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三週年紀念

Knowledge for "Self-Salvation" On Understanding the "Operations of Posthumous Life"

"Energy Protective Net" of the Spiritual Realm

The Ten Kinds of Unlimited Powers of Wisdom Capacity

Three Types of Mindsets in Changing the Fates of the Weak Ones

How to Find The Ways Out in Times of Adversities

What Are the Key Points of "Spiritual Practices"?

How To Differentiate Between Fake and Authentic "Spiritual Masters" (Gurus)?



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English Version

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The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophecies --- Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyendun Rinpoche (14)

by His Holiness' Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren



Namo Gurubhya!

We bow down at the Lotus Feet of our most beloved Lord of Refuge, the precious Wish-fulfilling Gem!

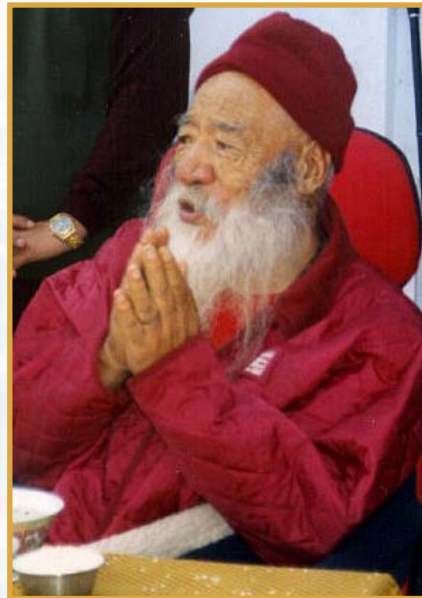
Palden Tsa'wai Lama Channo!

Glorious Root Guru, please pay heed to us, and bless us with your Body, Speech and Mind!

Emaho!

How wonderful and marvelous! With such an exceptional and rare opportunity to hear such a story!

How To Differentiate Between Fake and Authentic "Spiritual Masters" (Gurus)?



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

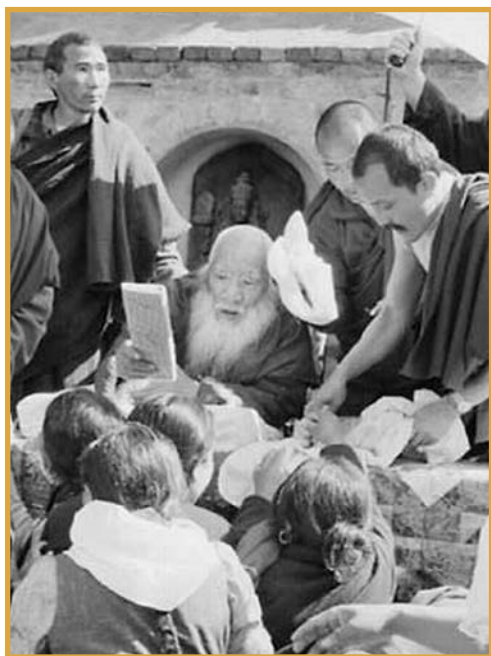
As a hidden yogi, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche's "body, speech and mind" must be very "secret" in terms of His Dharma practice and realization. Any realizations from one's practice, if spoken from one's mouth, will lose its warmth and blessing. Hence, if one does not want to lose what one has so painstakingly achieved through one's own Dharma practices, one must be very mindful of the meaning of "secrecy"! If there is such a "guru" who boasts about his/her own realizations in front of you, then you better be very careful and watch out! One should observe



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

the “spiritual master” (guru) from different points and aspects: such as, his writings, his teachings on “mind-training”, his concepts and meanings of the Holy Dharma, as well as his behaviors, in order that one can test him and find out whether he is an authentic “spiritual master”(guru) or a fake one?

We hope that you will not be stupid enough to take refuge from such a “guru” who, speaking of himself as having attained the highest stages of realization on the Great Perfection (Dzogchen), asks his disciples to buy his so-called “blessed” bottles of water (saying that it will cure diseases) for high prices? Not only this, those who have drunk the water soon find themselves to become “addicted”, and thus cannot get rid of this habit. Furthermore, in using human thoughts and medications to control his disciples, this so-called “guru” boastfully said that his practice of the Great



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

Perfection (Dzogchen) will have “no need to adhere to the precepts”! His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche’s advice to us is that: “You should immediately go away if you ever met him, as if you are encountering a poisonous snake, and try not to see him at all”.

This Degenerate Age is so saturated with false teachers,
 Countless sentient beings are torn with sufferings,
 Already so many bitter and painful stories in life itself,
 Distressingly, why there are more poisons to be added?

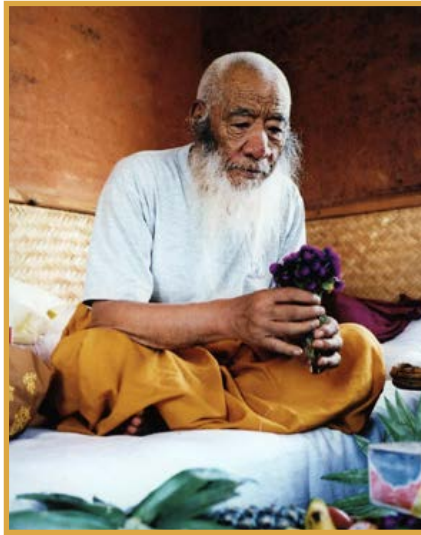
His Boundless Wisdom and Compassion in Helping and Upholding the Genuine Holy Dharma

His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche had offered to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II all the teachings and transmissions of the **Special Lineage of the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro Dewai Dorje (1899-1952)** while they were still in Tibet. With this, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II was most delighted and rejoiced at the blessings, and thus wrote a prayer of offering to the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro as follows:

Empress of the enlightened Vidyadharas and Dakinis,
 Holder of the Dakinis’ secret treasury of unprecedented secret instruction,
 Queen of the Sky Dancers’ wisdom sphere,
 Vajra of Happiness (Dewai Dorje),
 May her tradition be eternally encompassing, spreading and flourishing throughout the far reaches of every direction!

These words of prayer were composed with heartfelt, fervent aspirations by Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje on the auspicious occasion of the Clustering of Dakinis (the 25th day of the lunar month). It was written at a time when, having gained a properly-reasoned and unshakeable faith in the lifestory of the Supreme Wisdom Dakini, I received the ripening and liberation (pith instruction that supports) of her profound teachings in their entirety from her principal Heart Son, the Yogin of Activity-Free Self-liberation, Tro-gyal Dorje, like a vase being filled to the brim.

As both His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II and His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche were so respectful to each other, and that they loved each other so much that it is just natural that His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche feels it



His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche

is His responsibility to take care of His Holiness Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche. Yet, there is another reason for this: before His Holiness Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro passed away in Sikkim in 1959, he had written a letter asking His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche to be mindful about the confusion of the future incarnation of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II, and that His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche should be responsible for, and take care of, the Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche in the future.

As far as we know, there were at least four so-called “incarnations” (tulku) of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II. With the prophecy in Dakini scripts and other signs provided by the Wisdom Dakini Tare Khandro (the daughter of Apang Terton Orgyen Thinley Lingpa), together with his own realization and other important evidences, **His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche has thus recognized “Pema Osel” (“Light of Lotus”)** as the only “tulku” of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II, who was personally enthroned by His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche and all the high lamas of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism on November 25, 1994 (**the day of Lha Bab Duchon**) in Godavari, Nepal. Through a long-life prayer written by His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche Himself, His Holiness Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche was also offered the special name of **“Sangye Pema Shaypa Drodul Rigdzin Thrinley Drupaydey”** (please refer to the **Inaugural Issue of the “Light of Lotus”**, published by the **Dudjom Buddhist Association**). All the rest of the so-called “tulku” of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II were not recognized as such.

His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche had directly received all the **“wang, lung and tri”** from the **Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro Dewai Dorje** herself of her own cycle of “terma” teachings (**which have important commentaries and further teachings on the “Tersar” teachings of the Great Terton Dudjom Lingpa**), and of

her **Special Lineage**. At the same time, the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro’s **“Dharma-Heir” (Chodak)** was **Yigepa Tsultrim Dorje (or Shila Vajra in Sanskrit)**, with whom His Holiness also received all the transmissions of the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro’s Special Lineage. Hence, His Holiness had received this very precious and secret Special Lineage of the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro from both the Dakini herself, as well as from her direct **“Dharma-Heir”**. Furthermore, His Holiness had also received **all the “wang, lung and tri” of the “Dudjom Tersar” Lineage from Tersey Dorje Dradul (1891-1959, the youngest son of the Great Terton Dudjom Lingpa, please refer to the article on “The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophesies: Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche (4)” in Issue 9 of the “Lake of Lotus”**).

His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche is **the Vajra Regent (Dorje Gyaltsap)**, **the Principal Doctrine-Holder and “Dharma-Heir” (Kyabchok)**, as well as the **“Lord of the Mandala”** on the most complete teachings and transmissions (**wang, lung and tri**) of the **“Dudjom Tersar” Lineage** (please again refer to the article on **“The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophesies: Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche (2)” in Issue 7 of the “Lake of Lotus”** for this proclamation of the **“Vajra Regent”** from His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II). In this way, His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche holds the most complete authority on both the **“Dudjom Tersar” Lineage** and of the secret **“Special Lineage”** of the Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro, and thus has the total responsibility to transmit all these important teachings and transmissions back to Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche. So, naturally, His Holiness is the Root Guru of Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche..... (To be Continued) ❖



H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche III

The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death :

The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (19)

By Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren
Translated by Simon S.H. Tang

“Dissolution of the Four Elements” in “Near-Death Experiences”

“Death” is generally regarded as an “inauspicious” topic for discussion, and so most people do not like to face this reality. However, those “Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs) survivors, who have been revived from the death, do recognize the fact that **knowledge about death is of utmost importance and that everybody must have to learn about it**. If one does not learn about it, it would be very dangerous when death falls upon him/her. **How dangerous would it be?** Why is the “death” of a person not as simple as the “extinction of a candle light”?

Many people, such as those “Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs) survivors who have been revived from the death, or experienced spiritual practitioners, as well as the Buddhist sutras have provided **a lot of evidences** in proving that it is not true that the “death” of a person resembles the “extinction of a candle light”. Indeed, the decease of a physical body does not represent the extinguishment of a human life; but instead, it turns out that the posthumous world is such a completely **new format** of existence after death, being variegated, outlandish and **so unpredictable**, that if a person does not master the knowledge of “death”, how **dangerous and harmful** would it be to a deceased person? A NDE survivor had the following detailed evidence after her “revival from the dead”.

Case 21

Miss Chung Sue of Taiwan is a sportswoman in mountaineering, and also an instructor of Yoga. She has been in good health ever since. However, in the period from 2000 to 2007, Miss Chung had experienced **four times** of “revivals from the near-death experiences” of an **unknown cause**. One of the incidents occurred during a “religious ceremony for the pacification of deceased persons”. A car accident happened to the two younger brothers of Miss Chung’s friend, during which both of them got killed. As her friend was in a Christian family and was not feasible to hold a Buddhist ceremony of pacification for the two younger brothers, so Miss Chung was being requested by her friend to hold such a Buddhist ritual. During this ceremony, Miss Chung **sudden fell “unconscious”** and she experienced the “near-death” situation.

Miss Chung, being a Buddhist practitioner for 16 years, has been practicing meditation and reciting mantras ever since, and was able to sense that the two brothers of her friend would be coming to the ceremony before her “unconscious”. However, she felt that the two deceased brothers were associated with very “chaotic energy fields”, which had indicated that they were **not situated in a good place**. Moreover, there were **ups and downs of their emotions**, and thus causing their associated energies to be rather chaotic in nature.

While Miss Chung was starting to fall into “unconscious”, she felt that something like a big bell was enclosing her from the top downwards, and then her audio sensation became very sharp, hearing the sound of “hum”, which was so loud as if she would be crushed into pieces, until she was so shaken as to start falling onto the ground. **All of her sensations had now become very sharp**. When the “Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs) happened to her in the past few times, she was all alone with nobody by her side to touch her, and so she had no idea at all that the deceased person **would feel extremely painful and intolerable feelings** when being touched upon at the moment of death. As she was entering into the “process of death” during that moment, she had lost her ability to respond, and so she was in no way to stop the people in the ceremony to buffet her for resuscitation. Not until then did she come to realize that being touched upon at the moment of death would bring about such kind of extreme and intolerable pains. Anyhow, **it was already too late for everything**. She had no alternatives but to endure such kind of sufferings. This is, indeed, one of the dangers that all those people who do not have any relevant trainings and knowledge about death **must have to face**.



At that very moment, she felt her body to start decomposing with the solids to become melted down and dissolved into liquids. All the orifices of the body were excreting bodily fluids. The anus and all kinds of bodily organs seemed to be peeling off and falling apart. The feeling of the taping of bodily fluid was like the collapsing of the mountains and the cracking of the whole earth. Thereafter, her bodily temperature dropped, and she began to feel colder and colder gradually in the chills of gusty winds. These phenomena have been described in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”. In the book, solids were known as the “earth element”, fluids were known as the “water element”, temperatures were known as the “fire element”, and gases were known as the “wind element”. The whole phenomenon was known as the decomposition of the four elements of “earth, water, fire and wind” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in the Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Knowledge for “Self-Salvation” On Understanding the “Operations of Posthumous Life”

Later on, she found herself entering into another world. She heard a lot of noises, which sounded like the conversations of people in a very strange language, not the kind of human languages. When the first incident of NDE occurred to her, she was extremely **panic-stricken** as she had no idea what kind of happenings would occur to a deceased person. Basing upon these observations, it is most important and fundamental for people to come to understand that the “knowledge on the operations of posthumous life” is the most crucial **knowledge** for one’s own “**self-salvation**”.

After her “revival from the dead”, Miss Chung actively endeavored to study the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**” and its relevant materials. She then came to know that the various phenomena that might have happened after death, and so she was **no longer so scared** when the other NDE occurred to her again in the pacifying ceremony in the later days. As such, she was able to look around and pay great attention to the surrounding environment and its special features. **This sort of “calmness and composedness” in her mind allowed her to have a chance of “self-salvation” thereafter**.

Miss Chung saw a big crowd of people walking towards the same direction, and that she was also among them. It seemed that there was the existence of a **gigantic sucking disc** with strong tractional forces, such that the people were being pulled and dragged into it gradually and **helplessly**. This kind of phenomenon had been

accounted for by many NDE survivors, some of whom had described the gigantic sucking disc as some kind of a “whirlpool”, while others had mentioned that these were “holes in the ground with huge sucking forces” or “black holes”, locating everywhere.

“Energy Protective Net” of the Spiritual Realm

Miss Chung had continually heard a repeating sound of ‘Amita-buddha-ya’, which is the pronouncement of the name of the “Buddha Amitabha” in Sanskrit. Since she understood the meaning of the sound, therefore she followed the sound and focused on the chanting of it together. After she had concentrated on the sound, an incredible matter happened. She found herself being encompassed and protected by a “net of energy” like a super-bowl, and the speed of being pulled and dragged along by the gigantic sucking disc started to slow down. She no longer followed the crowd, which continued to be dragged forward by the “tractions” towards a certain direction. Eventually, she was able to avert the “tractions” and left the crowd altogether. After returning back to her physical body, and thus she was revived from the dead.

In fact, where did this kind of incredible protective force come from? Was it because of the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas? Or was it because of some other reason? If the principle behind this has not been realized, the method of spiritual practice could be detoured onto the wrong path of “materialism”, and consequentially entered into the tomb of “superstition”, with one’s spiritual practice failing just a step away from success. The continuous sound of repeating ‘Amita-buddha-ya’ was a kind of broadcasting from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, from the realm of heavens, as well as from the volunteers of the “spiritual domains” as a kind of assistance. Therefore, the footage of the sound could be in the forms of either Buddhas’ Holy Names, or mantras, or sounds of sacred beings whichever ways that maybe helpful to sentient beings. It could be said to be an “external blessing” to induce the “internal mental strength” of the sentient beings for “self-salvation”.

This kind of sound could not generate the “protective energy net”, and so most of the sentient beings in the crowd that had continued on with their proceeding towards the “gigantic sucking disc” had not been benefited. Only those who had been attracted by the sound and then concentrated on it could generate the “protective energy net” due to the ignitions of their “internal potential energies” through linkages with external assistances. This is because “concentration” could induce one’s “mental strength”, which would



activate the programming of “autonomy and independence”, coupling with the energy of “mental strength” for the development of “self-defense ability”, so that the “protective energy net” could be generated. Once the “protective energy net” has been generated, it could be able to insulate all the spiritual practitioners from external interferences, and so they could be free from the quagmire as wished. Since Miss Chung no longer followed the passive programming of operation as the crowd, she was then able to break away from those attractive forces of “tractions”.

Human nature, being what it is as of scary about strange environments and with the release from the attractive forces of “tractions”, triggered Miss Chung’s “sub-conscious” of the desire to return back to a more familiar place. This kind of “mental strength” caused Miss Chung to return to her own physical body, which was still full of vitality, and was thus able to maintain the linkage with her own “consciousness”. Hence, she was able to “revive from the dead”. In other words, Miss Chung still had the right of initiative in her mind. However, sentient beings had always been preoccupied with superstitions and reliances and thus regarded that all these were the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and had overlooked the subtle function of the “mental strength”.

In numerous NDE cases, people who had “revived from the dead” claimed that they had the “freedom of choices”, and so they were able to choose to return back to the human world. They all thought that this freedom of choice was given to them either by their gods or by the Buddhas. In fact, the phenomenon of the “revival from death” happens due to the subtle function of one’s own “mental strength”, in coordinating

with the physical body which is still in vitality.

For some of the NDE survivors who were **unwilling** to return to the human world, yet they had lost their rights on the “freedom of choices”, and so they were unable to stay in the “spiritual domain” and thus had to resume their lives because of the fact that the vitalities of their physical bodies were being stronger than that of their “mental strengths”. This is the phenomenon upon which the “**karmic forces**” were stronger than their “mental strengths”. Therefore, the **crucial point of all Dharma practices** centers on the training on the **strength of “mental concentration”**, for the induction on the operation of one’s “mental strength” under one’s own directives. Furthermore, the “correct programming of resolution” for “**self-salvation**” is triggered by one’s “mental strength”. Those spiritual practitioners who have misplaced **superstitions and reliances on blessings** into their Dharma practices would lose the ability of “self-salvation”. Just like those people who had fallen into the sea. They could carry out “self-salvation” if they know how to swim; but if they don’t, then they will have to “wait for help” from someone else. Undoubtedly, the odds of success for those persons who know how to carry out “self-salvation” are far better off than that for those who have to “wait for help” from someone else.

What are the Key Points of “Spiritual Practices”?

The contemporary Great Master of the “Pure Land Sect”, Venerable Master Yin-Guang, had said that: “All of the means in Dharma practices have to reply upon **one’s own strength (self-reliance)**. Even if a Dharma practitioner who has already accumulated profound merits and practices in one’s past lives and is able to have thorough discernment about one’s own mind, however if one’s perplexities of concepts and thoughts still exist, then the ‘cyclic existence of life and death’ would continue to persist. Furthermore, once a sentient being approaches the situation of reincarnation, with the associated physical body to be formed, this person would likely to grasp hold onto, and thus be bogged down by, the existing environment where he or she is situated. Those who can base upon their own **awareness** so as to **elevate to higher levels of realization** are, indeed, very rare, while those who are in **perplexities** will **worsen their confusions** even more are, indeed, so numerous.”

This is a **proverb of the truth**, which has elaborated on one of the **key points of “spiritual practices”**: that is, a person should be “reliant on one’s own efforts” for one’s “**self-salvation**”, and not to be “superstitious” about blessings, or to be relying upon “rescues from



external factors”. After the loss of a coarse physical body for support, the existence of one’s life is purely on the functioning of the “mind”. Regardless of either “blessing, help or injury”, all these external factors are merely **influencing** the functions of the “mind” **from outside**. In no way will it resemble the situation while one was still alive, in which so long one’s physical body is under control, then one’s security and freedom would also be reined.

No matter whether a person is alive or dead, external forces can never be able to **directly replace** the “minds” of sentient beings, and in no way could they be able to **be directly involved** in the functioning of the “mind”. Hence, they can only **indirectly influence** the functioning of the “minds”, which is more commonly known as “brainwashing”, by altering the habitual programming of the behavioral patterns within the “minds”. Having been trained for a long time in such a way that he or she can **take the initiatives**, and having known well the variegated characteristics of the posthumous world, then a sentient being’s “mental strength” can become more dictating and powerful, such that he or she would no long be afraid of all the tricks and temptations, and thus be able to maintain an **independent autonomy** in behavioral programming, so as to **correctly direct** one’s “mental strength” to a path for “**self-salvation**” in liberating oneself from all kinds of dangerous situations. Furthermore, one could be able to **take full control and choose** one’s own place of birth. This is, indeed, the crucial point of spiritual practice in “Vajrayana” - **to train the “mental strength”, and to purify one’s own “consciousness”** [please refer to the detailed explanations on the “phenomena in spiritual and psychological aspects” (“Cittadharma” in Sanskrit) and “consciousness” (“Vijnana” in Sanskrit) in the article on the “Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”].

In the case of Miss Chung, the “external force” is a kind of energy which had **pulled and dragged** her **into** a certain spiritual domain via the form of “tractions”. The crowd of people whom she saw had also imposed **certain influences** upon her own “mind”. Ordinary people would have the feeling of “since they have companions on the road, they would not feel lonely”, and thus their alertness would be **reduced**, resulting in their **loss** of the “sense of dangers”, upon which it would be difficult for them to induce their abilities for one’s own “self-salvation”. When sentient beings are being reined by some “external forces” (**which are a kind of energy**), unless there is a presence of another kind of “external forces” which can be more powerful that come to the rescue, otherwise the sentient beings would have to **induce** their own “mental strengths” for their “self-salvation”.

Thus, the key for either success or failure at this very moment lies in whether the sentient beings could induce their **own “mental strengths”**. If sentient beings had practiced “spiritual practices” while alive, with the key of the practices to be focused mainly on the training of “mental strength”, with an “up-to-the-point” theme of “directing the mind towards the correct position (**that is, the “Buddhafield”**)”, then those sentient beings who had received such trainings would be able to make use of their abilities of “self-salvation”. Just like Miss Chung, a “protective energy net” would have been formed so as to be able to successfully separate oneself from all those “tractions”.

As to whether it would be possible for one to proceed onto the “Pure Land” or “Buddhafield” after one’s separation from the buffet of “tractions” will have to depend upon the **intensity on the concentration of one’s “mental strength”**, as well as the **purity of one’s own “mind”**. An adequate intensity of “mental concentration” implies an amount of **sufficient energy** for one’s travel onto the final destination; while an adequate purity of one’s “mind” implies an amount of sufficient **energy for directing and positioning** one’s travel onto the final destination. Many “Vajrayana” practitioners **have failed** at the end of the day simply because they are too superstitious about the “blessings and the autonomous mental strength”, but have neglected the purity of their own “minds”. In other words, they **“have gone to extremes and lost the balance”**.

When the “mind” contains a great deal of negative energies of “greed, anger and ignorance”, whereupon confusions on the potential **energies of directing and positioning** one’s travel would take place, and so it would be impossible for one to set the “intentional bearing and direction” of one’s own “mental strength”, but would merely have to take on the “karmic forces” of one’s own “mind” at that time to be one’s energies of directing and positioning, while coordinating with

the **thrust of one’s “mental strength”** to **hastily** proceed towards the spiritual domains of negative energies (**“Karmic forces” are the “tractions”**. **“Karmic Web” of Networking: due to the virtuous and wicked behaviors in past countless lifetimes**, a mutually-intertwining and influencing connection between the “mental strengths” of both oneself and of others has been formed. This mutually-affected network of tractions is known as the “karmic web of networking”. Please refer to the VCD on “The Inconceivable Law of Karma”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).

The most famous example of this case is about a past Dharma practitioner in Tibet who had practiced the “ritual text” (**sadhana**) on the “deity” (**Yidam**) of “Yamantaka”, and had achieved perfect intensity of a very high “mental concentration”. However, as he was so conceited about the “powerfulness” of his own “mental strength”, and so he thought that he could be rest assured and definite to be “reborn into the Buddhafield”. Consequentially, he just domineered around, **did not take to his heart on the strict observances of the “precepts and disciplines”, and cared less about them as if they did not exist at all**. Both of his behavioral patterns and of “mind-consciousness” contained lots and lots of negative energies of “greed, hatred and ignorance”. As a result, not only did he not benefited from the merits and willfulness of doing practices on the “ritual text” on the “deity” of “Yamantaka” by being reborn into the “Buddhafield of Yamantaka” after his death; but instead, he had his direct downfall into the Hell Realm immediately after his death, but with the semblance as the “deity” of “Yamantaka”.

The “deity” of “Yamantaka” manifests as a ‘wrathful deity’ (in **“Vajrayana”, different Buddhas are called ‘deities’ who are the main objects of practices in their respective ritual texts**) in its appearance. Their semblances might look ferocious, but in their “hearts



and minds”, they are with the pure nature of the Buddhas. Internally, the ferocious appearance is to **cure** one’s own weakness and fear from inside; while externally, the ferocious appearance could scare away those stubborn karmic foes and creditors. This kind of method can be **useful to certain kinds of “spiritual practitioners”**. Unfortunately, it is a pity that this Dharma practitioner when practicing this “ritual text”, he merely centered on the fierce appearance on the surface, but then he remained to be most cunning and vicious in his mind. After nurturing for a long period of time, he had developed a strong concentration of his “mental strength”, but then his “mind” was so full of the negative energies of “greed, hatred and ignorance”. At the moment when he passed away, he **triggered off all of his energies** by highly concentrating himself to become visualized as the “deity” of “Yamantaka” in appearance via his powerful “mental strength” in order to proceed towards the “Buddhafiield of Yamantaka”. However, his “mind”, which was so full of the “negative energies”, just could not make any connections to the “positive energies” of the magnetic fields of the “Buddhafiields”. On the other hand, he could only link up with the “negative energies” of the Hell Realm which was having energies of the same kind as he had, basing on the principle of “like attracts like”, and so with the outward semblance as the “deity” of “Yamantaka”, he had his direct downfall into the Hell Realm immediately after his death at an **extremely fast speed**. The speed of his downfall was so swift and rapid that he had reached the Hell Realm just right after the very moment that he died. With all his **hard and great efforts** in visualizing as the “deity” of “Yamantaka”, he merely scared the sentient beings in the Hell Realm to death.

In other words, powerful concentrations of one’s “mental strength” could merely assist you to **proceed** to a certain place **at high speed**. The main aim and function of “visualization” is to help one in **“assembling one’s mental strength towards the Buddhafiields”**. Yet, whether the person could ultimately be directed correctly to proceed towards the “Buddhafiield” or not will still have to depend upon the “intrinsic quality” of one’s own “mind”. Hence, the **purification of one’s “mind”** is an **indispensable** key point in one’s “spiritual practice”. Both **the “training of mental strength” and the “purification of the mind”** must **have to be balanced**. Only those Dharma practices that are composed of these two key points can be considered as **“up-to-the-point” methods of Dharma practices**, the key subject of which is how to be reborn successfully into the “Buddhafiields”.

In possession of powerful concentrations of one’s “mental strength”, a person could **overcome** the “external forces” even though these are gigantic “karmic energies”. Therefore, the **“training of mental**



strength” is a **necessary condition** in one’s Dharma practice. Yet, only with “mental strength” but without a “charted direction”, it would only be like Miss Chung who could **temporarily** generate a “protective energy net”, but then one would have to leave it to one’s own “sub-conscious” and the “karmic forces” to chart and navigate one’s course of direction, and thus have to **passively wait** for one’s possible rescue. In this way, one could not actively chart and navigate one’s own direction, via the “programming of Dharma practices”, towards the “Buddhafiields”, or to enter into **correct mode** of “Emptiness” (“*Shunyata*”) for the “attainment of Buddhahood” (please refer to the DVDs on both the “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness” and on “The Functions of Body Mandala, with Dissolution of the Four Elements upon Death”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association).

If a person only has the will to chart and navigate one’s own direction towards the “Buddhafiields”, but without intensive concentration of one’s “mental strength”, it resembles a ship with a “compass” but having no “fuel” to **mobilize and energize** it, so that it would merely become a vessel that is drifting along in the ocean of “karma”. It is a case of **“having the ideals but without any practicalities”**, and as such, the person would have to “wait for help” and cannot attain “self-salvation”. On the other hand, if a person only has a “purified mind”, but does not have the concentrated “mental strength” with a clear “direction and orientation to either the ‘Buddhafiields’, or on the correct realization of ‘Emptiness’”, then it resembles a ship with “good functions”, but then it does not have any “fuels and compass” and so it would just drift along in the sea. In this way, the person could only **continue** to drift along

in the ocean of “karma”, according to the “tractions” of one’s own “karmic forces”. Hence, countless “spiritual practitioners” did not have thorough-enough “comprehension and understanding”, as well as “sufficient and deep reflections”, on the aforementioned **views**, and so resulting in different kinds of failures at the end of the day. This is exactly the meaning by the slight persistence on the existence of the “perplexities of concepts and thoughts”, as has been mentioned by the Venerable Master Yin Guang that “if one’s perplexities of concepts and thoughts still exist, then the ‘cyclic existence of life and death’ would continue to persist.”

The Major Deviations of Contemporary Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhist Practitioners

Nowadays, most of the Dharma practitioners of “exoteric Buddhism” have **neglected** the trainings on the programming of “mental strength” and the “navigated direction and orientation”; while most of the Dharma practitioners of “esoteric Buddhism” have **neglected** the purities of the “mind” and only focused on the **formalities** of “empowerments” and the trainings on the programming of “visualization”. Both of these trends would be some kinds of **deviations and imbalances** in terms of “Dharma practices”, and fall into the different types of “perplexities on concepts and thoughts” that have not been totally removed. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have repeatedly broadcasted their “Holy Names” in order to let those people **(with the heart to be liberated by chanting the Buddhas’ Holy Names)** to rely upon so as to establish their “mental concentration” in inducing their “abilities for self-protection”. This can be said to be some kind of “**external blessings**”. After all, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas **cannot replace** the “minds” of all sentient beings by their own “purified Buddha minds” of wisdom in order to make everybody to “attain Buddhahood”. **Neither is it possible, and in good time**, for all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas **to rescue** every sentient being who is in danger, but can only do so when a person, in agony, is voicing out his/her prayer which was then being heard; or by adopting a prevalent method of broadcasting the Holy Names of the Buddhas so as to alert the “minds” of all sentient beings. The case of Miss Chung is an obvious proof of this.

It is pitiful that this method is still a passive means. It is **difficult** for sentient beings **to maintain** the stability of their “mental concentration” without changes, from one to seven days. The “protective energy net”, which is created only temporarily, might be **disconnected at any moment**, and so what can be done **before** one can be **successfully linked to** the Buddhas and

Bodhisattvas for rescue? That is the reason why the “Vajrayana” strives for **an “active” approach** in its Dharma practices, which is **extremely** correct. As Miss Chung could focus her “mental concentration” for the induction of her own “mental strength” and potential energy, and so she could generate an “energy protective zone”. As her “mental strength” is stronger than that of the “external tractions”, and upon the connection of her “mind” to her physical body via the “energy thread”, her bodily vitality was thus **revived** and slowly her body recovered the pulling energy to pull her “mind” back, resulting in her being dragged back into her physical body again. In this way, all of her bodily organs slowly and progressively resumed their vitality and functions, and thus she was being able to be “revived from the dead” again.

However, due to the fact that Miss Chung lacks in the “**training of mental strength**”, and so she could not correctly and actively “chart and navigate her direction towards the ‘Buddhahfields’”, nor could she enter into the correct realization of “Emptiness” in “attaining Buddhahood”, through a series of correct “programming of Dharma practices”. In this way, her potentials had **not been thoroughly elaborated and fully utilized**, and so she had to make use of her **very limited “mental strength”** for “self-salvation” with **very limited choices**.

It has been shown that all sentient beings do possess great potentials, which is the tenet of Buddhism that “all sentient beings are born with the ‘**Buddha Nature**’ (or “**Buddhata**” in Sanskrit)”, and that this “**Buddha Nature**” is an inborn nature with characteristics of huge energies and capabilities. **How to develop one’s own naturally-possessed potentials thoroughly by all sentient beings is, indeed, the fundamental key point of all “Dharma practices”**. It is at the **center of endeavors** for all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to help all sentient beings to fully develop their naturally-possessed potentials for “self-salvation” while they are either at dangerous moments, or at the turning points of major changes on the existences of life-forms. The **key point for comparisons** among all kinds of “Dharma practices” lies in: whether it is a **limited** or **total** development of one’s naturally-possessed potentials; whether it is a kind of rescue through **active** “self-salvation”, or whether it is a kind of rescue through **passive** waiting for outside help? In fact, what are the main characteristics of this ‘**Buddha Nature**’ (or “**Buddhata**” in Sanskrit)? How powerful are its associated energies and capabilities?

The Ten Kinds of Unlimited Powers of Wisdom Capacity

According to the reports of the NDE survivors, even though many of them had seen the brightness of

“Light”, and yet very few of them could actually describe the intensity of it. This kind of “Light” could be called as the “Almighty Light”. It possesses great and powerful abilities, which is one of the characteristics of the ‘**Buddha Nature**’ (or “**Buddhata**” in Sanskrit). However, most NDE survivors would usually take it as something that exists “externally”, and could not realize that this kind of energy actually comes from “inside”, and is a manifestation of one’s own self. Thus, for most of the NDE survivors, this power has been weakened, and thus could not manifest the totality of all its abilities that are supposed to be available. Furthermore, besides the possession of these powerful energies, there are also profound powers of wisdom capacity that are associated with the ‘**Buddha Nature**’, and they are known as the “**Ten Powers**” in the Buddhist teachings, as according to the explanations in the “**The Sutra on the Buddha’s Ten Kinds of Power**”, taught by the Lord Buddha Himself.

1. **Power of the Wisdom in Distinguishing Between Right and Wrong:** the wisdom on the realization of all the principles of “rights and wrongs”, without analysis and processes; and able to understand everything thoroughly in a natural manner.
2. **Power of the Wisdom of Karma:** the wisdom of knowing the karmic structures of the “past, present and future”, how the “karmic forces” arise, and how the function of retribution works. All kinds of relationship on the “causes and effects” of all things can be known naturally.
3. **Power of the Wisdom of Mental Concentration:** the wisdom to understand naturally on the various levels of “mental concentration” and of various “Samadhis”, how to deepen one’s meditation and how to make use of them.
4. **Power of the Wisdom of Knowledge on All Functions:** the wisdom to naturally know and realize all the different levels of wisdom for all sentient beings, their relevant strengths and weaknesses, and their future accomplishments, whether large or small, in terms of their fruitions.
5. **Power of the Wisdom on Understanding:** the wisdom to know completely and naturally the various forms of secular happiness, virtues and unwholesomeness, as well as the views of all sentient beings.
6. **Power of the Wisdom to Identify Circumstances:** the wisdom to differentiate all sentient beings in terms of their various circumstances, and know how to teach and coach them according to their particular circumstances.

7. **Power of the Wisdom to Realize the Ultimate Accomplishment from Specific Dharma Practices:** the wisdom of knowing all sorts of Dharma practices in realizing the different objectives, and their ultimate destinations. For instance, if a person observes and practices the “Five Precepts and the Ten Wholesome Deeds”, he or she would then be reborn in either the human world, or in the heavenly realms; or to practice “Emptiness” for the “attainment of Buddhahood (Nirvana)”.
8. **Power of the Wisdom of Knowing All Details of the Past:** the wisdom to naturally know all of the matters of “past lifetimes”. A complete knowledge of all the histories of all sentient beings, for instance from the last past life to millions of lives before, and even for countless lifetimes, with minute details as to where to be reborn, with their different names, dietary habits, enjoyments or sufferings, longevity, and so on.
9. **Power of the Wisdom of Divine Vision:** the wisdom to naturally know clearly all the dates and times of births and deaths of all sentient beings, as well as the realms and places of their future reincarnations, through the “divine vision”, even to crystal-clear minute details of such things as good or bad semblances, poor or rich, virtuous or wicked situations, and karmic conditions that are to be encountered.
10. **Power of the Wisdom to Exhaust All Defilements:** the wisdom that can transcend all kinds of barriers due to all kinds of defilements, as well as other normative barriers and constraints due to past learning experiences and knowledge. Upon attaining this wisdom, all kinds of ignorance and perplexities could be removed, with no more habitual inferior behaviors.

Even in the possession of only a small portion of the above-mentioned ten kinds of wisdom capacity, the energies of the ‘**Buddha Nature**’ could be triggered for the arising of other “super-abilities”. This is a kind of phenomenon on the manifestation of the ‘**Buddha Nature**’ that would be brought about by one’s “Dharma practices”. In the next issue of the “Lake of Lotus”, we will further explore on another facet of this important case study.

The Areas and Questions Pending for Further Discussions

As a matter of fact, are they the same reasons for the occurrence of “Near-death Experiences” (NDEs) as well as the bad scenes at the “brink of death”? In the article on “The Meanings of Near-death Experiences”



in Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”, it was mentioned that some scenes at the moment of death had also occurred in some other religions. There were also similar reports of “being besieged by brightness, and saw that Jesus and Mary coming to fetch them.” Why is it like that?

In fact, what do the phenomena of the “scenes at the moment of death” really represent? Whether it represents some worrisome results of miserable ending when encountering some bad scenes? In the descriptions about the twenty-five Dharma practitioners in Issue 8, they were using the same kind of method for their Dharma practice, and they were united together and endeavored with the same efforts in their practices. Yet, various bad scenarios had occurred on their verge of dying. Why is it like that? In fact, what had gone wrong?

In the other religions, there were reports about the coming of “God” to fetch for the deceased persons, and so does it mean that all religions are having the same kind of effect? How to carry out one’s Dharma practice in order to ensure that an “auspicious scene” can occur at the moment of death? If bad scenes had appeared at the moment of death, is there any method of rescue for such kind of emergency?

In fact, what are the required conditions in the methods of “Dharma practice” that are considered as “up-to-the-point” “training on the spiritual elevation”? How can one make a choice amongst the so many methods of “training on the spiritual elevation” when coping with the different stages?

We may conduct another “brain storming session of wisdom” and give these some more thoughts. In the future articles, we will continue and try to verify the answers which can adhere to both science and the Buddhist teachings. How about that? (To be Continued) 🌀

(Note: The newly-released book on “The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)” has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meaning of the Near-Death Experiences “from Issues 1 to 10.)

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“Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs)
History of Research on “Near-Death Experiences”
Special Common Features of “Near-Death Experiences”
Points of Arguments About “Near-Death Experiences”

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The “Energy Thread” Between Life and Death
The Profound Secrets of the “Energy Thread”
Five “Supernatural Powers”

Issue 3

The Mystery of “Light”
The Mysteries on the “Entrance and Exit Doors” of Life and Death
The Origin on the Linkage of Life and Death

Issue 4

The “Almighty Light” at the Moment of Death
The Origin of “Light”
The Application of “Light”
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Reasons for the Generation of the “Light of Life and Death”
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The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (19)

By Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren

Translated by Amy W.F. Chow

Excerpt of Last Issue The Skills in the Setting-up of "Plans"

The primary condition for "success" is the setting-up of an "objective" (please refer to Issue 2 of the "Lake of Lotus"). In the setting-up of an objective with regards to one's preference, capability and ideal, to be supplemented with the skills in the setting-up of an "objective" (please refer to Issue 3 of the "Lake of Lotus"), a blueprint of grandeur for the ideal of one's life has more or less been drawn up. Then, what is the next step to proceed in order to ensure success "in achieving the objective"?

The next step is to draw up a detailed and concrete "plan" which is also strategic and efficient in nature. To work out a series of "plans" for the major, medium-term and small objectives is like the building up of a network of interconnected highways which would eventually lead to "success". In designing the numerous "plans", attention must be paid to the following items:

1. **Complementarity and the Enhancement of Effectiveness:** The links between "plans" should have compatible, complementary and interdependent effects....(please refer to Issue 4 of the "Lake of Lotus").
2. **A thorough elimination process to decide what to "adopt and abandon":** Irrespective of working out major, medium-term and small "plans", there must

be a process to prioritize and eliminate with regards to some designated elements and conditions. A thorough elimination process to determine what to "adopt and abandon"

Designated Elements & Conditions in Determining What to "Adopt and Abandon"

- (i) **Importance:** To what extent would the "plan" help in achieving the "objective"? To what extent would this "objective", in which one is prepared to achieve, help in achieving the major objective"?..... (please refer to Issue 5 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (ii) **The Price to be Paid:** Life is short and limited. All the resources that you presently possess could be lost at any moment. One must clearly understand the characteristics of the "Combination of Resources" and its relations with Destiny in one's own life before making any changes, to realize the price that one has to pay for the different "plans", and then go through the processes of elimination and deployment in order to "adopt and abandon" in these various "plans". In this way, this would

enable the limited resources to become “ever-renewing, inexhaustible and of unusual value for money” within a limited framework of time and space (please refer to Issue 6 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(iii) **Strength and Weakness:** Every person has his/her own strengths, merits, skills, as well as his/her weaknesses and the Achilles’ heel (weakest point). In order to achieve success of any “objective” or of any “plan”, one must be very clear of one’s own strengths and weaknesses; and then through various skillful arrangements, try to complement and make use of one’s strengths and weaknesses in designing the contents and procedures of the “plans”. This is an “important strategy” in eliminating and deploying the “plans”, and thus should not be underestimated (please refer to Issue 7 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(iv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (1):** In drawing up any “plan”, one must take into account the “planning of time”. The “principles for the usages and wastages of time” must be clear, and have to be linked up with the effectiveness of the “plan”. Hence, time should be spent on those “plans” which are most effective and can bring the highest rate of return. One should prioritize one’s different “plans” according to the long or short durations of time used and their relative effectiveness. “Plans” that require one to put in a lot of time and effort, but with low rates of return and low effectiveness, should be scrapped. One should refine and improve one’s “plans” by making reference to the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”. This is a major direction in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one’s “plans” (please refer to Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(v) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2):** Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one’s lifetime, and if one’s own objective is either to be “liberated from the cycle of transmigration” (known as “Samsara” in Sanskrit), or to attain “full enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”) within this very life, then your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time” for this life will become one of the critical points in determining whether you would

succeed or fail. Hence one must be very cautious and rational about this. If your objective is “to be reborn into the Buddha’s Pure Land” within this lifetime, then you would have had greater flexibility in the handling of your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”, but they still should not be neglected. Hence, what will be the most wise and effective way in the “planning of time” for one’s life while one is on the path for Dharma practice?.....(please refer to Issue 9 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(vi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (3):** Does it mean that if one is unable to undergo “long-term retreat”, one would not be able to achieve the “objective” to become “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”? If you want to know the answer, please answer the following three questions first and to know about the “three essential factors” in the application of Buddhist teaching in our “Daily Living” (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(vii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (4): Wrong “Planning of Time”:** It is no easy matter at all for one to be able to master the keys to success of “Dharma Practices” in one’s “daily living” in order to have achievements, as well as to be able to achieve the “objective” of becoming “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”. Even if one does possess the three best conditions (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”), it will still be unavoidable that one can fall prey and become lost again in this “tidal sea of sorrow in Samsara”, as one goes through this undulated waves of ever-changing life cycle. If one tries not to fall again, and instead wants to further consolidate upon one’s own foundation, one of the best methods is to merge one’s own “Dharma practices” into one’s “daily living” so as to ensure one’s mastering of the “Planning of Time”.

No matter in the setting of what kinds of “plans”, one has to try and predict what would be the outcomes that would be brought upon you by this “plan”? What will be the side-effects and how many? One always hopes for the best but be prepared for the worst. Many a Dharma

practitioners, when planning the times for their “Dharma practices”, will tend to **take care of one but then lose hold of the others**, making it more contradictory, and also more confusing, for one’s own “daily living”, and thus ending in the **loss of what to “adopt and abandon”**. (please refer to the Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(viii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (5): The “Planning of Time” in One’s “Daily Living” (1) -- Linking up by the Main Theme, and Getting Through the Sequences of Events: How can the “planning of time” in one’s “daily living” **be designed** so as to avoid the various wrong doings? How should we practice the “Holy Dharma” so as to make the “effectiveness of Dharma practices during meditation” be linked up and **steadily sustained** with that in “post-meditation daily living” so as to further it and let it become **fully “developed”**? If one wants the “success” to be speed up, how should it be planned so as to **remove those obstacles** that will hinder the “effectiveness”? How can the **sequence** of incidents to be traced out of those confusions, and the **key** positions to be found in solving the problems? How can a consensus be reached between one’s “cognitions” and “reality” so that the **“contradictions” can be resolved**? How can the **“devotion, pure state of mind and dedication”** of Dharma practices “during meditation” be linked up and be sustained with that in the “post-meditation daily living” with a **correct “state of mind”**?(please refer to the Issue 12 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(ix) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (6): The Skilful Usages of the “Main Theme” and the “Sequences of Events”: The “cardinal mentality” is the major key in deciding on all things, and so the **“planning of one’s Dharma practices”** in one’s “daily living” has to use the “cardinal mentality” as the “main theme” to link up the “static states of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic states of Dharma practices”, by connecting their “common points” so as to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time,” and thus opening and tidying up the disordered “sequences of events” in order to synergize the contradictions of these two and to make them to become complementary to each other, while using

the “cardinal mentality” as the basis all through. This is, indeed, the **“main points of planning”** for one’s Dharma practices in “daily living”. Yet, how one focuses on the **“cardinal mentality”** and the **“planning of time”** would become the **main key points for one’s “successes and/or failures”**.... (please refer to the Issue 13 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(x) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (7): Flexibility in the Using of One’s “Mentality” for One’s Dharma Practice: While practicing the Dharma during the undulated waves of “daily living”, one can hardly sustain one’s “meditational power” and the **degree of the steadiness** of one’s “Dharma practice” by **relying solely on “Emptiness”**. In order to be able to continuously enhance and elevate one’s Dharma practice in “daily living”, one must have **to adopt “Emptiness” as the unchanging and everlasting “cardinal mentality”**. One further needs to flexibly make use of the “three main essential points” of one’s Dharma practice in “daily living” so as to **train one’s own “mind”** in addressing the problems of one’s “daily living”, as well as to transform one’s “emotions and feelings” in becoming the “driving force for one’s Dharma practice” (please refer to the Issue 14 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (8): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (1): In the undulated journey in the course of one’s lifetime, it is **unavoidable** that one would meet with many adversities. If you encounter these adversities and could not handle them properly, they would become the **obstacles** to all of your



plans and objectives. Regardless of what “time and effectiveness” that you may have, they would be **completely** disturbed and delayed, and would hardly function properly. Thus, when one can skillfully adopt the strategy of getting through the obstacles by linking up the “Main Theme and the Sequences of Events”, and when one has set up the principles for **choosing** one’s “Cardinal Mentality” and also for the “Three Essential Factors” within one’s “mind”, one should at the same time follow the criteria for one’s “Dharma practices in times of adversities” as the **procedures for handling the situations** (please refer to the Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (9): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (2):** Among the criteria for “Dharma Practices in times of Adversities”, one should pay attention and **adhere to** the following **procedures**: 1) to alienate from one’s role; 2) to remain calm; 3) to analyze accurately; 4) to act within one’s own capacities – this can be regarded as the “time planning for one’s Dharma practice during adversities”; 5) to take advantage of the different circumstances; 6) to learn from one’s own experiences; and 7) to elevate one’s own awareness, with particular reference to 3) to analyze accurately (please refer to the Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (10): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (3):** In times of favorable circumstances, it would be easy for one to achieve success regardless of what one does. One would **naturally** be successful without having to wait for the right opportunities, neither does one have to make any planning. This is because this will be the time for **the arrival of the “achieved rewards”**. The good deeds that you have accumulated in the past are the best planning for the “achieved rewards.” However, in times of adversities, no matter what one does, one would have encountered many obstacles and have one’s head badly battered. If one simply goes along naturally, it would lead one to a dead end. This is because, in times of adversities, it is the time **for the coming of one’s retributions due to one’s past**

bad deeds. If one does not remain calm, wait for the right opportunity, and plan appropriately, it would be difficult for one to get out from the plight. The question, then, is **when will be the best time** to get out from the plight? And what would be considered as the **appropriate planning** (please refer to the Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”)?

(xiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (11): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (4) – Making use of the Circumstances:** The characteristics for being in adversities are that one would be **beset with difficulties and will be unable to cope with the situations**. If one has to make use of the circumstances of that particular situation and time so as to break through the obstacles is basically an **extremely difficult matter to achieve**. Since it is **all that difficult**, the conditions that one would have to consider in order to complement the whole situation would be particularly even more so. There is an old Chinese saying that “Hero makes the trend of his time, and the trend of the time makes its own Hero”. After all, ‘the trend of the time and the environment’ together is one of the major elements for one’s success and failure. Hence, it is also **a necessary element** for one to get out from the plight by making use of the circumstances to break away from adversities. If one is to make use of the circumstances, one would adopt one of the following situations: (1) to **quietly wait** for the favourable circumstances to arise; (2) to **make use of** the existing circumstances; and (3) to **build up** favourable circumstances (please refer to the Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xv) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (12): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities”(5) -- Learn One’s Lessons from Past Experiences

Failure is not necessarily a miserable thing. It can only be said as a blueprint which reflects on a series of **merits and weaknesses**. If one can learn one’s lessons well from past experiences in finding out the “reasons for one’s failures, as well as the **personal behavioral formulae** that led to such failures”, one’s “wisdom of self-enhancement” will be elevated by



applying proper remedies to revise these **extremely concealed** and improper formulae, this would help to bring about one's success in the next occasion. During this process of "self-enhancement", it would enable one to live more happily and to have a direction, to have more meanings and values, and to be more proactive. In this way, what one would regard as failures have, in fact, now been changed into successes, and have brought about the essential elements for one's future successes. To learn one's lessons from past experiences is a prerequisite and a necessary condition for success.

The "state of invincibility" is the most lonely and painful experience. Too many successes and for too long will only make one to lose one's sense of direction, and to easily lose oneself in one's own "ego". As such, one **would not be able to find out and revise the poor formulae**, and oneself would thus be easily bogged down in the mire of having too much "self-pride" and strong "arrogance" within one's own "ego", never being able **to see the real world in its totality**. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be **an extremely big failure**.

The difference between the strong ones and the weak ones lies in their attitudes and spirits in facing one's own destiny. Even though the strong ones can understand that fate has its own patterns of locus, one also considers that **this can be changed**. The strong

ones would see that fate's own patterns of locus is only the foundation, upon which one can bring it into play and to expand it further in order to achieve one's own objectives and life goals. The strong ones would consider the adversities as agents for one's own encouragement, while that of failures as the essential elements for one's own enhancements. The strong ones can thus **transform everything into resources and elements for one's own usage**, with an optimistic and proactive attitude. Hence, one can face life and death issues quite readily, and can thus face failures easily. In this way, one's unyielding spirit would persist, despite repeated calamities, and would radiate more brilliantly than ever before.

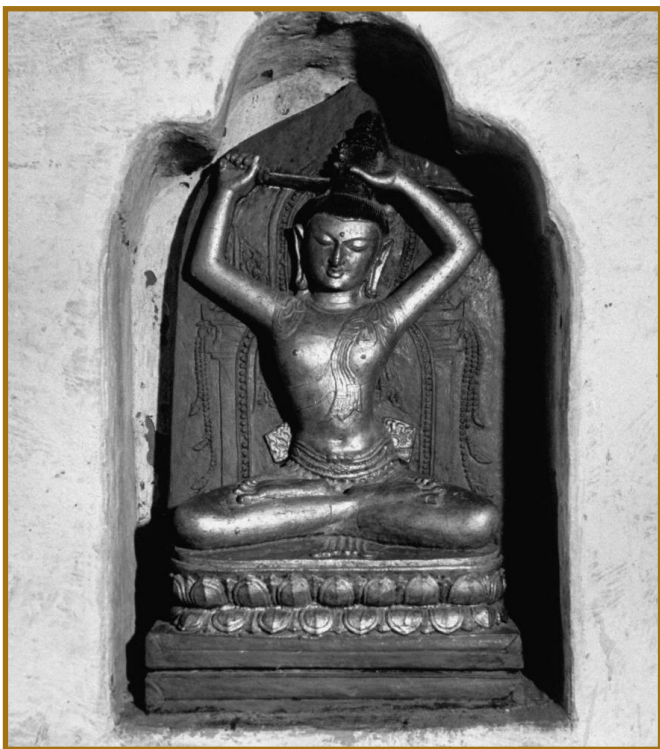
On the other hand, the weak ones would only regard fate's patterns of locus as iron-cast, and thus could not be resisted. As such, one would be **willing to accept the total control by one's own destiny**. Another **fatal weakness** of them is that one "could not face one's own mistakes". Hence, one would continuously repeat the same old mistakes, over and over again, leading to the coming of evil retributions. The mindsets of the weak ones are that they are rather passive with a pessimistic attitude, and would thus end up in "failures even before fighting the battles". One would be a loser, both in terms of oneself **as a person**, as well **as one's own strategic position**.

Three Types of Mindsets in Changing the Fates of the Weak Ones

In order to change the fates of the weak ones and to turn their inclinations towards failures, the most important mission is to **change one's own mindset**. The following are the three types of mindset that are possessed by all the strong ones, including those **Dharma practitioners**:

1. willing to **face** one's own mistakes;
2. gladly **accept** one's own mistakes;
3. believe in the **discovery** of one's own mistakes as a kind of **wisdom**, and is also a type of **success**.

If one is determined to practice the Holy Dharma, but is unable to possess the above-mentioned three types of mindset, the achievements of one's Dharma practice would not only be **rather limited**, but they would also **be doomed to failure**. The reason why sentient beings ARE sentient beings, and are subjected to the painful storms in the ocean of the "cycle of karmic existence", is simply because they cannot revise and get rid of their inherent wrong formulae. "Dharma practices" are, in fact, precisely the ways upon which **the revisions**



and removals of such inherent wrong formulae could be done, until one has succeeded in one's liberation from the "cycle of karmic existence".

Hence, the learning of lessons from one's past experiences is one type of **wisdom** for one's "Dharma practices". It is also a direction and a method of wisdom in enhancing and elevating oneself when dealing with adversities. The "willingness to **face** mistakes" is for the "**discovery** of mistakes". If there is the slightest trace of unwillingness and resistance on one's part, then the already hidden mistakes would be more concealed, and thus making it more **invisible to oneself**.

"To gladly **accept** one's own mistakes" is for the **revising** of one's own mistake. If there is the slightest trace of unwillingness and resistance on one's part, then the already deep-rooted mistakes would be further strengthened and could no longer be broken, making it **impossible** for you to **advance** any further. It is only with "**complete acceptance**" that one may bring about "**perfect revision**".

Most people would consider mistakes as some kind of a **shame**, and a symbol for one's own **inability**. Furthermore, they would not dare to bear with the "responsibilities and guilty feelings" after admitting their mistakes. Sentient beings would thus put their focus on some **short-sighted** immediate interests by adopting the "ostrich policy" to **escape from their own mistakes**. Such type of foolish behaviors would only

make oneself to **deteriorate even further** and would **gradually lead to one's own downfall**.

To be able to **discover** one's own mistakes is a type of **wisdom**, and is also one type of **success**. For those who believe in this will be able to **ignite their own wisdom**, and continue to **discover** their own mistakes. Only then, would it be possible for one to **revise one's own mistakes** after one has discovered them. In having the above-mentioned three types of mindsets, it **would not be long** before one can succeed in finding one's own mistakes.

For some Dharma practitioners, they would always be praying to the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, hoping that they would bless and bestow upon them both success and wisdom. In fact, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had already bestowed upon us **the wisdom which would lead us to success**. The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had ordered all his disciples to attend the "**Posadha**" (that is, the gathering for the recitation of the precepts and the confessions of sins), and to adopt the method of "making public confessions on one's own mistakes and sins", so as to **completely and thoroughly revise** the deep-rooted formulae for one's own wrong behaviors.

To "make public confessions on one's own mistakes and sins" would need tremendous courage on one's part. Those who have such kind of courage would **inevitably** be able to revise their deep-rooted mistakes **in the near future**. Apart from having courage, what else do they need to have? Of course, they must need to have a **clear mind** which would enable them to clearly and accurately identify, without any omissions, on the "scope of the mistakes, the formational elements of the mistakes, and the influences of those mistakes". To be able to meticulously find out the **contents and connotations** of the mistakes would require a thorough-going and tedious process of deep analysis and soul-searching, upon which one's own "**wisdom**" would slowly **arise amidst this process of analysis**.

The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had already bestowed upon us the method for **giving rise to wisdom**, and not the wisdom "itself". In other words, it would be impossible for the Lord Buddha to induce external wisdom onto you, because **wisdom is** something coming from **within** us. Since the "beginningless time immemorial", wisdom has already existed within the "natural intrinsic nature" of all sentient beings. It is only that the sentient beings do not have the ways and means to "**discover and give rise**" to it. Through "Dharma practices", that is, in trying to "**revise** all the wrong **behaviors**", one would be able to become successful in all one does, including "liberation from

the cycle of karmic existence". The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni is the Great Teacher and taught us how to become "liberated from the cycle of karmic existence". By so doing, He had taught us to understand and to be able to differentiate between what are regarded as "right" and what are regarded as "wrong mistakes"? The "precepts and disciplines" are **the yardsticks for measuring one's own mistakes**.

Hence, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had ordered that all his disciples must regularly "recite the precepts and disciplines collectively". Through "repeated and continuous recitations", one would be able to **maintain** long-lasting memories of them. These "repeated reminders" will forcefully **impinge on** obstinate wrong thoughts, while the "force of collective monitoring" helps to monitor and discipline the **inborn** laziness of sentient beings. Furthermore, with the "method of collective demonstrations", it would encourage the sentient beings to **face their own mistakes**. Such types of Dharma practice methods would **directly strike and attack** the **vital points** on the "chains of the cycle of karmic existence", such that the sentient beings would be able to confidently **stand up again**, would not hesitate to press forward, and would no longer try to escape. In this way, it will open up an "exit door" for escape for oneself from the "cycle of karmic existence", which would eventually lead to the "road of salvation and liberation".

Of course, sentient beings must be prepared to **put in great efforts**, such that they would be able to learn their lessons from their past experiences of failures and mistakes, and will slowly give rise to one's own "wisdom", without having to wait **patiently** for the various Buddha and Bodhisattvas to bestow upon them both wisdom and success. In this secular world, most of the sentient beings would hate mistakes and failures, and thus would lead to their not being able to face their own mistakes and failures. Without any failures and mistakes, how would it be possible for us to "revise those mistakes"? Whether sentient beings can discover one's own mistakes from one's success such that they can "revise the formulae for wrong behaviors"? The answer to this is that it would be very difficult, indeed. It would only be possible for **the cream of the wise ones** who would have the abilities to do so. This is something which is not appropriate to the general population in general.

In other words, "mistakes and failures" are the soil for nurturing "successes". "Mistakes and failures" is, indeed, **a treasure**. Those who can be able to find the formulae leading to one's own "mistakes and failures" can then **quickly and accurately** master the key to success in revising those formulae, such that he can

rewrite the whole script and formula for "success" in a **"tailor-made"** fashion. Therefore, the wise saying that **"failure is the mother of success"**!

How to Find The Ways Out in Times of Adversities

The question is when one is in times of prosperity, one can still be able to find out one's own mistakes from one's "failures". However, in times of adversities, due to one's own sufferings, one would already be **having one's "head swam"**, how could one be able to find out what went wrong from one's "failures"? **"Reflection and review" are something that one can practice only amidst "calmness"**. When one's "mind is calm", one would no longer be disturbed by externalities, upon which one's "mental processes" would be more **meticulous** and can thus **"understand the reasons"** behind things. Hence, it is most important for those who are in adversities to keep their "minds and bodies" calm.

To allow the "body to remain calm" is relatively easy, but to "calm one's mind" **is really very difficult** for those who are in adversities. Then, how can one achieve this? The reason why those who are in adversities cannot "keep their minds calm" is simply because they were so **focused on the pains of adversities** and were **too eager** to get away from the plights. When one's "mental state" is all the more anxious, the more one would be confused and perplexed, without leaving any trace of space for oneself. In such a case, how could one have the space in allowing for the thoughts of one's own "reflection and review"? **To be able to take, one must first have to give**. In order to "keep one's mind calm", one must first have to **"let go"**. Otherwise, one would only be in a spiral "vicious circle" of continual downfalls in the midst of one's failures, with crazy riots in great adversities.

So, what exactly is "letting go"? In simple terms, to **"let go" of all those things that would "make you feel confused and perplexed"**. One has to "let go" of the **impetuosity** of hoping to get away from the plight, to "let go" of the **boiling wants** for one's desires, to "let go" of the strong **graspings** on one's favors and enmities, to "let go" of the troubled thoughts and secular moods; to "let go" of one's "self-pity" and sadness, to "let go" of one's **hopes and fears**, to "let go" of one's feelings of "self-pride" and arrogance, to "let go" of one's "inferiority complex" and shame, to **"let go" of all the elements that will harm both oneself and others**, to let go.....

In order to "first let go of everything and prepare for



the worst scenarios as if even at one's death-bed, before one may be able to be re-born again later on" (or "the phoenix rising from the ashes", one would first have to "let go" of everything and to let one's "mental state" to remain calm. Only with a "calm mind" could one be able to inspire and nurture the rise of one's own wisdom, and then the road for one to get away from the plight would **appear vividly** one day. It may first appear that the way out for adversities is nowhere to be seen; and yet, in reality, it has been buried in one's own "mind". The light that would lead one away from the painful storm seemed to be far away; and yet it is, in fact, so **near** to us that it is within one's own "mind", instead of the outside world. Try to inspire the revelation of one's own "spiritual wisdom", such that the "exit door" for one's getting away from the plight is no longer far away from us. One should "let go of all the disturbances" in order to help the arising of one's own "spiritual wisdom". To quietly "reflect and review upon one's wrongdoings" would help one in rewriting the formulae for successfully getting away from the plight. To "accept one's own mistakes" will help one to "analyze one's own wrongdoings". "To face failures" will help one to "discover one's own faults". **"To accept failures" will help to nurture the embryo for one's own "success in getting away from the plight".**

How to Obtain "Everlasting and Ultimate Success"

Those people who harbor the thought that "anyone who admits one's own mistakes is equivalent to the one who is a complete failure" in their minds are dangerous, extremely passive with **strong grasplings**.

For the not so serious ones, they will harm both themselves and others. For the most serious ones, they will harm and kill all those people who have made them failed, **including themselves**. Those who commit suicide consider that the good point of "death" is that they do not have to face "mistakes and failures", and could get away from the plight quickly. These people, who like to get into a dead end, mistakenly think that "death" is equivalent to the "bringing an end to everything". In fact, "death" only refers to the destruction of the material body, but the "mind" will **continue to exist endlessly**.

Suicide and killing in revenge will only bring more negative influences to the "mindsets" of people, and thus making the formulae for wrong behaviors to become more **strengthened and going to extremes**. "Death" definitely cannot change "mistakes and failures", and that the plights will continue to appear after one's "death", simply because it is the **"mindset" that masters the environment**. If one does not change the **"mindset"** that has the formulae for wrong behaviors, the plights that are projected from the "mindset" will then **repeatedly appear and re-appear**.

Some of those people with "Near-Death Experiences" (NDEs), or those who can remember the "situations after one's death", have described that those who have committed suicide had continuously repeated "the behavior of killing oneself" at the scene of committing suicide, including repeating the experiences of the painful situations of the time. The reason for this is because the behaviors of one's "countless past lives" will remain in one's "mind" as **"a hidden memory with influences"**. As such, one would have formed the variegated different kinds of matters in a **"pre-determined way of thinking processes and handling methods"**. Modern psychology terms this as the **"operational formulae of one's subconscious"**. In Buddhism, it is known as **"habitual tendencies"**. The meaning of "habitual tendencies" refer to the "energies in terms of **air** currents and streams of memories that had been formed from the previous **habits**, thinking modes and behavioral patterns that had been accumulated from countless past lifetimes, since the "beginningless time immemorial". This kind of hidden habitual "mental strength" of inertia will make the one who commits suicide to easily enter into a state of miseries, and will commit further behaviors that will bring more "self harms".

The "mental strength" that comes from this type of "self-influencing" is known as the "main force." The meaning refers to the **main** "elements and forces" that form the "outcomes". In other words, the most important element of the cause of "suicide", irrespective of whether it

is caused by any persons or any matters, is that of “self-making”. Hence, those who have been rescued from committing “suicide” will soon find themselves to continue on with committing “suicide”. Even after their deaths, they will **continue to commit suicide in their “Bardo” state**, (the “Bardo” refers to the transitional period from one’s death to one’s rebirth, in which the density of one’s “mental body” would be very thin in terms of its material structure), **endlessly prolonging their pains and sufferings without any cessations**.

Hence, the **key in getting success** in resolving problems, is not on whether one can really “get away from the plight or escape from it”, but has to do with how one can **change** the formulae for wrong thinking and behavioral patterns deep **within one’s own mind**. Even if one is within the same plight, and since one has already “learned from the lessons”, one can “focus right at the main crux of the problem”, and thus can change the formulae for the wrong thinking and behavioral patterns. Under this kind of situation, one would then be regarded as being really successful, and this is a kind of **“everlasting and ultimate success”**.

In the **“Sutra of Hundred Actions”** (or **“Karmasataka-Sutra” in Sanskrit**), the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had cited Himself as a case in point of how to obtain “everlasting and ultimate success”, and thus urged all sentient beings to change their behavioral formulae of “only caring for the one’s own benefits while neglecting the pains and sufferings of others”, in order to obtain “everlasting and ultimate success”.

“At one time the Lord Buddha was in Sravasta, and spoke of His admirations and rejoices on the merits of “almsgiving”. Thus He said: ‘All monks, I am very clear about the **perfect merits of almsgiving, as well as the little merits of almsgiving**. If the sentient beings in the “Realm of Desire” (**“Kamaloka” in Sanskrit**) can like me in having the **full understanding** of how huge it would be for the perfect merits of almsgiving as well as the little merits of almsgiving, then they will give up by “almsgiving” of all they have, instead of trying to enjoy them for themselves. Even if there is only a mouthful of rice, they will be willing to use it for “almsgiving”. **Unfortunately**, the sentient beings cannot **fully understand** these “merits” (**“Punna” in Sanskrit**) like me.’

At this time, the monks asked: ‘The Most Honored and Noble Being in the World, please explain to us what are the causes and conditions that make you decide to highly praise and rejoice at the perfect merits and little merits of almsgivings? Please explain to us.’

The Lord Buddha spoke to the monks: ‘I not only highly praise and rejoice at the perfect merits and little

merits of almsgivings in this life, but I had also praised and rejoiced at the perfect merits and little merits of almsgivings in my previous lives. Please listen: At the times gone by, there was a king in Sarnath who was known as the Moonlight King. During his reign, the country was well governed and very prosperous, and the people there lived happily together. The country was run on the principles of Buddhism, and so in all aspects, all things were **very perfect**.

This Moonlight King was a king with the most “compassion and mercifulness” (**“MahaMetta” and “MahaKaruna” in Sanskrit**) in his mind. He always practiced “almsgivings”. No matter who came to him and asked for donations of either food or clothings, he would always fulfill their wishes. He also would always try to cure the various diseases of the sentient beings so as to remove their pains and sufferings from the diseases. Later, there was a Brahmin who used to observe astronomy, and had observed that in the coming twelve years, there would not be any rainfalls in the whole country, upon which the whole country would face a great draught. With this, he asked the Moonlight King on **how to deal with it?**

The King then summoned all his ministers and the common people around him, and told them of this: ‘according to the observations of astronomy, it is estimated that there will not be any rainfalls in our country in the coming twelve years, and so we will face a huge draught. For those of you who have adequate wealth to last for your livings for the next twelve years, you can still continue to live in this country. However, for those of you do not have enough wealth, you should go to other countries to make a living, or else your lives would be in danger. For those of you who go out to make a living and die in a foreign country, there would be no need for them to be sent back and buried in this country. On the other hand, if they can survive after twelve years, and that if the ground for this country still continues to exist, they can then return home.’

After his announcement, a portion of the people left their homes to go to other foreign places to make their livings. A portion of the people who were not willing to leave their **kind-hearted king** had chosen to remain in their own country. Later on, the country really experienced an unprecedented great draught, and there were no rainfalls at all. Many people had lived in great difficulties, and so they **came to ask** their king: ‘How should we continue to live under this situation?’

The King asked the minister, who was in charge of the treasury of the country, by taking stocks of all the wealth in the country, and then with calculations, tried to see how would these wealth be distributed, in terms

of the average amount of food and rice that each one of those remaining in the country could take each day, within the next twelve years, so that the country could be **better prepared** for all these. The result of these calculations came up to the fact that, in the next twelve years, each person could on average take a mouthful of rice, while the King could take two mouthfuls of rice daily. This would basically enable the people to maintain their basic subsistence of their lives, without dying of hunger **immediately**.

And the King still **insisted** on the explanations of the “Buddhist teachings” to the people, and requested all of them not to fight among themselves in order to get one more mouthful of rice, and that they should continue to practice the “Buddhist teachings”. Since the people had practiced the various good deeds, they were reborn into the “heavenly realms” after their starvation to death. The number of “heavenly gods” (“**devas**” in **Sanskrit**) gradually become more and more.

Indra (**the Lord of the gods in Heaven**) knew that there are two reasons why there is an increase in the numbers of “devas”, namely: the first reason is that a Buddha would be born and so a lot of people in this secular world were practicing good deeds; the second reason is that there would be a “King of the World” (“**Cakravarti**” in **Sanskrit**) in this secular world of the people. According to this understanding, Indra then tried to observe and find out whether: ‘was a Cakravarti being born in this secular world of the people, or whether a Buddha was born?’ The finding of his observation was that neither a Cakravarti nor a Buddha was born at that time. The result was because there was this Moonlight King who himself has practiced the “Buddhist teachings”, and had taught his people to do good deeds, and all of these factors had led to the increase in the numbers of “devas” in the various “heavenly realms”.

After the observation made by Indra, he thought that: ‘if **his intention and motivation** of doing those good deeds was **true and pure**, then I should be “rejoicing” (“**Amodana**” in **Sanskrit**) of this. If not, then at least I should go to comfort him.’ Hence, Indra disguised himself as a Brahmin, and went in front of the Moonlight King to beg for food.

The king himself had only two mouthful of rice. He felt that it would be more appropriate to give him a mouthful, while leaving another mouthful for himself. Hence, he had the **intention** of giving one mouthful of rice to the Brahmin. However, the Brahmin was still not yet satisfied and requested, “King, can you give me the other mouthful of rice as well?”

The King thought: ‘If I give the two mouthfuls of rice to this Brahmin, then I would surely be starved to death. Nevertheless, he is one of the sentient beings, after all. For them, I should have the **good intention** for “almsgiving”, and so decide to give it to him.’ He then made a **vow** to ‘wish the root of goodness of my almsgiving would enable me to be able to attain the Unsurpassed Enlightenment of Buddhahood’. With that, he gave the only remaining mouthful of rice that he had to the Brahmin.

At this time, Indra was very happy and felt that the Moonlight King had **truly the good intention** of ‘almsgiving’. He then showed his own body in the form of Indra and begged the Moonlight King by saying, ‘When you will attain the Unsurpassed Enlightenment of Buddhahood in the future, please remember to take me on as a disciple.’ After which, he simply disappeared.

Monks, the then Moonlight King was me who has now attained the Unsurpassed Enlightenment of Buddhahood! At that time, I had praised and rejoiced at the “merits of almsgivings” (“**Dana Paramita**” in **Sanskrit**), and had practiced it. Hence, even now I am **still doing it!**”

The meaning of “**perfect merits**” is that, when you proceed with the practicing of a particular merit, your **intention** to do it is so **complete, thorough and whole-heartedly** at 100%, without any reservations whatsoever. When the Moonlight King proceeded with his ‘almsgivings’, he had whole-heartedly performed the deeds. He not only urged and taught others to practice “almsgivings”, he himself had successfully gone through the test on his sincerity. He **firmly** insisted on his correct beliefs, and at the end of the day, he had succeeded in the “attainment of Buddhahood”, and was successful in being “liberated from the cycle of karmic existence”.

The meaning of “**little merits**” is that: when you proceed with the practicing of a particular merit, your intention in doing so is **not so complete, thorough and whole-heartedly** at 100%. The intention could be less than 50%. Depending on the degrees of one’s “causes” of actions, all sentient beings would reap the proportional amounts of either rewards or retributions in terms of their “consequences”. Even though one would only do a small amount of “little merits in almsgiving”, it would already enable a large number of sentient beings to be reborn in the “realms of heaven”. Hence, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said: “It was **a pity** that sentient beings **could not fully understand** the “merits of almsgiving” (**Punna**) like me.”

The case of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has illustrated the following main points:

1. The formulae for thinking and behavioral patterns in one's own mind will remain forever for **countless lifetimes**;
2. If the formulae for thinking and behavioral patterns in one's own mind are wrong, one must have to **correct and revise** them according to the "Buddhist teachings";
3. Even if one can only **revise** a **small amount** of mistakes, one would still be able to **reap great benefits**;
4. If the formulae for the thinking and behavioral patterns in one's own mind are correct, one should continuously persist with them, and should **not be shaken** in one's determination;
5. The formulae of thinking and behavioral patterns in one's own mind could be strengthened by making strong "vows" to "strengthen their positions" and to **set up objectives**;
6. If one continually persists and remains unshaken on one's determination, there is no doubt that one would be able to achieve one's objective and become successful. However, one should not **limit** oneself in obtaining only the interests, successes and failures of this **present life**.
7. To abandon the present in order to achieve the **eternal and everlasting**: one should not indiscriminately adopt any approaches in order to achieve success which would only last for one moment, nor should one try to **repeat** the wrong steps of the past.

In the next issue of the "Lake of Lotus", we will further explore on the remaining **criteria** and the **methods in flexibly making use of the "mindset" in one's Dharma practices**..... (To be Continued) 🌸

Mistakes, why are there so many of them?

Let go, why is it so difficult to put into practice?

Success, why is it so far away and unreachable?

Oh! Child! **Mistakes**, who does not have them? The reason that mistakes are getting more as days passed by is because you have not tried to face them, discover them, correct them and revise them. Due to your **pampering** of the indistinctly visible mistakes which continue to exist, how would they not increase in numbers? Please accept the fact

that mistakes are the elements in nurturing successes. Please **discover it patiently and be determined to correct and revise them**. Then, there will be a day when you will discover that successes will always be here, and it will be difficult to find mistakes. Please **work hard**! Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! **Let go**, as the words imply, you must first have to **let go** before you can experience the relaxed moment of this **very presence**. The fact that **let go** is difficult to practice is simply because you are not willing to part with the entanglements of love and desires, and are not willing to leave behind the hatreds of revenges. Secular thoughts have disturbed the wisdom of clarity, and gloomy moods have blocked the awareness of the "intrinsic nature" (**rigpa**). **To abandon everything is equivalent to getting back everything, including wisdom and awareness**. Please let go of them! If you are open-hearted and upright in character, you will be able to leisurely put down the heavy chains. Please **be strong**! Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! **Success** is in fact not far away. When you could discover the mistakes made by your own body, it was already discovering the elements in achieving success. Your success is already **within reach**. The fact that it is still far away and unreachable is because you have focused on the superficiality of successes, while having illusions of happiness in obtaining successes, and thus would make your "sight-line" to be far away. When you notice the mistakes that have blocked your successes, you have already reached the important key position of success – the very heartland. Please **watch attentively**! Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! Wish the Lord Buddha will guide you! And **enable you to give rise to the bright intrinsic nature of Enlightenment**!

(Note: The newly released book on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (1)" has already been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" from Issues 1 to 10.)



The Essence of Teachings: Emptiness -- Neither Existence Nor Voidness (14)



By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye

Transcribed by To Sau-chu and Byron K.K. Yiu

(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

Excerpt of Last Chapter

If we can have some kind of understanding or realization on the “Eight Negations”, during the process in trying to understand the Buddhist Dharma, then our **wisdom may be revealed**. Indeed, the goal to learn the Buddhist Dharma, from the very beginning, is to reveal one’s own wisdom. The “Eight Negations” is like this:

Neither Creation Nor Destruction

The Lord Buddha had taught us that all sentient beings have the ‘Buddha-Nature’ within themselves, and that all things in the universe have their own ‘Intrinsic Nature’. Our own ‘Intrinsic Nature’ is **“Neither Created Nor Destroyed”**, and it is **present ever since the ‘beginningless’ time immemorial**, without any origin or process of being created, and it has **never been destroyed, and will remain forever.....** (please refer to the article on “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness (13)” in Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Neither Eternalism Nor Nihilism

The Second pair of dualism is “Neither Eternalism nor Nihilism”. These are two erroneous views: **Eternalism** is the belief that there is a permanent and causeless creator of everything. In particular, it believes that one’s identity or consciousness has a concrete essence which is independent, everlasting and singular in nature. On the contrary, **Nihilism** is the other extreme view that everything is void and their

nature is of “nothingness”. In particular, it believes that there is no rebirth or Karmic effects, and hence there is the “non-existence” of a mind after death.

Hence, what is meant by **“Neither Eternalism nor Nihilism”**? Its meaning is that all things will **not ‘continue forever’**, and that is **‘not Eternalism’**. But they are **continuously circulated** in the different stages of ‘formation, persistence, disintegration, annihilation’, and thus is not **‘not Nihilism’**. It is because all things are formed when the ‘causes and conditions are matched’, while they will disintegrate when the ‘causes and conditions no longer match’ each other.

Neither Identicalness Nor Differentiation

The Third pair of dualism is “Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation”. For example, when water becomes steam, it looks like the water has gone into thin air. Water and steam are two different forms, and so they look different, and yet they are of the same nature. Hence they are “Neither Identical Nor Different”.

So, what is “Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation”? Using the same example of having water in becoming steam, or that of ‘all things being created by Emptiness’. Indeed, water and steam have the same properties, but only that their **physical appearances (forms) have changed continuously**. It has different physical appearances (forms) and therefore it is **‘Not Identical’**, yet it is also **‘Not Different’** simply because

it is not another thing altogether. The truth is that all things have the **same nature of properties**, and yet have manifested in different physical appearances (forms), such as 'water and steam'. And so this is "Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation".

Neither Coming Nor Going

The Fourth pair of dualism is "Neither Coming nor Going". Things that are in motion seem to look like that they are either coming or going. But when you analyze them more deeply, they, in fact, remain stable. "Motion" & "Stability" are the two sides of the same coin, and is relative to each other.

So what is meant by "Neither Coming nor Going"? If we replace the word 'Going' by 'Passing', then it will be the same as what I have mentioned before in the previous chapters, and can be understood as 'the Past **has gone**, the Present **stays** and the Future **will come**'.

The meaning of "Neither Coming nor Going" does not have the so-called 'Past and Future'. If you use another level to interpret this "Neither Coming nor Going", you can view it as '**Dynamic and Static**'. And the truth is that both 'Dynamic and Static' is **relative in nature**.

For example, the films of motion-pictures are composed of numerous stacks of fixed '**slides**' of static 'plastic film', and if they have been revolved in fast speed, then we will have the false impressions



that they are actually 'moving'. Hence, many of the movies and cartoons, etc, are actually formed by numerous 'Static' images. They have never actually 'moved', but it seems to you that they are 'moving'. In actuality, they themselves are "non-motion" in nature. Hence, the truth is that they are 'Neither Coming nor Going'! Each of the film slides remains unchanged, is the same as ever, is 'Static', and unchanging. Yet, it looks like that it is continuously 'moving', and is ever changing. Thus, "**Neither Coming Nor Going**" is referring to this kind of a state.

The Lord Buddha said that each of us has the 'Buddha Nature', and that **all things also have their 'Intrinsic Nature'**, and their natural properties also possess the characteristics of the "Eight Negations".

Conclusion

Here we come to the last conclusion: what is the reason behind the teaching of the Dharma? And why do you want to know about Buddhism? There are four answers to these two fundamental questions:

The first answer is on the "**Revelation on the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha**". So these 'Four Pairs of Dualisms', or the 'Eight Negations', that Nagarjuna talks about help us to break down the dichotomies among dualisms. The Lord Buddha had '**revealed**' to us the true 'knowledge' and true 'view'



of what “reality” really is. Hence, the reason for our listening to Buddhism is to know the “Revelation on the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”.

The second answer is on the “Exhibition of the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”. We can either use scientific explanations, or other means of interpretations, in order to ‘exhibit’ the teachings of the Lord Buddha, so that you can start to understand them. In so doing, it helps us to realize the true ‘knowledge’ and true ‘view’ of the Lord Buddha.

Hence, these first two answers are on the Study of the Buddhist Teachings. Hence, for what we have just mentioned on the “Eight Negations”, it does not matter if you do not really understand them. You can either recite them, or reflect upon them. You can also read more Sutras, or try to recall some of the ways that can help you to realize better through learning from this lecture. The main goal is simply to reveal your own wisdom.

The third answer is on the “Awareness of the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”; this is, to make you aware of the truth of all things, so as to nurture and to reveal your own wisdom bit by bit. The ultimate goal is to lead you to the “Realization of the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”, such that



you can realize the true knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha.

The fourth answer is on the “Realization of the knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”, so that through wisdom and Dharma practice, you can enter into and truly realize the true knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha.

These latter two answers are on the Practice of the Buddhist Teachings, such that one can practice and realize the Holy Dharma, via the “true knowledge and view of the Lord Buddha”, in order to enter into the path of “perfect enlightenment”. Hence, all Buddhist teachings must have to incorporate all of the four dimensions mentioned above, namely: “Revelation, Exhibition, Awareness and Realization”.

For those who have never heard about the Buddhist Dharma, this could be quite difficult to understand. Clearly, the concept of “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness” is also very difficult to comprehend even for those who have studied the Holy Dharma for a long time. I hope that the lecture that I have given you today can help to assist you in the understanding of what is meant by “Emptiness”. Hopefully, this will be useful for your Dharma practice in the future. The previously-mentioned example of the Tibetan Saint Milarepa that he had suddenly realized what is meant by “Neither Creation Nor Destruction”, and thus became extremely useful to him such that he can make a major advancement in his Dharma practice. (To be Continued) ❖



EPILOGUE

The Buddhist teachings are meticulous and profound, while its methods of practice are practical and achievable. Nevertheless, the teachings are as abstruse and comprehensive as an ocean such that it is not an easy task for one to even just trying to grasp its contents in a concise and accurate manner. Therefore, our Association aims to help reveal the abstruse meanings of the Buddhist teachings in such a way that it can be easily understood by the general public through the distribution of CDs, VCDs and DVDs, either free of charge or with a cost.

Though we have limited resources and capabilities, we still humbly wish, with a sincerity of heart, to publish this bimonthly journal of the "Lake of Lotus", in order that the essence of the Buddhist teachings can be spread and popularized. We earnestly hope that the readers will help with your meritorious deeds by supporting this publication of the "Lake of Lotus", through subscriptions and donations, as well as in our various projects in the preaching of Buddhism, so as to sow the seed of meritorious cause in benefiting all our motherly sentient beings.

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