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# Lake of Lotus

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Detailed Analysis of the First  
Stage After Death in the  
"Tibetan Book of the Dead"  
Various Phenomena due to  
Projections of the "Mind" under  
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High Quality  
The Causes and Conditions for



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*by His Holiness' Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren*

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# The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophecies --- **Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyendun Rinpoche (15)**

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!

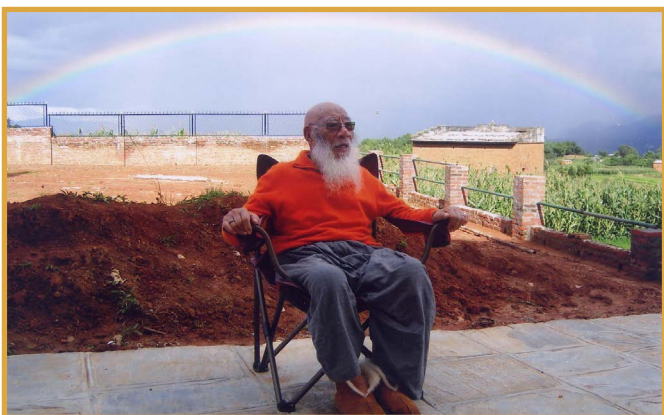
**His Boundless Wisdom and Compassion in  
Helping and Upholding the Genuine Holy  
Dharma**



H.E. Kathok Situ Rinpoche

There is the sixth incarnation of His Eminence Kathok Situ Rinpoche, who is also the grandson of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II, that His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche is taking care of. When the tulku was born in 1976, Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche II had asked Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche to go to the hospital to sprinkle the holy water and bless the baby, saying that the baby is the incarnation (tulku) of the fifth Kathok Situ Rinpoche. Hence, after His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II had passed away in 1987, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche saw to it as his duty and responsibility to take care of the sixth incarnation of His Eminence Kathok Situ Rinpoche, on the behalf of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche.





A Most Recent Photo of H.H. Chadral Rinpoche

## His Holiness Has Never Been Contaminated by Any Worldly Concerns

In this way, His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche does his great activities without any kind of attachments and to any kinds of worldly concerns. Thus, **His Holiness' deeds have never been "flooded by riches and wealth, frightened by the flames of power, contaminated by spoiled offerings, left to the tender mercies of fame and positions, involved in the disputes within the Sangha community, nor erred by heated debates"**.

Everyone knows that His Holiness will only stay around in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and that he has declined the invitations to go overseas to the West, Taiwan and other places. There might be a few reasons to account for His Holiness' decision: that

- (a) there are already so many lamas and rinpoches in those places, and so there is no need for His Holiness to go there;
- (b) **in order to test the sincerity of those who want to receive teachings from His Holiness, they should take the journey to come and see His Holiness to show their respects to both the Teacher and the Holy Dharma, and not the other way round;**



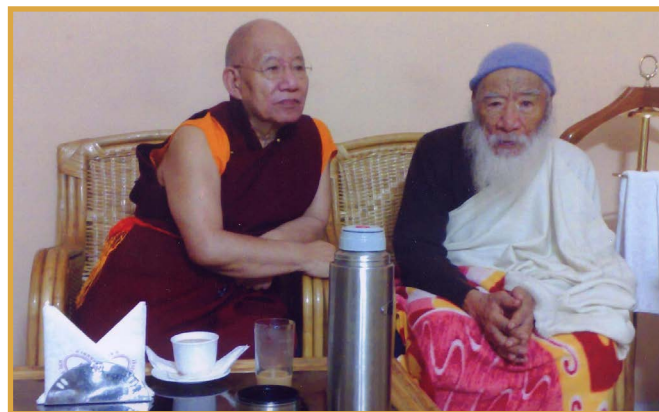
His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche

- (c) His Holiness always love Mother Nature, especially when there are so many holy places in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim that His Holiness would prefer to stay in these places;
- (d) there are so many meritorious ones in the mountains, as well as many Dharma practitioners who are practicing in the various retreat centers, all of whom would want His Holiness to stay behind to be with them all the time for Spiritual Advices.

Unless there are strong and very special reasons, such as the freeing of fish and animals, it is the style of Rinpoche not to go away to other far-away places and countries.

## His Holiness' Collected Works

On the excellent explanations that this Noble Master has composed, in response to requests by faithful disciples, His Holiness' writings are related to the transmissions of sutras, tantras, and treatises; His Holiness' style conforms to grammar, logic, and reasoning, and His Holiness induces understanding by adding elucidation from the pith instructions. These contain refutations to criticisms, histories of spiritual



H.H. Chadral Rinpoche and H.H. Dodrupchen Rinpoche

centers, collections of praises, direct instruction, the cycle of the oral lineage of the Great Perfection, catalogs, the history of Buddhism, ritual, directions for performance of ceremonies, advice for intensive meditation, practice of enlightened activity, dance, measurement for mandalas, etc., music, and the subjects of three elements of ritual, making tormas, wind instruments, percussion instruments and so forth.

Recently, His Holiness Chadral Rinpoche is building a library in his place of residence, Tashi Gang retreat center, so as to preserve, collect and re-edit some of the rare manuscripts and collections of the precious teachings. In short, **His Holiness' works contain all the true characteristics of treatises that are both well-**





His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche

written and enduringly valuable. His earlier and later works can be collected into four to five volumes, at the present moment, as His Holiness has always been very strict on his own works. Similarly, His Holiness has been very strict in allowing others to translate the important works of the Holy Dharma into other languages.

Many times with his help and support in upholding the right Dharma,  
With gratitude, we bow down to the Holy Saint who has boundless wisdom and compassion for all sentient beings,  
To protect the young by upholding the Victory Banner of golden lotus,  
His style of gusty wind will blow away obscurations and stop all disputes!

## Concluding Remarks

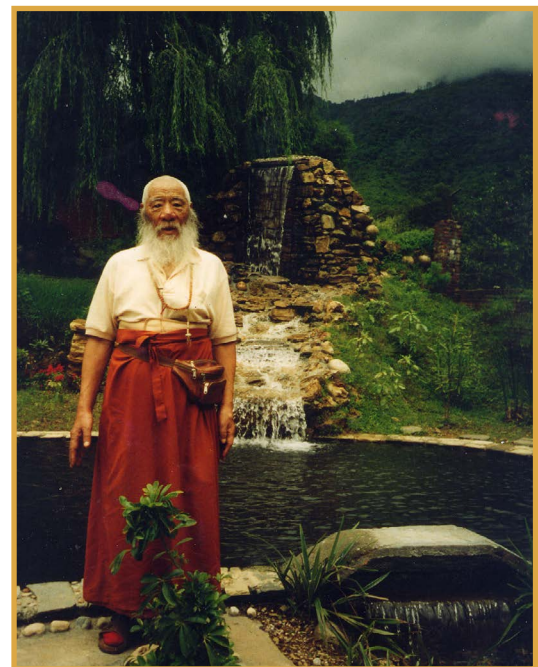
His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche has told us, time and again, that all Dharma practitioners alike have to always keep their samayas (vows) pure and clean, as this is the most essential and important condition if one is to achieve any attainments while practicing on the Vajrayana teachings.

Again, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II had advised

us of its importance in his “Mountain Retreat” as follows: “It has never been said that you have to keep the samaya perfectly with important Gurus who have many attendants, who are rich, powerful and prosperous, but that there is no need to keep it with modest Guru who take a humble position, the beggar-like yogis; whichever the case, you must understand the crucial points of advantages and risks, since to remain as dull as an old horse won’t work. This need to keep the samaya, is it for the Guru’s benefit or for your own? Deeply recollect yourself and think this over carefully, as when grinding medicine. If it’s for the Guru’s benefit, then you can forget it right away; but if it’s not, then there’s no point in throwing ashes upon your own head..... At all times there are only three things to be considered: the Dharma, the Guru and sentient beings. So do not contradict your intentions by your actions. Don’t compete with those who bear the trappings or the names of yogis or monks. Bite your lip, control your mind. This is extremely important – don’t play the fool.”

The whole life of His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche is so full of insights and practical meanings for all Dharma practitioners. It also helps to clear away countless doubts, obstacles and it stops many disputes and debates. As a “real life” case study, His Holiness’ life story has plainly and clearly shown us the real meaning of what genuine Dharma practice is all about, as well as what we should adopt and what we should abandon. There will be no more uncertainties! ❖

..... (To be Continued)



His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche





# The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death :

## The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (20)

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

### Synopsis of the Previous Chapter

In the previous chapter of “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences”, we had discussed a case that could clearly reveal a person’s feelings at the time of death and its imminent risks. It could help to provide those sentient beings who have to go through the state of dying with a comprehensive series of practical cognitions and preparation guidelines for that very moment, so to alleviate their anxieties and reduce the risk of losing control on the verge of death. In reviewing this case by comparing it with revelations from the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**, a detailed analysis could be done in great depths.

#### 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”).

### Detailed Analysis of the First Stage After Death in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”

The process of death is classified into three states in the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**. The “Bardo”, a specific term in describing those states, refers to a “period of time during an intermediate state”. These three intermediate states, from death in transmigrating towards rebirth, are as follows:

1. The **“Bardo of Dying”** – the transitional stage and process of the “dissolution and reductionism” of “all existences and sentient beings”.
2. The **“Bardo of Dharmata”** – the transitional stage and process of the “condensation and restoration” of “all existences and sentient beings”.
3. The **“Bardo of Becoming”** – the transitional stage and process of the “solidification and formation in rebirths” of “all existences and sentient beings”.

The afore-mentioned case of Miss Chung Sue mainly described the experience about the first half in the state of the “Bardo of Dying”, the contents of which are in fine details, and are extremely close to the descriptions in the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**. The “Bardo of Dying” could be more finely classified into the following stages:

### The Fine Classifications of the “Bardo of Dying”

1. The **“Dissolution of the Four Elements”** and **“Scenes at the Moment of Death”** – When an ailing physical body of a dying person develops into such a severe status that it starts collapsing, gradually decomposes and stops functioning, this stage is known as the **“Dissolution of the Four Elements”** (please refer to the article titled “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”). Having been affected by decomposition of the physical body, the “spiritual condition” of the dying person starts to gradually dissolve, step by step, from the external to the internal, such that one would experience hallucinations, which are considered as the **“Scenes at the Moment of Death”**. This is known as the **exterior and coarse process of “Dissolution and Fusion”**.



Miss Chung Sue

2. **“A Thrust of Three Drops of Blood”** – when the physical body plummets to extreme weakness, exhalation would become more than inhalation. Upon the final moment when all of one’s energies are exhausted, one could no longer breathe in the air, and so the inhalation of air ceases while only exhalation of air continues. Due to a difference in air pressures, when the external pressure is stronger than the internal one, the air stream so arisen concentrates the blood to be amassed at the “Life Channel” of the “Heart Wheel”. Finally, when the last three drops of blood are amassed, which is also the time when the **last three exhalation of breaths** would take place. Since there is no inhalation but only exhalation, this is the moment when the exhaustion of energy has been completed. These last three exhalation of breaths would be **rather long**, after which the breath ceases to exist. This is known as the “thrust of three drops of blood”.
3. **Cease of “External Breath”** – When the depletion of energy is up to the condition that it could no longer support the continuation of breath, and so the breath ceases to exist, which is the state of the cessation of the “external breath”. Even though the exchange of the “external air” and the “internal air” have stopped inside the body, the air exchanges amongst the internal organs and the cells, which is known as the “internal breath”, gradually debilitates but has not yet ceased. Another level of the “Scenes at the Moment of Death” would thus be formed.
4. **The Release and Reductionism of the “Nature of Mind”** – About twenty minutes after the cessation of the “external breath” (**excluding those people who have practiced “Qigong”**), there is a leakage of a great amount of “internal air” due to the influence of the outside atmospheric pressure, and so the “spiritual body” starts to exit from the physical body. The most primordial state of the “spiritual body”, known as the “nature of mind”, would thus be released from the body. This is known as the **interior and subtle process of “Dissolution and Fusion”**. At this stage, the deceased person would pass out, and would undergo a condition of coma.
5. **Occurrence of the “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity”** – The deceased person would revive from the condition of coma. The “nature of mind” in the body, also known as **“Buddhata”** (or simply **“Buddha Nature”**) is the nature of all existences and is “colorless, odorless and formless”. After it is being released, there is a **transformation of energies** within the body and would manifest itself in a state of brightness. In the **initial stage** of transformation, the “intensity of brightness” is as if it is “at the break of dawn”, and is known as the **“Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity”**. Thus, when the deceased revives from the coma, one would see the “brightness” in such a state, as if it is “at the break of dawn”. Since this is the first appearance, it is most intact and is a complete manifestation of the highest degree of purity of **“awareness”**. This brightness is not that of the physical light beam, but is the natural brightness of the **“wisdom of enlightenment” of the primordial “Buddhata”**. It is the **fundamental and intrinsic nature of all existences. It exists forever and could never be destroyed nor eroded**. However, it is deeply embedded, and would only be released and exposed until the very moment right after death. Upon the stage of rebirth, this “nature of mind” would then be reconnected to a physical body again, and then become stashed within the body. (**The “nature of mind”, also known as “Buddhata” or “primordial nature”, means that it is intrinsically possessed by oneself which is the clearest nature of awareness. Please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 4 and 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”**).
6. **Missing the “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity” and the “Entrance to the First Shortcut”** – Having no idea of “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity”, not to mention the making use of this opportunity, most sentient beings would have missed this **crucial moment when the “nature of mind” exposes itself during this process of transformation**, when this will be the best moment for one’s attainment of the **“Buddhahood of Dharmakaya”** (please refer to the detailed explanation about Dharmakaya in the article “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” on Issues 4 and 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”), in reviving the one’s mighty primordial ability. In other words, there is no way for the revival of the “inborn and inherent” infinite potentials, in order to disengage oneself from those tractions of relentless rebirths in this “cycle of karmic existence”. If a person could properly make use of this “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity” at this very moment, one could attain the **“Buddhahood of Dharmakaya”**, and can thus be totally disengaged from those tractions of relentless rebirths forever. Therefore, this very moment can be called as the **“entrance to the first shortcut”**. Since the attainment of the “Buddhahood of Dharmakaya” is very difficult and will take a very long period of time in austere practices, which could be as long as the countless cycles of lives. Therefore, this method and its timely application is known as a “shortcut”. Once



this moment is missed, the deceased person would have to enter into the next stage.

7. **Decomposition Process in the First Three-and-a-Half Days** – It usually takes three-and-a-half to four days for the internal debilitation and decomposition of the human physical body before this process partially comes to a halt. However, the functioning of the **magnetic fields formed by the motions of molecules and particles** within the microscopic internal structure of the cells has not been completely stopped. Hence, the “spiritual body” of the deceased person would have to wait, until the tractional forces of these magnetic fields diminish to a proper extent, at which moment its disengagement from the physical body would become possible and so it will leave the physical body. This process would usually take about three-and-a-half to four days. Even if a “spiritual body” leaves the physical body prematurely and wanders in the spiritual domains, it is still under the influence of the magnetic forces generated from the physical body. There is still an “energy thread” in connecting the two bodies (please refer to the detailed explanation about the energy thread in the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 2 and 3 of the “Lake of Lotus”), and so the **sensations and freedom** of the deceased person are still being affected.

8. **The Second Appearance of the “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity”** – The second appearance of the “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity” would take place at the last stage of the “Bardo of Dying”, but then the purity of the **“Dharmata”** (or the **“awareness”**) would not be as high as at its first appearance. There would not be any condition of coma, as it had been for its first appearance, and so the deceased person would be in an awakened state all through, until the second appearance of the “Mother Luminosity or Ground Luminosity”. If this chance is again missed, the deceased person would then proceed to the next stage.

9. **The Actual Departure of the “Spiritual Body” from the Physical Body** – The “spiritual body” would actually depart from the physical body through one of the bodily orifices. Upon the “karmic forces” of an individual, and the influence from the magnetic fields of the variegated spiritual domains, from where the “spiritual body” would depart from the physical body (via a certain bodily orifice) will reveal the fact as to what sort of a “spiritual domain” that particular person will be close and inclined to be connected to. In other words, it will be the domain where this person will be **most**

**likely** to be reborn. Unless the deceased person knows how to **apply the relevant programming** of those Dharma practices, as well as to have an effective navigation of one’s own “mental strength”, it would be most difficult for one to **turn around the whole situation**. The **“Sutra of Miscellaneous Treasuries”** mentions: “Top holy, eyes transmigrate onto the heavens, human heart, hungry ghost abdomen, animals leave from knee caps, hell from feet”, which means that a person who departs either from the cranium or through the eyes would be transmigrated onto the “heavenly realms”. For rebirths into the “human realm”, its departure would be via the orifice of the heart. Departure from the orifices of the abdomen would transmigrate to the realm of the “hungry ghosts”, while departure from the orifices of the kneecaps and down below would transmigrate to the realm of the “animals”. Departure from the physical body via orifices of the feet would then be reborn into the realms of “hell”. (Karmic forces are the traction. Karmic network: Due to virtuous or non-virtuous deeds amassed over countless previous lifetimes, these karmic forces would affect the mental strength of oneself as well as those of other sentient beings, and are so much mutually-intertwining and influencing with each other that it forms the network of tractions known as the karmic network. Please refer to the VCD on the “Inconceivable Law of Karma”, published by the Dudjom Buddhism Association).

10. **Entering into Another New Stage** – The “Bardo of Dharmata” while the “Bardo of Dying” has come to its formal completion.

### Various Phenomena due to Projections of the “Mind” under Influences of Posthumous Transformation of Energies

In taking the example of Miss Chung Sue, the situation at the early stage of the “Bardo of Dying” could be further delineated in finer details. When Miss Chung started to “pass out”, her feelings could be summarized as following:

1. The pressing down of a big bell
2. Occurrence of black fog
3. Audio and tactile senses suddenly become sharp and sensitive
4. Severe pains occurred even just a casual pat by others
5. Feeling the peeling off of the anus and other organs



6. Excretion of liquids from all bodily orifices
7. Vision of people in specter domains

Please refer to the following table for comparison on the descriptions about the “**Dissolution of the Four Elements**” (of **Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind**) between the aforementioned case and the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”.

The process to be gone through	The severity of interference
<b>Earth</b> – represents  <b>A. Decomposition of solid substances:</b> skeleton, muscle, cells and all solid matters started decaying and decomposing.  <b>B. Earth</b> being absorbed into <b>Water</b> – excretion of liquids from solid substances after loss of vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The feeling of being dispersed for all the bones and the whole bodily skeleton, and felt <b>very painful</b>.</li> <li>• The feeling of being pressurized by heavy loading, becoming frail and losing its vigor. Even just <b>a slight pat to the deceased person would cause severe pains</b>.</li> <li>• Hyper-sensitive audibility, and heard loud noises.</li> <li>• Visions would turn to yellowish in color like soil, and all the images are related to collapsing, breaking up, and the washing away of matters.</li> <li>• The deceased would see scenes of sparkling faint lights in smoke.</li> </ul>

Miss Chung’s feeling of the pressing down of a big bell upon her was due to the weakening of air pressure as a result of her shortness of breath. The imbalance of the pressures, due to debility of internal pressure inside her body in succumbing to the external air pressure, generated a feeling of being crushed into pieces. Due to frailness of the body, the protective layers of “qi” around the nervous system would be breaking down, and so causing all the **sense organs to become rather sharp and sensitive as a result of direct exposures**. Moreover, as the “spiritual body” had entered into the state of separation from the physical body, and so one’s “awareness” was not only having inputs from the physical body’s nervous system, but it also receives other **alternative sources of non-materialistic**

**capabilities of “awareness”** coming from the “spiritual body”. Thus, the sharpness and sensitivity of her “awareness” had been multiplied many times due to the enhanced effects in its collection of all kinds of inputs. For instance, soft sound becomes loud noise, light loading becomes great and intense pressure, and a casual touch becomes a heavy blow.

Due to the arising of other alternative sources of non-materialistic capabilities of “awareness”, Miss Chung was able to **simultaneously hear different kinds of sounds coming from both the realms of human beings and apparitions**. During her interview with the Dudjom Buddhist Association, Miss Chung pointed out that while she was gradually entering into the “spiritual domain”, she had found that the sounds that were coming from the human world slowly faded away and became very weak; whereas the sounds that were coming from the “spiritual domain” got picked up progressively and became louder and clearer. On the other hand, when she slowly returned back to the human world, the sounds from the “spiritual domain” gradually weakened, faded away, until they totally vanished; while the sounds from the human world gradually became louder and clearer.

Miss Chung had mentioned about the appearance of the black smoke, yet she fell short of having the feeling of the sparkling faint lights. In general, when NDE survivors enter into a “spiritual domain”, they would all come across the appearance of the black smoke, which also conformed to the description in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”. When solid substances were transformed into liquids (known as the moment of the “Earth being absorbed into Water”), a deceased person would then see the smoke. Both the smoke and the twinkling faint lights are all the effects of the transformation of energies on the “awareness” of the deceased persons when solid substances are changing into liquids. This is a phenomenon on the **transformation of energies which then affect the projections of the “mind”**. Miss Chung had mentioned that even just a casual pat by another person caused extreme pains which were so severe that they were intolerable, many times more severe than any kind of pains that she had experienced before while still alive. She clearly indicated that she does not support “organ donations” after death, simply because the pains that would be derived from touching the body would become so severe and intolerable that it would only make the deceased person to arouse his/her hatred. In the presence of too excessive negative energies, **the deceased person would be dragged down and transmigrated to an extremely abominable and a suffering environment**.

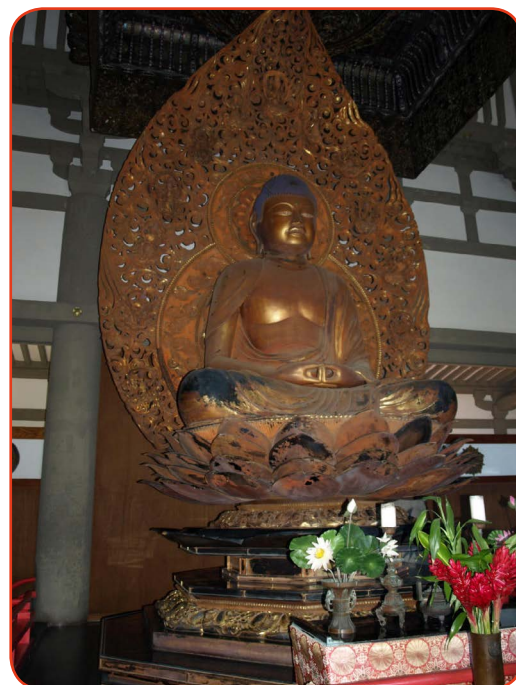
After all, “organ donations” by living human beings would **receive humanistic treatments and be**



anesthetized for the reductions of pains. However, due to the rather limited scope and breadth of knowledge that are present among sentient beings in this contemporary world, the concept of “death” is taken unilaterally as if like the “extinguishment of a lamp”, and so it does not know the kind of situation that a person, who has just passed away, would feel in terms of the severe levels of pains when the body is being touched upon. Much less to mention any kind of facilities and measures that may be used for the reduction of pains for the deceased person who has so kindly agreed to donate his/her organs before death. It would, indeed, be too late for a deceased person to regret when he or she has already been impacted by the severe pains. The case of Miss Chung is such a concrete proof of this.

The wholesome retribution of an “organ donor” would definitely come in the future, but surely it would not occur at the present moment. A person would definitely feel intense pains when being dissected and dismembered by knife; however, this kind of painful feeling of being dissected would be multiplied many times when this is done just right after a person passed away. Severe pains would arouse hatred from the deceased person, which is just a natural response. When hatred is developed, the vicious karmic force so generated would bring immediate unfortunate retribution, and abominable retribution would also be triggered in the future. This kind of damaging power is beyond estimation. The hatred so created in one’s mind would induce those unwholesome seeds that have already been stored in the “karmic combinations and permutations” of the deceased person, and so it will trigger immediate unfortunate retractions. This unfortunate retribution arisen is like the detonation of a series of chain explosions in the further triggering of both past and current unwholesome deeds to explode as if barrages.

Hence, in order to resolve this issue of “organ transplant”, it seems that “organ donations” from people who are still alive, as well as vigorous scientific research in the nurture of organs from “stem cells”, should be more actively promoted. This way is more conforming to the spirits of humanity rather than the seeking of “organ donations” from people after death. Once a deceased person ends up with immediate unfortunate retribution, one would have to transmigrate to an abominable “spiritual domain”, and it would usually take a very long time before one could be able to exit from this kind of predicament. Because those sentient beings who are situated in such kind of adverse environments would suffer from horrors and develop hatred, as they are already under excruciating pains. As such, they would then be committing even more “negative karmas” relentlessly, without being aware of being bogged down in a deteriorative “vicious



cycle”. The Chinese saying that: “with one wrong step, it brings everlasting griefs, and it will already be billions of kalpas afterwards when one could finally turn back”. (A “kalpa” is a period of time required for the completion of one cycle of “formation, maintenance, deterioration and annihilation” of a universe).

Therefore, whether it is the rationale that we should have in trying to rescue a living person for the prolongation of a fleeting life of just a few decades, we then have to sacrifice a deceased person’s opportunity of rebirth by ending up in suffering for billions of “kalpas”? This would have to depend upon the breadth on the scope of knowledge of contemporary fellows. If they all think that “death is like the extinction of a lamp” and consider that if the cells of a deceased person’s organs are still functioning and could be used for “organ transplant”, while they disregard whether the sensation cells are dead or not, and whether the deceased person would feel painful or not? On the contrary, they even cry out aloud that this will be the sign of “true love and genuine mercy”! In this connection, it is suggested that such an ignorant yet naïve individual, who considers himself/herself to be so merciful, should donate his/her own organs to materialize this genuine love and care while still alive, and also continue to fulfill this genuine love and care by further “organ donation” after death. In so doing, they could have the first hand experience, like Miss Chung, in finding out whether the pain is really intolerable or not.

As a matter of fact, these people are contradicting themselves. On the one hand, they know that the cells of the organs are still functional and are apt for “organ transplant”; yet on the other hand, why they cannot believe that a newly-deceased person’s tactile





sensation cells are **still not yet completely dead** and are still functioning? Is it because that those dead persons could not express themselves, and so they can be either **disregarded, ignored or simply neglected**? If it is believed that a merciful person is psychologically prepared for “organ donation”, and so he or she is also ready for the suffering; yet, how can we be so sure that the **ordinary general** people who have the mercy for “organ donation” are able to turn around their **spontaneous reactions of negative feelings** of “hatred and confrontation due to excruciating pains”? Were they all the reincarnations of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni who feared not the pains of “feeding his own body to a tigress”?

In order to help the posterity further, Miss Chung Sue has actively engaged herself in the teaching of meditation to **endure pains**, hoping that the trainees would have a better ability in handling the inevitable sufferings during the posthumous period. However, this is not the best way since “ascetic practice” is not a way to become liberated. Neither is it a method of spiritual practice which is directly “up-to-the-point”. In Tibetan Buddhism, there are **unique methods of Dharma practice** in dealing with, and making use of, the moment at the “Dissolution of the Four Elements” as aids for one’s attainment of liberation for life.

Miss Chung felt that her anus and organs were peeling off, and that all of the bodily orifices were excreting liquids, which were very dirty. This is a situation that is prevalently occurring among dying persons. If you take a walk through a hospital ward, and have a chat with those medical staff who handle corpses that were newly passed away, you would then understand the situation as described by Miss Chung, which is **so out of control, helpless and embarrassing**. When the “spiritual body” starts the process of separation from the physical body, it is getting closest to the margins of the “spiritual realms”. Thus, a lot of NDE survivors have various experiences in the encountering of apparitions. Miss Chung had no exception. She had seen the uncanny scene that a group of people were entering into a certain spiritual domain.

The aforementioned **fully concurred** with the descriptions about the “Earth” element in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”, which has sufficiently proved that the existence of the “posthumous world” is a fact, and its relevant knowledge is worthy for our learning.

The process being gone through	The severity of interference
<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deceased would feel high humidity.</li> </ul>
<b>A. Decomposition of liquids:</b> liquids in the body would be excreted from the cells of the bodily tissues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenes turned to grayish in color.</li> <li>• All the images involved are being besieged by deluge, flooding and drowning.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Water</b> being absorbed into <b>Fire</b> – the liquids inside the body started vaporizing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision of fluttering of ‘solar flare’.</li> </ul>

If taking the decomposition of “Water” as an analog, the case of Miss Chung largely matched with the descriptions in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”. The only point missing was that Miss Chung had not seen the appearance of the ‘solar flare’. Or she might have just missed it altogether.

The process being gone through	The severity of interference
<b>Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deceased would feel scorching heat.</li> </ul>
<b>A. Decomposition of heat and energy</b> – The heat and energy inside the body would be dissipated from the cells of tissues within the body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenes turned to reddish in color.</li> <li>• All the images involved are impending scorching heat, volcanic eruption, and feelings like being ‘baked’.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Fire</b> being absorbed into <b>Wind</b> – heat dissipated along with the air currents flowing out of the body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sparkling light of glowing fireflies.</li> <li>• Feeling of complete dissipation of heat, with gradual decrease in bodily temperature to coldness.</li> </ul>



In the case of Miss Chung, there was no indication about the decomposition of the element “Fire”, which then showed that, when Miss Chung had entered into the process of death, she did not yet reach the deeper levels, and so her bodily temperature had not been swiftly decreased.

The process being gone through	The severity of interference
<p><b>Wind</b></p> <p><b>A. Decomposition of gases:</b> The gases in the body gradually ceased circulating and started dissipating away.</p> <p><b>B. Wind</b> being absorbed into <b>Consciousness</b> – assorted illusory scenes being reflected from the “consciousness”. Due to the function of “Wind”, the reflection of consciousness is in a state of delirium.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deceased would experience the roaring of gusty winds and the deafening sound of thunderbolts.</li> <li>• Scenes turned to pale greenish in color.</li> <li>• All the images involved are attacks of strong gales, stuffs whirling away by tornadoes with situations associated with suffocations.</li> <li>• At times, the deceased person would see wavering lights amidst the wind.</li> </ul>

In the case of Miss Chung, there was no description about the decomposition of the element “Wind”, which proved that, when Miss Chung had entered into the process of death, she had only reached the level of the “Earth being absorbed into Water”, and had not advanced into deeper levels. Therefore the contents of the “near-death experiences” (NDEs) of Miss Chung were only limited to the characteristics of the decompositions of the elements of “Earth” and “Water”. However, a person who has truly entered into the dying stage must have to experience all of the situations, simply because all of these are the normal and natural phenomena of physical changes. Even if a patient is still lingering at the end of life, one might still be able to foresee some of the “Scenes at the Moment of Death”, which is an indication that the “Dissolution of the Four Elements” are processing at a high speed.

## How to Define on the “Definition of Death”?

How to define on the “definition of death”? It has

been a **focus of contention** among the circles of both religions and medical sciences. With the different levels during the process of the “Dissolution of the Four Elements”, the influences on the physical and psychological aspects of a person would be rather different. Considering from this angle of viewpoint, one would find that **it is not simple to define on the “definition of death”**. When can an organ be removed for transplant? When does a genuine death take place? These questions **have been in contention for over forty years**. It was on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 that an article entitled “O death, when is thy sting?” was published by an authoritative academic journal, the “**Economist**”. It was about a **new point of contention** concerning the “definition of death” and “organ donation”. (Readers can refer to this article by looking up at URL: [http://www.economist.com/science/displayStory.cfm?source=hptextfeature&story\\_id=12332939](http://www.economist.com/science/displayStory.cfm?source=hptextfeature&story_id=12332939)).

Why was this paper being written? It all started back in 2008 when Dr. Lucetta Scaraffia, a religious historian at the La Sapienza University of Rome and also a member of Italy’s National Bioethics Committee, wrote an article on a Vatican’s newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, which **triggered a hot debate**. The contents of the debate **involved the benefits of all people from all walks of life**, and so it had attracted public attention. As the editors of the “**Economist**” knew that there would be a conference, on the topic of “organ donation”, to be held in Vatican in November 2008, and so they specially published this article “O death, when is thy sting?” in order to arouse a wider interest from the general public before the conference.

Why did Dr. Scaraffia’s paper trigger such a hot debate? This was because, in the paper, it had mentioned the present situation that human organs are in great demands nowadays, and so physicians “are under pressure to shift the line that divides life from death, so that they can get hold of organs for transplant at a time when they are more likely to be in a healthy condition.” In this way, doctors are under great pressures to alter the borderlines of the **world-recognized** criteria on the “definitions of life and death” for the convenience of harvesting healthy organs for transplant. This kind of the “**hastening of the borderlines**” means to push forward the certification on the death of a person. If that is the case, in the future, all **nations across the world** would then be able to **push forward legally** in removing human organs, in accordance with this new standard.

In order to get wider attention from the general public, as well as to **safeguard and protect** the interests of those merciful “organ donors”, so that **their interests would not be ignored and slashed**, a **fierce debate had been induced**. It seemed that the interests of those people who are still alive are gaining more and



more weight and attention, while those people who are at the verge of death are being closely watched upon (since they possess treasures within themselves – their bodily organs), such that the “safeguarded and protected interests” of these dying people are going to be further coveted and exploited. In a society where “utilitarianism” is being prioritized and treasured, the interests of the majority are placed much higher than that of the minority. Hence, those merciful “organ donors” could not safeguard and protect their own interests. Under the influences of those mundane secular people who are ignorant, yet greedy, aggressively and endlessly pursuing their own self interests, it would be difficult for “organ donors” to get away from this disaster of “hastening their pains”.

### The Abstruseness of the “Scenes at the Moment of Death”

As a matter of fact, are they of the same reasons for the occurrence of “Near-death Experiences” (NDE’s) and the bad scenes at the “moment 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 either Jesus Christ or Mother Mary coming to fetch them.” Why is it like this?

In fact, what do these 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 methods for their Dharma practice, and they were united together and endeavored with the same efforts in their practices. Yet, various bad scenarios had occurred as their “scenes at the moment of death”. Why is it like that? In fact, what had gone wrong? In other religions, there were reports about the coming of “God” to fetch for the deceased persons, and so does it mean that all religions will have 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 some bad scenes had appeared at the moment of death, are there any methods of rescue for such kind of emergency?

Since the spiritual, physical and physiological conditions of each individual vary accordingly, hence different “scenes at the moment of death” would arise, due to differences in speed and their degrees of transformation during the “Dissolution of the Four Elements” of the “Earth, Water, Fire and Wind”. Regardless of whether these scenes are to be seen

either before or after death, it is just a matter of time, in terms of the speed of the transformation, for the “Dissolution of the Four Elements”. That was why the 25 Dharma practitioners, as described in Issue 8, while they were using the same kind of methods for their Dharma practice and were united together and endeavored with the same efforts in their practices, but then they had experienced various bad scenarios of the “scenes at the moment of death”. It was the fact that these 25 Dharma practitioners were of different spiritual conditions, physiques as well as physiological conditions, and not because of the issue of whether they were diligent enough to apply their methods of Dharma practice and with much effort exerted. Neither did it have anything to do with their religious faith.

Each and every one of us must and will encounter the influences by the “Dissolution of the Four Elements” of the “Earth, Water, Fire and Wind”, and it is just a matter of time and degrees of severity. People under poor spiritual conditions would be more deeply impacted by their own “minds”. Due to the process on the “Dissolution of the Four Elements”, many scenes of hallucinations would arise in one’s own “mind”. In order to ensure that auspicious scenes would arise at the moment of death, one must have to know how to carry out the Dharma practice on the “Transformation of Illusory Scenes” of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism, including those practices of the “Wrathful Deities”. In such a way, those illusory scenes of fire and flooding would become beneficiary, rather than harmful, to one’s spiritual condition. There will only be good influences, rather than bad ones, to the deceased persons. Therefore, there is no need to panic when adverse scenes occurred at the moment of death. These are just natural phenomena, and they do not necessarily mean any miserable consequences, but only to speed up the process on the “Dissolution of the Four Elements”. If the deceased person is being scared to the condition of delirium, the rescue method is to have either someone to whom, or a religious faith to which, this person has confidence in to calm his/her emotions down, so to re-orient him/her to a positive and active direction. Even though this is not a thorough way of salvation, but at least it is better than just letting the deceased person to stay in a panic situation.

### Reasons for the Causes of “Brightness” and Gods

“Brightness” (or “luminosity”) is one of the scenes that would occur during the “Bardo of Dying”. This is a natural phenomenon which could be seen by all people and has nothing to do with any religious beliefs. Only that people’s “minds” are under the influences of their experiences and preferences, and so those images of



one's fondness would then be projected. Furthermore, one would then interpret those images being seen in accordance with one's own will. Therefore, a lot of NDE survivors who had seen "brightness" upon death did believe that there were images inside the "brightness", and had interpreted those images as the supreme deities of their own religions in which they believed. In fact, those images were really nothing but the manifestation of their own purest "nature of the mind". (Please refer to the detailed explanations about what had been encountered after death in the article on "The Meanings of Near-death Experiences" in Issue 14 of the "Lake of Lotus").



The Hindu "God of Death"

A further investigation on comparing the "near-death experiences" (NDEs) of children and that of adults had shown that there were obvious and fundamental differences. "Near-death experiences" in adults varied tremendously, due to the influences of their cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. For instance, American NDE survivors often saw Jesus Christ; people in the East tend to see Buddhas and/or Bodhisattvas more

often; while Indians had often seen their Hindu God of Death. NDE survivors of different religious and cultural backgrounds all tended to say that they had met either the gods of their own beliefs, or the spiritual leaders of their own cultures. As to the children, since the cultural influences that they had were much weaker than that of the adults, the kinds of persons or items that had lingered in their minds were quite different from those of the adults. For example, there was a child who claimed that he had seen a physician in heaven. When he was asked how he knew that person was a physician, he simply answered that that person wore white clothes. If he were an adult, he or she would have claimed that the person in white clothes would either be an angel, Jesus Christ, or a God.

At the moment on the exposure of one's "primordial nature", or while encountering different people in different spiritual realms, sentient beings would tend to judge on those people to be either as "God, Buddha, or their relatives", basing upon their own subjective "minds". This kind of subjectivity of the "mind" would either lead them to some similar spiritual realms, or to some unique illusory scenarios. Thus, sentient beings of different religions and cultural backgrounds would enter into different related spiritual realms, encounter with various related people of different affiliations,

and/or structure related spiritual realms with related people. With the further mixing up with so many of the "karmic forces" at work, the kinds of "illusory scenes" would then be much more complicated.

There are many reasons for the adverse scenes encountered by NDE survivors, and the main ones mostly come from the projections and influences of the "karmic forces" upon the "mind", while the abominable "scenes at the moment of death" are mostly come from the influences of the process on the "Dissolution of the Four Elements".

Most of the descriptions about the "scenes at the moment of death" usually came from those people before their deaths, and then they actually died right afterwards, and did not "revive back to life" after that. Since the process on the "Dissolution of the Four Elements" that they had undergone was usually progressing at such a high speed, with the degree of decomposition to be quite intense. On the contrary, the NDE survivors, whose vitality of life forces were strong, all later on "revived back to life" and so had not actually died. In this way, it was revealed that their degrees on the "Dissolution of the Four Elements" would not be intense, otherwise it would not be possible for them to "revive back to life". Therefore, there were certain fundamental differences that existed between the scenes encountered by NDE survivors with those at the moment of death.

The "Tibetan Book of the Dead" revealed that: "All the illusory scenes have manifested from the consciousness of one's intrinsic 'mind'. The 'flaming brightness' is the exposure of the 'primordial nature' of one's intrinsic 'mind', and these two are of the same nature." This is the biggest difference between Buddhism and all other religions. Buddhism has truly described the abstruseness of Mother Nature and applied it in practice without any kinds of deviations or distortions about the true reality. Therefore, it is most helpful to aid all sentient beings in resolving their adverse predicaments and disengaging themselves from calamities. It is truly efficacious. As for other religions, the idea of salvation has to depend blindly upon the power of a certain god, and since there is no nurturing of one's own strength of the intrinsic "mind", their teachings are distorting and deviating from the truth of reality, and so it is difficult to save sentient beings to disengage themselves from the tractions of karmic entanglements and bondages of the "cycle of karmic existence" ("Samsara" in Sanskrit). The only thing that they can do is merely to urge and lead others to do good deeds. The depth of involvements in good deeds, and their strictness in observing the precepts, will vary quite a lot from one religion to another. As such, the retributions on their karmic fruitions for different sentient beings who believe in different



religions will not be the same. Hence, for all those religions, the efficacies of practicing their relevant teachings are not the same. Anyhow, in no way can they be compared and peered with the depths and actualities of the Buddhist teachings.

Taking the descriptions on “brightness” in Buddhism, the depth and actualities would differ greatly from other religions and with a great distance. Guru Padmasambhava, the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism (please refer to the brief introduction on Guru Padmasambhava, the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism, in Issue 1 of the “Lake of Lotus”), had described the “Mother Luminosity” or “Ground Luminosity” as follows: “This self-arisen ‘flaring brightness’ has never been created from the beginningless time immemorial. It is the derivative of ‘self-awareness’, and neither is ‘self-awareness’ itself being created from any sources. How marvelous! This self-arisen wisdom is not being created by anyone, how marvelous! It has never been through the process of creation, neither does it have any components of death, how marvelous! Although it is so explicitly visible, yet nobody has ever seen it, how marvelous! Although it keeps on reincarnating in the “six realms of beings”, it has never been slashed, how marvelous! Although it had seen the Buddha-Field, it does not become any better, how marvelous! Although it exists anywhere in anybody, yet it has never been discovered, how marvelous! And yet you still keep on trying to recognize some other kinds of fruitions from somewhere else, how marvelous! Even though it belongs to you originally, but then you are searching for it somewhere else, how marvelous!”

All other religions will consider this “brightness” as something that is external, or the God that exists externally. They have no idea that it is the manifestation of one’s own “awareness”. As such, they are incapable of fully developing and expanding their internal unfathomable and infinite potentials, in order to recover their “primordial nature”. This is because, in all other religions, they do not recognize themselves and do not realize the subtleness of one’s own “mind”. Neither did they realize the most authentic and true reality of Mother Nature, and thus their teachings are not really scientific, which is the biggest shortcoming in all other religions. In fact, what are the required conditions in the methods of “Dharma practice” that can be 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 each of the various stages of one’s life and death?.....(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 Meanings of the near-Death Experiences “from Issues 1 to 10.)

## Summary on the Key Points of Each Issue

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- The Truth of Life
- “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”

### Issue 2

- The “Energy Thread” Between Life and Death
- The Profound Secrets of the “Energy Thread”
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### Issue 3

- The Mystery of “Light”
- The Mysteries on the “Entrance and Exit Doors” of Life and Death
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### Issue 4

- The “Almighty Light” at the Moment of Death
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- The Application of “Light”
- “Super Abilities”, “Supernatural Powers” and “Levels of Realization”

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- Reasons for the Generation of the “Light of Life and Death”
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### Issue 6

- “Omniscience” and “Flash Foreword”
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### Issue 7

- “Near-Death Experience” is Beyond Doubt
- The “Near-Death Experience” of the Unification with “God”
- A “Universal Religion” that Embraces, and is Suitable for all Mankind
- Real “Death”: A “Highly Risky Turning Point” of Life

### Issue 8

- The Different Phases of “Death”
- The Phase of Separation between the “Physical Body” and the “Spiritual Body”
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- Shocking Revelations: Scenes Before Death

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- The Proportions of Negative “Near-Death Experiences”
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- The Reasons on the Causes of “Near-Death Experiences”
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- Where the Future Well-Being of Mankind Lies
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The Application

of Wisdom

# The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (20)

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. 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-

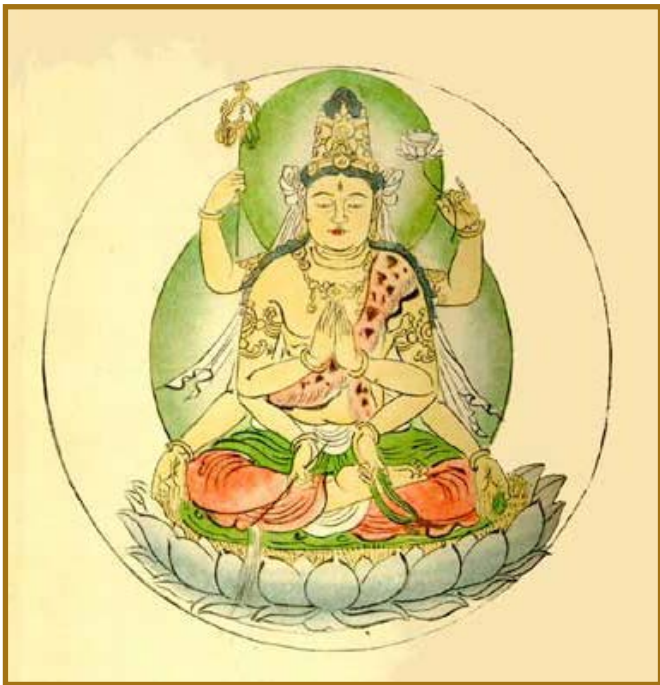
pride” and strong “arrogance” within one’s own “ego”, never being able **to see the real world in its totality**. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be **an extremely big failure** (please refer to the Issue 19 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xvi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (13)

### Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (6) – Enhancing One’s Awareness

Many a times the formation of one’s mistakes and failures are due to the inadequacy of one’s own “awareness”. The biggest drawback was one’s own failure lied in not “being aware” of what and where had gone wrong in one’s own “behavioral formulae”. This would result in one’s repeating, or even expanding, of one’s mistakes and failures endlessly. Being faulty or carelessness for a short while is not the main cause for one’s mistakes and failures. **The main and real cause is the existence of deviations and defects in both the consciousness and the subconscious of one’s own “behavioral formulae”**. This would lead to a chain of wrong behaviors, which would form **an orbit which would lead to further failures, and that one would find it hard to depart from it**. Along with this orbit of failures, it would further extend to many more faults and carelessness, and the end result would be more and greater failures. Hence, to “enhance one’s awareness” is not only to elevate one’s attentiveness, such that the frequency of one’s making mistakes due to carelessness would be reduced, but the more important aspect is whether to have the ability for one’s “self-reflection”, for observing the minute details, and to carefully find out the deviations and defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”.

Due to the inadequacy of one’s “awareness”, one would not be able to “become aware” of the defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”, resulting in numerous mistakes and failures which would further lead to repeated adversities. At times when adversities come one after the other, one’s **mind** would be heavily swashed and be **in a state of dullness and mental confusion**. Hence, there is a direct and indivisible link between the inadequacy of one’s “awareness” and the mental confusion of one’s “mind”. In other words, if one can “**enhance one’s awareness**” in knowing the defects of one’s own “behavioral formulae” and then repair them, one would be able **to let one’s mind to**



return to a state of clarity and awakening, such that one would be able to have correct and excellent “behavioral formulae” to get away from one’s plights, or even to embark on a way for prosperities.

### The Key in the Mutual Transformation of Good and Bad Fortunes

What exactly is “awareness”? How can one nurture an “awareness” of good quality?

“Awareness” is one of the functions of the “mind”, with which one

1. can **perceive** the formation of mistakes, such that one can become **awakened** and thus be able to correct one’s own mistakes;
2. can **perceive** the key and the principle of different matters, such that one can **come to realize** the options for solutions.

No matter whether one is in adversity or prosperity, whether one is an ordinary person or a Dharma practitioner, if one would like to have more successes than failures in one’s life, more exultation than dejection, and more smoothness than obstacles, then one must have to learn how to “enhance one’s awareness”. What will be the outcome if **one does not learn to “enhance one’s awareness”**? There is a famous saying from the

renowned Chinese philosopher Lao Zi: “Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good.”

This statement, which is well known throughout the ages, is one that is filled with the “dialectical philosophy”, and that if one can take an opposite angle to interpret this statement, one can come to realize the “changes of the mores, norms and values of the times”. The meaning of this statement “Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good” is this: when a person is in happiness, he will be involved too much in his leisure activities and even inclined to being self-indulgent, resulting in **not having any kind of “awareness”**. He would carelessly or unintentionally make mistakes without knowing them. The mistakes would then get bigger and bigger, and will eventually bring about damages and harms to both oneself and others. Hence, when one is in times of prosperity and is filled with happiness, one must have the **wisdom** to know that the seedling for harms and damages is **hidden** within happiness, and so must be alert. This is the principle behind the second part of this statement on “bad fortune lurketh within good”.

On the contrary, when a person is in misfortune, one would be in great fear, and thus would try one’s best to **“enhance one’s awareness”** to an extremely high level. One would duck whenever there are dangers, and will try to avoid whenever there are difficulties. One will try to stay in a quiet place to think of a way to deal with the situation. During this process of trying to resolve one’s difficulties, one would be able to correct many of one’s numerous mistakes in the past. In this way, one would also sow the seeds for one’s future success. Not only will one be able to deal with one’s misfortunes, this can also nurture one’s happiness for the future. Hence, when one is in adversities, one should have the **wisdom** to know that there are side branches of happiness **leaning** upon the present dangers. This is the principle behind the first part of this statement on “good fortune lieth within bad”.

In other words, **good and bad fortunes** co-exist inter-dependently, and can thus be mutually transformed. **The key and the trick for their mutual transformation is on whether there is the existence of “awareness”**. Hence, “good and bad fortunes come from the same door. If one feels proud after having a small amount of good fortune, it will only bring him bad fortune. When one met with a small amount of misfortune but then felt alert, it will bring him good fortune” is based on the same kind of principle. If one lacks “awareness”, one is bound to sink into the “vicious cycle”. For one who knows how to train and “enhance one’s awareness”, one would definitely be full of proactive meanings and would leap forward.



Hence, “Dharma practice” is the training of one’s “clarity and perceptive power” of the “mind”, in making the “mind” to “be aware” of whether there are any deviations or defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”. With this kind of “awareness”, one would then rectify one’s own “behavioral formulae” in making it run in a correct manner, so as to get away from the control of the “tractional forces” of the “cycle of karmic existence”, with the ultimate aim in “attaining Buddhahood”.

So, what are the “behavioral formulae”? What is the basis of one’s “awareness” in order to know if there are any deviations and defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”? “Behaviors” refer to “the behavioral patterns of the body, speech and mind”. “Formulae” (or “programmings”) refer to the “objectives, motives and sequences” of what one does. All “Dharma practices” adhere to the standards of the “behavioral formulae” as according to the “Buddhist teachings”, and would thus make use of one’s “perceptive power” to put them into practice. The most fundamental and basic standard of the “Buddhist teachings” that can help one to get away from the “cycle of karmic existence” is to stay away from “greed, hatred and ignorance”; while the most thorough standard of the “Buddhist teachings” that can help one to “attain Buddhahood” is on “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness” (please refer to the DVD entitled “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association).

The deviations and defects of one’s own “behavioral formulae” usually come from the following:

1. “Objectives” are not clear, leading to one’s formulae to become aimless and be easily mistaken;
2. “Motives” consist of a lot of “greed, hatred and ignorance”, leading to the structure of one’s formulae to become deviated from the right orbit;
3. “Sequences” are confusing and interfering with each other, and with too many impurities, leading to one’s formulae to go in circles when in operation, and thus meet with many obstacles.

A qualified “Guru”, when giving guidance to his disciples on their “Dharma practices”, would provide them with a set of clear “behavioral formulae” without any defects, and would give them detailed explanations. These kinds of “behavior formulae” are normally known as the “texts for practice rituals” (“Sadhanas” in Tibetan). When the disciples can skillfully master the “objectives, motives and sequences” of those “behavioral formulae”, the realized “Guru” would then

further guide his disciples spiritually to enhance their “awareness”, and would also directly pointing out the deviations, defects and inadequacies after his disciples have put these sets of “behavioral formulae” into practice.

If this “Guru” cannot clearly explain the “sequences, motives and objectives” of this set of “behavioral formulae”, and would only know how to recite the “texts for practice rituals” (“Sadhanas” in Tibetan), then the effectiveness of this kind of “Dharma practice” would not be great. When one meets with the ever-changing posthumous situations, then the “Dharma practitioner” would not know how to make the necessary changes, or make appropriate use, of the “behavioral formulae” for making amendments, and thus leading to failures. If this “Guru” is unable to spiritually guide on the enhancement of “awareness”, the “Dharma practitioner” will be unable to get away from the obstacles, difficulties and sudden changes of the ever-changing posthumous situations. One would be in a dangerous situation without even knowing it. If this “Guru” is unable to point out the deviations, defects and inadequacies when his disciples were putting these sets of “behavioral formulae” into practice, these Dharma practitioners, when faced with the ever-changing posthumous situations, would most unlikely to be able to cope with those situations, or missing out at the critical moments, and would thus stand at the verge of failures.

### How to Nurture “Awareness” of High Quality

How can one nurture the “awareness” of high quality? “Awareness” is of a sharp, moving, and quick nature, while “meditational power” is a composed temperament. The two are mutually dependent upon each other for their existences. They can be achieving the effect of “active yet with calmness, loose without being scattered, and complementary to each other”. It has the ability of stabilizing effect like the earth, and can nurture the seeds that fully embrace millions of opportunities of vigor and vitality. Hence, “meditational power” is the best breeding-ground and partner for the nurturing of “awareness”, and is one of the most essential training items for Dharma practices. “Awareness” contains different degrees of “flexibility, depth, meticulousness and comprehensiveness”. When one nurtures it, one should pay attention to the following points:

1. The characteristics of a high degree of “flexibility” are that one would be “swift and



sharp and quick in one's responses", such that one would have to rely upon one's "intuition" for observations and examinations. A realized "Guru", in providing trainings for his disciples, must have to explain, as deep as possible, on the "behavioral formulae" and their relations with the posthumous environment, in terms of their speed of changes and their sharpness. He will have to supplement his trainings for his disciples with concrete examples, until the sharpness of their "awareness" can be "as high as a loose rabbit", such that they can master the "pulse" of the events and matters, and would thus not miss the opportunity that would disappear in a split of a second. In other words, the "Guru" has to train his disciples to learn how to master the different opportunities, get hold of the accuracy of the timing, before one can truly nurture an "awareness" which is sharp, quick and with a high degree of accuracy.

2. A more "in-depth" "awareness" will enable one to "reach the important ground and go directly to the vital point", mainly through infiltration and penetration, so as to develop the ability for one to come to a "realization" of things. The realized "Guru", in providing trainings for his disciples, must have to explain, as deep as possible, on the "behavioral formulae" and the profound and ever-changing nature of the environment after one's death. He will have to supplement his trainings for his disciples with concrete examples, until the "depth" of one's "awareness" can reach the "key position" of the issue. In other words, the "Guru" has to train his disciples to learn how to master the key position, get hold of

the important and key points of the issue, before one can truly nurture an "awareness" which is in-depth and with a high degree of accuracy.

3. "Awareness" with a high degree of "meticulousness" can train one to be "exquisite, clear without missing out something". The main focus is on the clarity of one's "awareness". The realized "Guru", in providing trainings for his disciples, must have to explain, as deep as possible, on the "behavioral formulae" and the thoroughness and dangerous situations of one's posthumous environment. He will also have to supplement his trainings for his disciples with concrete examples, until the "thoroughness" of their "awareness" can reach a stage whereby, even when being confronted with different dangerous situations, the operation of one's formulae can still run seamlessly without any omissions. In other words, the "Guru" has to train his disciples to learn how to master the thorough knowledge on the dangerous situations, get hold of where the gaps of dangerous situations lie, and how to find a way out from the gaps, before one can truly nurture an "awareness" which is meticulous and with a high degree of accuracy.
4. "Awareness" with a high degree of "comprehensiveness" can enable one to "comprehend by grasping a typical example, and then relate it to all other similar things by comparing them with it". The main focus would be on the "ability to come to realization" in all situations. The realized "Guru", in providing trainings for his disciples, must have to explain, as deep as possible, on the "behavioral formulae" and the comprehensiveness, all bearings and different strategies of one's posthumous environment. He will also have to supplement his trainings for his disciples with concrete examples, until the "comprehensiveness" of their "awareness" can reach a stage whereby they can make use of their wisdom to find a way out, such that even when being confronted with different dangerous situations and obstacles, they could still be able to resolve them with ease. In other words, the "Guru" has to train his disciples to learn how to be fearless and have confidence in facing the difficult situations, and get hold of the holistic view and the linkages of the matters, such that they can command the whole situation from a great height, before they can truly nurture an "awareness" which is comprehensive and with a high degree of accuracy.



On the above-mentioned four points, if one's training is more "comprehensive and in-depth", the degree of one's "awareness" would be higher, and the quality of it would be better. A "Guru" with a high degree of "awareness" would be able to **explain clearly** the difficult meanings of the "Buddhist teachings" in an easy to understand, yet comprehensive, deep and thorough way. The understanding of the "Buddhist teachings" does not rely on the degree of proficiency in one's recitations, nor does it rely on the knowledge and depth of understanding on the different schools, neither does it depend on the highness or lowness of one's position within the religion. It simply has to depend on one's own degree of "realization" on the "Buddhist teachings".

The degree of one's ability in "realization" can hardly be shown on the face. It must have to be shown from one's interpretation of the "Buddhist teachings". If there is such a "guru" whose explanations on the "Buddhist teachings" **are muddled, sketchy, unable to explain the real meanings, or even have twisted the meanings**, or he simply uses a lot of jargons with a tone used by those tricksters, and with the hue of superstition, trying to be outwardly pretentious as if he is so special, important and prestigious, his followers should be very careful about this! They may not be able to obtain any benefits, and may even **be harmed, by him**.

Even if this "guru" does not have any intentions to cheat, the fact is that if his trainings for his disciples are **without any kind of explanations**, or to have confusions and babbled through his explanations, then his followers would have **difficulties in dealing** with the challenges of the posthumous world at the end of the day. Many people who come to believe in Buddhism are nor sure of the reasons why they want to believe in it. Hence, they would be **very casual or superstitious** in their choosing of their "gurus". After all, for a lot of people, they are not sure that they will have to face the **serious and callous** "dangerous situations of rebirths" in the future. The only situation that they can help themselves directly is, not by some **indirect** outside forces, but only by **one's own adaptability**.

Hence, the true meaning of life is not just to have a happy and very satisfactory period of the present life, simply because this is just **too short-sighted** and worthy only of "a grin". In the long, tedious and winding journey of the "cycle of karmic existence", there would be many and long periods of pains and sufferings. This so-called "happy life" is really **"a minute point of happiness in the boundless ocean of sufferings, and would disappear completely within the snap of the fingers. Instead of exhausting all of one's efforts in order**

**to have a better day, it would be wise to enhance and enlighten one's own awareness"**. The real meaning of life is **to find a true way out** during one's lifetime, so as to have the ability to "elevate one's life", and to receive those related proper trainings in providing adequate protections for oneself. One would then move along an orbit leading upwards towards one's elevation and enlightenment, until one can become liberated from those bondages of the "tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence". **To "enhance and elevate one's own awareness" is the most fundamental and essential must-have training.**

### The Causes and Conditions for the Continuity of "Awareness"

"Awareness", once get enhanced, will not be extinguished in numerous lives, and would even continue to be further elevated. The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had mentioned about the causes and conditions of this in the **"Sutra of Hundred Actions"** (or **"Karmasataka-Sutra"** in Sanskrit).

"At a time when the Buddha was in Sravasti, there was the King Sakya inside the city. There was another King Fan Se in Sarnath. Due to some disputes, the two kings were in battles, resulting in heavy casualties for both sides. One day, the King Fan Se was leading his troops to encamp at the side of River Kongde in a threatening manner. King Sakya also hated to be outshone, and led his troops of soldiers to the River to prepare for the fight. The two troops fought and there were many casualties. As the troops of the two countries were of considerable size and strength, they fought for a long time but neither side could get the upper hand. While their fighting was in a deadlock, a very pretty baby girl was being born to King Sakya, while a decent boy was also born to King Fan Se.

Both sides celebrated the births of their respective children by playing music, singing and dancing. At this time, both countries could hear the sounds of joy from the other side, and so both had sent some secret agents to find out the situations. When they found out the reasons, King Fan Se was quite happy and considered this was a good causation. This would mean: each side got a child at the same time, while they were fighting against each other. The birth of a boy and a girl implied that there would be peace. Both sides could stop the fight, and join together in marriage.

Both sides sent their apologies and gifts to the other side. The daughter of King Sakya was called Sang Lok Mou. Since she was a child, she has a very good nature. She 'took refuge in the Buddhist

teachings and observed the precepts for her Dharma practice'. She also practiced almsgivings and had great faith in the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni. She said to her parents: 'I'm awakened. In order to pursue the precious Buddhist teachings, I would want to leave home to become a nun, so as to become a member of the 'Sangha' community. I pray that both of you can grant me your approvals!' Her parents said: 'We do not have the power to give permission to you to leave home to become a nun, simply because there were arrangements made for you to be married to the son of King Fan Se when you were just born. You have to ask for his permission instead.'

After hearing the words of her parents, Sang Lok Mou said: 'Okay, I myself will discuss this matter with the Prince.' Her parents then silently sent an envoy to inform King Fan Se that they should fix a good date for the Prince to get married as soon as possible, so as to stop Sang Lok Mou from leaving home to become a nun. King Fan Se immediately fixed a good date to hold the wedding ceremony. On that day, the Prince put on his best clothes, and Sang Lok Mou also put up her beautiful dress and was being sent to Sarnath. When they were about to hold the ceremony, Sang Lok Mou talked to the Prince: 'I'm now awakened, and would not like to spend time and efforts to enjoy the happiness of this world. I would like to bring out **the true meaning of my life**. Please agree to my leaving home to become a nun!'

The Prince thought for a while, and considered what Sang Lok Mou had said was reasonable, and she should not be forced to abide by the marriage. He that said to her: 'I respect your wishes. You can do whatever you like, but I would like to hear about your **path of awakening**'. Sang Lok Mou then gladly spoke to the guests concerning some of the Buddhist teachings. After that, she obtained the kind permissions of her parents and took refuge from the Lord Buddha in the Jetavana.

She put her two hands together, knelt in front the feet of the Lord Buddha, and respectfully made a humble bow. She begged: 'The Most Honored and Noble Being in this World. If there are cause and conditions, may the Most Honored and Noble Being in this World would mercifully receive and accept me. I would like to become a nun and observe the pure precepts for Dharma practice.' The Lord Buddha acceded to her request. From then onwards, she practiced diligently, and made good progress to eradicate all of her troubles, and was able to attain the fruition of the 'Arhat'. As she had accumulated numerous merits, she was able to become liberated from the tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence, and was able

to regain her true freedom.

She became a saint who was the '**First in Wisdom**' among all the nuns. **Her 'awareness' was most excellent than all other Dharma practitioners.** The Prince heard about the attainment of the Holy Fruit by Sang Lok Mou, and **also suddenly realized the importance of this.** Hence, he also joined the group of monks within the 'Sangha' community of the Lord Buddha. He also practiced very diligently and made significant progress. At the end of the day, he was able to eradicate all of his troubles, and had thus attained the fruition of the 'Arhat'. **His 'awareness' was also much better than most of the others.**

The monks did not know about the mysteries behind them, and so asked the Lord Buddha: 'The Most Honored and Noble Being in this World. What are the causes and conditions that the Prince and the Princess were born in royal families? Again, under what causes and conditions that make them to have great faith in the Lord Buddha, that they could leave behind their homes to practice, and were finally able to attain the Holy Fruit of 'Arhat'? Why were **their 'awarenesses' so particularly superior to all others?**'

The Lord Buddha said to them: 'These were related to their previous strong **aspirations** made in their past lives, as well as the results of the **continuity of their 'awarenesses'**. All monks and nuns, during the era of 'Bhadrakalpa' when the age of a human being was twenty thousand years old, the Teacher for all humans and devas, the Lord Buddha Kasyapa, who was with universal enlightenment and all the Buddha nature, was born. At that time, there was a wealthy man in Sarnath, who was enjoying his happiness with his wife, and both of them have great faith in the Lord Buddha Kasyapa.

The two of them decided: 'Since we do not have any children, and it is meaningless to have all those wealth with us. We can use these wealth for doing good merits for the Lord Buddha Kasyapa while we are still alive'. After their discussion, they used their own wealth to build a building as their offerings to the Lord Buddha Kasyapa and the monks of the 'Sangha' community. Later, they left home and become both monk and nun before the Lord Buddha Kasyapa.

Although they did not attain any Holy Fruits in their lives, but **their 'awarenesses' had been elevated.** Under the guidance of their own 'awarenesses', they were able to make **their aspirations** upon their deaths, 'May the merits of our almsgivings and becoming monk and nun in this life will enable us to be reborn in countless lives, with lots of money and in royal families;



and to be reborn at the time when the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni would be in this world so that we could please Him and make Him happy. May we then both leave home to become monk and nun respectively, so as to learn the Buddhist teachings, and finally to attain the fruition of the 'Arhat.'

The two of them had made such **aspirations**. On the strength of their **aspirations and merits**, and when the causes and conditions of these **aspirations and merits** are ripen, they were reborn into wealthy and royal families. As the 'awareness' is the ability in realizing clearly, this ability once arisen will be like a room being lit by bright light, and the darkness of foolishness and ignorance will automatically disappear. Since this "ability of realization would not be extinguished", this "**wakefulness**" would arise again even after countless lifetimes, so long as the right causes and conditions were there. Hence, the two of them could decide to leave behind their homes to practice **out of their own initiatives**, and would **naturally** be diligent in their practices, and making good progress **without any coercions**.

On the basis of this, no matter whether one is **in adversity or prosperity**, whether one is an ordinary person or a Dharma practitioner, if one would want to have more successes than failures, more exultations than dejections, more smoothness than obstacles, one must have to learn how to "enhance one's own awareness". This will enable one to take precautions against possible future difficulties, and to have penetrating insights into every moment and opportunity. This will ensure that **one's wishes will come true, and will not fall into dangerous grounds**.  
..... (To be Continued) ❖

**Sufferings**, why are they easy to provoke?

**Happiness**, why are they difficult to come by?

**Awareness**, why can't they be nurtured?

Oh! Child! **Sufferings** come from mistakes which originate from one's being slacken. When one is in happiness, one would incline to be "wallowing in luxury, pleasure, and arrogant and conceited". Sufferings would inevitably come. At the time when happiness floods in, please give rise to one's "wakefulness" so as to eradicate

the hidden roots of our future troubles. Please replace one's arrogance with the humbleness of hearts, and replace despise with appreciation. Please make use of "self-reflection" to dispute your stupidity. Please **be aware of it!** Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! **Happiness** comes from luck, which originates from your own accumulated merits. Accumulated merits come from "one's constantly striving to improve oneself, rectifying one's own mistakes, and in enhancing one's awareness". Happiness will come without inviting, and it will come naturally. When there are sufferings, please give rise to one's "resolute mind", rectifying one's own mistakes, and accumulate the merits bits by bits. Try to find the key to happiness that lies hidden within the sufferings. Please **be awakened!** Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! **Awareness** is not difficult to nurture. When you can **righteously** and objectively analyze the developmental process of issues in a cool-headed fashion, you will discover that the formations of all kinds of matters and events in this world will revolve around the various orbits of interdependent causes and conditions. When the ability of the "mind" to "experientially understand" can become more penetrating and infiltrating in a more in-depth and meticulous manner, the "awareness" would become more focused, sharp and quick, and will give rise at all fronts. Please **come to realize this!** 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 (15)



By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye

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

(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

## Conclusion (2)

Advice from Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye :

Before we “dedicate the merits”, here I would like to add something. Clearly, ever since we took our rebirths, we have already been socialized and educated in many different ways by our society. As this society is only a mundane secular world, and so we have been **fettered and affected by this mundane secular world**. All of these factors have all **become the various cages and roadblocks that have tied up our minds and our thinking patterns**.

Now that we want to **practice the Buddhist Dharma in order to set ourselves free from all these constraints and bondages**. Therefore, within the whole sphere and process of practicing the Buddhist Dharma, one should not only stay at the level of the theoretical aspect, or purely from the level of the thinking aspect; even though the thinking aspect is, indeed, very important. But, even more important, is to **practice the Buddhist Dharma in order to break those constraints and bondages**. So I hope that this lecture will be able to help everyone of you to better understand **the greatness of the Buddhist Dharma**.

As the saying goes, “Even though the Buddhist Dharma is as vast as a great ocean, one will need faith in order to enter.” However, even if one has the faith, we should insist that it should be based upon the **“right belief”**, but not on “superstition” that we have mentioned before. The truth of the Buddhist Dharma is, indeed, **very profound**. Even though science has greatly advanced over the years, yet there are still many things that science has been missing, which

had already been elaborated in the Buddhist Dharma long time ago. More than over two thousand and five hundred years ago, the Lord Buddha had already told us all the most important things. **What is the ultimate truth of the universe? What is the truth for lives in general? Why is there the existence of human beings? Why does human die? What will happen after one's death?** and so on.

The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had already told us all. Yet we are still completely in the dark, and what's more is that we tend to believe that these must be all





kinds of superstitions, and so that these are worthless to believe in. In fact, when we try to do research and study, we are not just researching on its scientific nature, or its theoretical nature. But, in fact, the most important aspect of all is the **way of practice** that the Lord Buddha had taught us. The real goal for us to practice the Buddhist Dharma is to help ourselves to become “liberated from the cycle of karmic existence”. Hence, I **hope that all of us could be equipped with such kind of a mentality** in participating in this course. Now, I would like to make a “dedication of merits”:

**I wish to apply this power of the Dharma practice in order to accomplish all kinds of activities and goals,**

**Such that all sentient beings within the three realms, with no one remaining behind, could be guided to the Buddha-Fields.**

**Wishing auspiciousness all the times, and wishing great auspiciousness coming from the blessings of all the Lamas and Yidams,**

**Wishing great auspiciousness for all those Vajrayana practitioners, and also for all sentient beings as well.**

**Wishing all virtues and excellence will grow and prosper!**



of “water”, and so we just tend to think of them as “**not identical**”. But, in actuality, all these different forms of “water” are composed of the **same** nature of thing. And so this is the meaning of “**not different**”, since they are all composed of the same kinds of elements --  $H^2O$ .

## Questions and Answers:

Question A : Could you explain once more what is meant by “Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation”?

Answer by Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren : “**Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation**” is similar to the example of “water” that what we had used before. The **appearance** of water is in **liquid form**. Yet, it could be changed into a **gaseous form** as steam, and it could also be changed into a **solid form** as ice. In other words, as it seems to us from the surface that there are different things coming from the element



In fact, there are different levels of understandings on the Buddhist Dharma and so they are **many times deeper than this**, as this is just a simple metaphor to show you in understanding what is meant by “**Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation**”. While they have different **forms** and **appearances**, but in actuality their **natures** are all the same. Similarly, every sentient being has the same “Buddha Nature” and its **nature is eternal and unchanging**. Yet, because of our own “ignorance and stupidity”, we undertake countless cycles of births and rebirths, life after life. We would take different forms and appearances during our countless rebirths, such as a human being in this lifetime, but then may change to become an animal in our next life. So, even though we may have possessed different forms and appearances during our countless lifetimes and rebirths, yet the “Buddha Nature” of all sentient beings will remain unchanged. We did **not** have only **one** form and appearance, yet our “nature” has **also** never been changed, and so it is still the same and **not another** kind of “nature”. Therefore, “**Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation**” is the characteristic of our “Buddha





you can **get it done in a single trial**. To that extent, the future can be more of a straight road for your practice; rather than you still having tried it out without those criteria, upon which it may get you nowhere, either in a round-about situation, or in one of criss-crossing, and may eventually lead you to stop it altogether.

As for the advice of “even if one can meditate like taking a short rest, or trying to visualize on “Emptiness”, then the merits of it will already be great”, is it true? Please don’t forget that, from the very beginning since time immemorial, we all have been attaching, clinging and grasping onto many things. Because of such **strong attachments and graspings**, they will form great tractions upon which we would have been dragged into this “cycle of karmic existence”, which is like an ocean of sufferings, and there is no way that we can get out of it. Therefore, if we can have only a minute, or even a second, to meditate upon “Emptiness” for just this simple while, then we would be **“released and free from those attachments and graspings”** for this very minute or second. In other words, this act can create such an **enormous relief** of our “consciousness” from those **“attachments and graspings”** even for just one minute, or even a second, since time immemorial, **that in itself is already a great merit!** 🙏

.... (To be Continued)

Nature”, and it has been used to describe the “Buddha Nature”. Hence, it becomes a **technical term for the “Buddha Nature”**.

Question B : As for the advice on meditation, some Gurus have mentioned that one should follow the six criteria that were listed in **“The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment” (“Lamrim Chenmo” in Tibetan)** before one should start to meditate. Hence, one should have some preparations before one’s meditation. Yet, for some other Gurus, they have mentioned that even if one can meditate like taking a short rest, or trying to visualize on “Emptiness”, then the merits of it will already be great. So **whose teaching should be the correct one?**

Answer by Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren : **Both are correct**. For example, when you meditate, you need to fulfill certain criteria, which will mean that if you can have those criteria, then you will have a faster result with lesser hindrances. But, then, does it mean that one should not meditate if one does not have those criteria? The answer is no, but then your **progress may become slower**, or that you may not have the patience to continue on with your meditation, as you may encounter greater hindrances as time goes by. Therefore, it may be better for you to have those criteria well prepared before you start meditating; by then,





# 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.

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