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Lake of Lotus

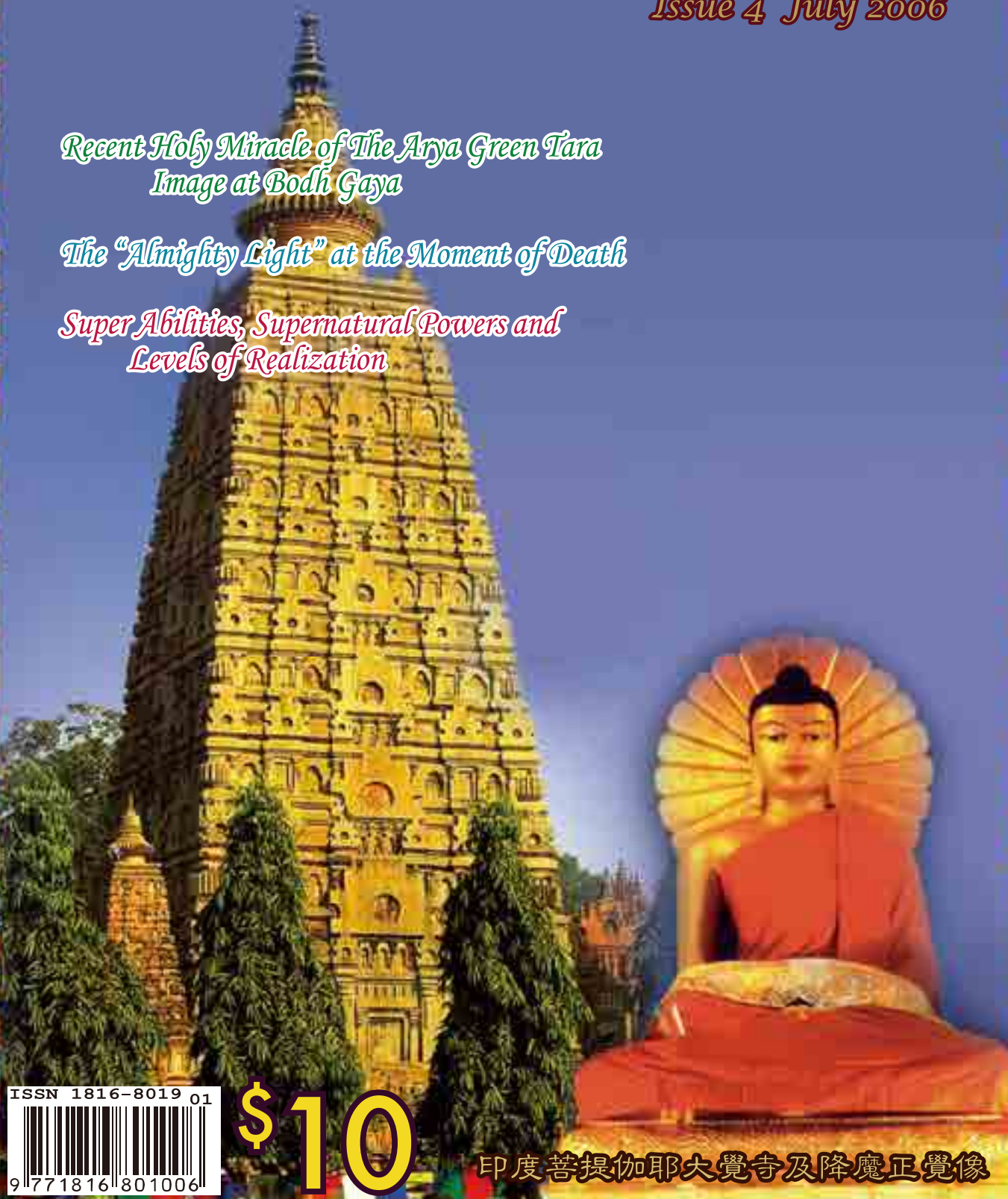
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*Recent Holy Miracle of The Arya Green Tara
Image at Bodhi Gaya*

The "Almighty Light" at the Moment of Death

*Super Abilities, Supernatural Powers and
Levels of Realization*



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Editor's Remarks: The Meaning of Life



The recent visit by the world renowned scientist, Professor Stephen Hawking, to Hong Kong has sparked off locally a heated wave towards a great interest in science in general, and in the search for the origin of the universe and of life in particular. In his inaugural lecture for the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Professor Hawking has brought out an in-depth question on "What is the meaning of life?" An important philosophical question that was asked by a top-notch contemporary scientist, whose high spirit and sincerity towards life, whose spiritual dimension far exceeds that of science, together with his humility at heart, is indeed, a most telling one and is most worthy for us to ponder.

If Professor Hawking can truly understand the true meanings of Buddhism, he will come to marvel that Buddhism is not just a religion, but that it is a scientific, or even a supra-scientific, way of describing the truth of both the changes and the laws of nature. Furthermore, it will provide a real way out existentially for all living beings and will be, ultimately, much better off than our migrating to other planets. Professor Hawking will also become more conscious of the fact that the "meaning of life" is not just for the protections of one's life and assets in this single life, because life will continue to exist even after death, where there will be continuous formations and destructions, just like the universe which has "no beginning and no end".

Hence, to know the "True Meaning of Life" is to know how to continuously uplift the purity, and to rid of the entanglements of impurities, of one's "mental capacity" to such an extent and in such a way as to recover one's own primordial "intrinsic nature", which is free from the manipulation and control of all sorts of "tractions". In order to achieve such a goal, the greatest "auxiliary force" is to use all of one's capabilities to benefit all living beings, the fulfillment of which can enable one's "mental capacity" to be elevated continuously. The costs and benefits of it are of the same nature. The greatest "main force" is to practice the "Holy Dharma" in order to elevate one's "mental strength" which is, indeed, the "meaning of life". Those readers who would like to know more about this can read the series of articles entitled "The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences" in the various issues of the "Lake of Lotus".

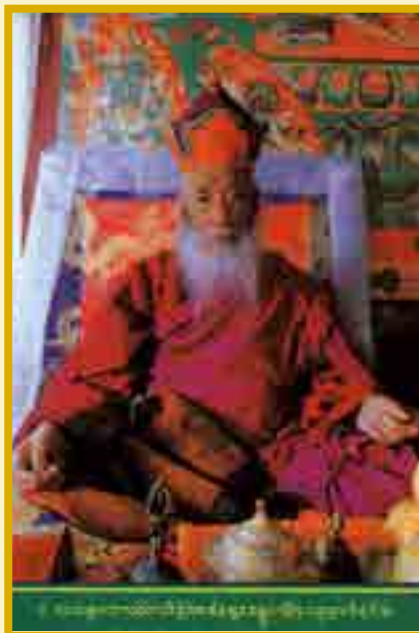


A Short Life Story of His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche

Dudjom Buddhist Association

A renowned great realized **Dzogchen** Master in his mid-90s, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche is a "secret yogi" known for his great realizations and strict disciplines. His Holiness was born in the village of Nyarong province of Kham in 1913, and soon migrated to Amdo with his family. At the age of 15, he abandoned his ties with his family, and went to many great masters to study and practice. He insisted on travelling on foot and refused to enter the residences of householders, staying only in hermitages, caves or his own little tent.

His Holiness, being the only living Lineage Holder (chodak) of the very **Special Lineage** of the famed Wisdom Dakini **Sera Khandro** (an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal), and also one of the very few living disciples of the great master **Khenpo Ngagchung** (Kathok Khenchen Ngagi Wangpo Rinpoche), is widely recognized by most of the Masters in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as one of the most highly realized living **Dzogchen** yogis.



His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche

In addition to his relationship with the great master Khenpo Ngagchung, H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche also studied with, and also gave back transmissions of important teachings to, some of the last century's most renowned masters, including His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje and Kyabje Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro. H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche is one of the major Lineage Holders of the **Longchen Nyingthig**, and in particular the lineage line that descends through Jigme Lingpa's heart son Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu, via Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Patrul Rinpoche, Lungtok Tenpe Nyima and then on to Khenchen Ngagi Wangpo Rinpoche, who was His Holiness' most beloved Root Guru.

Though his main lineage is the **Longchen Nyingthig**, H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche is also the Principal Lineage Holder (Kyabchok) and the Lord of the Mandala for the **Dudjom Tersar Lineage**. He was authorized and empowered by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje as the "**Vajra Regent**" (**Dorje Gyaltsap**) of the **Dudjom Tersar Lineage** while they were still in Tibet. To



The Wisdom Dakini Sera Khandro

this very day, H.H. Chadral Rinpoche is currently passing on this precious terma lineage to Kyabje Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche who lives primarily in Tibet.

Gyaltsap Retring, who was then the regent of Tibet, invited His Holiness to Lhasa and received many transmissions and instructions on [Dzogchen](#) from him. As a result, many people from all walks of life flocked to His Holiness for teachings with offerings. His Holiness saw this as a distraction from the path and left suddenly to the caves in the mountains blessed by Guru Rinpoche and other masters of the past. He then lived as a hermit for decades and became known as "Chadral"(a hermit), one who has abandoned all mundane activities.

Back in 1968, there was an incident that an American Trappist monk, Father Thomas Merton, went to



H.H. Chadral Rinpoche with the late Father Thomas Merton in Darjeeling

Darjeeling, India and met with His Holiness concerning his spiritual experiences. After the meeting, Father Merton mentioned to Mr. Harold Talbott, who was present at their meeting, saying: "That is the greatest man I ever met. He is my teacher."

H.H. Chadral Rinpoche has shunned institutional and political involvement in his whole life, choosing instead to live the life of a wandering yogi and has thus maintained a hermit tradition all through his life. To this day, despite his great age, he is still very healthy and strong, and continues to move about, rarely remaining in one place for more than a few months, to carry out his Bodhisattva activities for the benefits of all sentient beings. A lay yogi, he is also greatly concerned with maintaining strict disciplines in the context of the [Dzogchen](#) view.

His Holiness is especially well known for his advocacy of vegetarianism and his yearly practice of ransoming the lives of millions of living creatures in India and Nepal. In addition to his emphasis on the [union of view and conduct](#), H.H. Chadral Rinpoche also stresses the practice of strict retreats. His Holiness has established numerous retreat centers throughout the Himalayas, including those in Pharping, Yolmo and Darjeeling, etc. H.H. Chadral Rinpoche currently resides in between his monasteries in India and Nepal. His Holiness, with his consort Sangyum Kamala, has two daughters, Tsemo Saraswati and Tsemo Tara Devi.



His Holiness' Root Guru Kathok Khenchen Ngagi Wangpo Rinpoche



HIS HOLINESS CHADRAL RINPOCHE'S HEART ADVICE ON VEGETARIANISM

I was the first to become vegetarian since we came to India. The first year of the Nyingma Monlam in Bodh Gaya was non-vegetarian. In the second year I came there and spoke at a meeting of all the high Nyingma Lamas. I told them that Bodh Gaya is a very special place which is holy to all Buddhists, and if we say we are gathered here for the Nyingma Monlam and yet eat meat, this is a disgrace and the greatest insult to Buddhism. I said they should all give up meat from now on, during the Nyingma Monlam. Even the Tibetan lamas and monks eat meat! What a shame if even the lamas can't give up meat!

First the lamas should commit themselves to being life-long vegetarians. If the Lamas become vegetarian, and then you can address the lay people. Then also you should urge the monks to become vegetarian. Otherwise if knowledgeable religious people eat meat, how can one expect the ignorant public, who follow along just like sheep, to become vegetarian?

Earlier in the Sakyapas, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo abstained from meat and alcohol. From then on gradually in the Nyingmapas there was Ngari Pandita Pema Wangyal, an emanation of King Trisong Detsen. He was a vegetarian all his life. Also the non-sectarian Lama Zhabkar Tsogdrug Rangdrol: he was born in Amdo and was a heavy meat-eater, but when he went to Lhasa and saw the many animals being slaughtered in the butchers' district of Lhasa, he became

vegetarian for the rest of his life. Many of his disciples also became vegetarian.

Many others – Sakyapas, Geluggas, Kagyudpas and Nyingmapas – have done like this and become vegetarian. In Kongpo, Gotsang Natsog Rangdrol told his monks to abstain from meat and alcohol. Because the Kongpo Tsele Gon monks wouldn't obey his orders, he became angry with them and went to Gotsang Phug in lower Kongpo, and stayed there in isolated retreat for 20-30 years. Abstaining from non-virtuous actions such as eating meat and drinking alcohol, he attained realization and became known as Gotsang Natsog Rangdrol, a highly qualified teacher.



The late H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (left) & H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche (right)

Similarly, Nyagla Pema Dudul abstained from meat and alcohol. He meditated in isolated hermitages for 20-30 years, not relying on people's food but rather nourishing himself on the essence of rocks and earth, and attained a rainbow body. He is known as "Pema Dudul who attained rainbow body." He lived at the time of Nyagke Gonpo Namgyal. It happened like that.

When I was in Bhutan, sometimes meat would be served during big ceremonies or pujas for the dead people. This killing of animals for the dead person is an obstacle for the spiritual evolution of the dead and an impediment on the path to liberation. It is of no benefit to the dead person. The people in the Himalayan region are all Buddhists. Some of the Tamang and Sherpa lamas are ignorant. Because they want to eat meat and drink alcohol, they say that it is necessary since they are followers of Guru Rinpoche, who ate meat and drank alcohol. But Guru Rinpoche was born miraculously, not like those Lamas who were born from human parents. **Guru Rinpoche is known as the Second Buddha.** The teacher of the Sutras is Shakyamuni and the teacher of the Tantras is the omniscient Guru Rinpoche, who prophesized exactly what will happen in the future.

Abstaining from meat is a means of attaining world peace. I have given up meat, and I also don't eat cake since it contains eggs. Eating meat and eating eggs is the same. An egg will hatch into a chicken. A chicken is a sentient being. For example, there is no difference between killing the unborn fetus in a pregnant woman and killing the child after it is born; the killing is the same negative action. This is the reason why I don't eat eggs.

Your work is not useless – it is very useful. This message is not just for Buddhists; everyone who thinks and reasons can understand it. Especially all the learned scientists and doctors should think about this: are smoking and meat-eating beneficial? As an indication of this, who has a longer life span, smokers or non-smokers? Who has more illnesses, smokers or non-smokers? You university students can think about all the reasons and figure it out. I only speak Tibetan; I don't speak other languages. But I have studied the Buddha's outer Vinaya and inner Vajrayana teachings. Especially I have studied the Dzogchen writings of many scholars and yogis. They all say that **abstaining from meat is good for longevity.** If I consider my own family, there is no one else who has lived beyond 60; all my relatives are dead. But because I left my homeland and abstain from meat and smoking, I am now 93 years old. I can still walk, sit and get around everywhere by car and plane.

A few days ago, I went to Lhaxhang Gon in Helambu, where they are building a new Sherpa monastery. You asked me to talk about the reasons for becoming vegetarian, and what I have told you may be publicized. **What I have told you is all true, not a lie. It is based on the Buddhist**

scriptures, the teachings of the gurus, and on my own experience, not on the words of a few people who claim to be scholars. That is why you should publicize this message. I also rejoice in your virtue. Your actions are definitely virtuous. You should continue your campaign to educate the lay people, and also the ordained people. You should tell it to the Lamas and Tulkus who sit on high thrones and think they are important, and also to those of the lowest rank, to the monastic communities and also to the public, to those worldly people in high position with common sense who can reason for themselves and also to those without common sense.

This is what I have to say: You have asked this frail old man to speak, so **I have told you my heart advice.** There is a need for this message and the reasoning to be publicized; there is nothing in this message that should be withheld.

Dedication of Merits:

May all sentient beings be happy,
May all the lower realms be empty forever.
Wherever the Bodhisattvas live,
May this prayer be realized.

(This heart advice was given by H.H. Chadral Rinpoche on 29th May, 2005 to the Tibetan Volunteers for Animals, which subsequently published this in their official journal SEMCHEN, Vol.2, 2006. Khenpo Dorje Tsering and Jamphel Rabten had transcribed His Holiness' speech and it was translated by Chonyid Zangmo into English. This reprint of the text here was granted by His Holiness' kind permission.)



H.H. Chadral Rinpoche ready for his solitary retreats

The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death : The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (4)

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

The “Almighty Light” at the Moment of Death

In many cases of “near-death experiences” (NDEs), most of the survivors have seen the ‘Light’. In fact, how is the “Light” being generated, and what does it stand for? Many survivors have tried to, according to their own personal religious beliefs, identify this ‘Light’ as the deity or “God” in whom they believe. However, is this correct?

It is rather unscientific if an individual simply subjectively identifies the ‘Light’ in accordance with one’s own religious beliefs. Even though the scientific community cannot fully understand the various evidences being surfaced in “near-death experiences”, the survivors’ “psychological effects” and elements are being attributed to have certain proportions of importance in their inductions of their various kinds of experiences.

Since the “teachings of Buddhism” is based upon

its “true reflection of the natural reality” of the universe as its basic foundation, it has pointed out that **all phenomena are the projections of the ‘mind’**.

In this respect, it concurs with certain part of the arguments from the scientific community; however, in terms of the depths of interpretation, “Buddhism” excels “sciences” by leaps and bounds. For instance, there are very profound and clear explanations about the ‘Light’ in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”, including the ways in dealing with and utilizing it. **In this respect, Buddhism has no peers, regardless of the scientific community or with other religions.**



Case 4

Before more in-depth explanations, we would like to cite a case about the profound experience of the 'Light'. The story is about Ms Kimberly who is a clinical social worker, as well as an adjunct professor of medicine at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. The event occurred in 1970 when she was a senior high school student. The following was her own description of the incident:-

"During that time, I was living in Kansas. One day, I got the first driver's license in my life, and so my father escorted me to collect it from the relevant office in a nearby small town.

While I was queuing on the line, I suddenly felt very uncomfortable and couldn't even stand still. After telling that to my father, I suddenly fainted and fell on the ground. Due to unknown reasons, both my breaths and pulses all stopped. It took thirty minutes before the ambulance from the city centre arrived. In the meantime, someone got an artificial respirator from a nearby voluntary fire brigade, but nobody knew how to use it.

Due to their improper application, the artificial respirator had sucked out the air in my lung instead. My lips and fingers had all turned black. Then, some first aid personnel re-adjusted and re-applied the respirator, but again this time they had mistakenly pumped the air into the wrong place, and so my abdomen was inflated gradually. As there were no other options, they had to switch off the artificial respirator.

All the people thought that I was dead. A fireman told my father that his daughter was incurable, and so he covered my body with a blanket sheet. During this interval of coma, I went through the "near-death experience". To my left, I saw a lady shrieking out that I no longer had any pulses. I

responded by shouting out loudly that I was fine, but I just couldn't make any noise. During that time, I saw more and more people gathering around me, and with worries, they were staring at the place where I was lying. Surprisingly, I found out that I couldn't see their faces.

Subsequently, I felt that I was trapped in a thick fog, but I couldn't see anything except the fog. It seemed that I **had lost the sense of timing and had entered into "eternity"**. It felt like I was waiting for something, and during that time in the midst of the fog, I gradually realize the "true nature" of the fog. It was composed of micro "droplets of light", with extreme darkness surrounding them. I believed

that there were no other light sources to be more clean and pure than the lights of those "droplets of light". Similarly, there was no other darkness to be darker than that which was surrounding those "droplets of light". It just felt like staring into the light particles of the TV screen with one's eyes. When staring at the thick cloud of the fog with one's eyes, one would then find that it was formed by these micro "droplets of light".

Thereafter, there emitted a strong light beam just beneath me. I was embraced by this high energy light source.

Converging upon me as the focal point, **this light beam symbolized "rebirth" and was full of love. This light beam is so inconceivably brilliant**, with me being inside it, and I had the feeling of coming back "home". I think that this light beam may perhaps be "God". **I felt that I had gained all kinds of knowledge.** Anything that I want to know, I could comprehend it completely. Even those things that I thought they were very difficult to understand before, I could now easily understand them completely. After this kind of understanding, I started to realize how simple these things are.

Thereafter, I heard someone telling me that, since I was still young, I have to go back. At that time, I

The Process of the Appearance of "Light"

The "Spiritual Body" of the Dead leaves its "Physical Body" through the "Exit Doors"



All irksome negative feelings and energies (of 80 types categorized under "greed, hatred and ignorance") would cease to exist at this very moment, and so all the tractions of the "karmic forces" become malfunctioned. With this, one's own primordial "intrinsic nature" would completely manifest itself as the "Dharmakaya"

"Light" and "Natural Abilities" Appear Simultaneously

The "natural abilities" which have been existing in all "sentient beings" all along since time immemorial would completely manifest itself. In Buddhism, this is known as "Svabhava" in Sanskrit, meaning 'intrinsic nature', or 'Buddhata' or 'primordial nature'.



replied that I didn't want to go back. Nonetheless, I knew I couldn't stay there. When I went back, I saw my physical body. Yet, the return into the physical body was not a simple matter. If the accurate distance was not calculated properly, one just couldn't be able to go back. At the beginning, I missed it by about four feet. Hence, I had to try it again. It was like having missed the target while trying to park a car along the roadside, and so one had to try it again.

After I had returned to my physical body, I found a person was trying hard doing mouth-to-mouth artificial resuscitation on me."

The Origin of the Light

According to the descriptions in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", when a person leaves one's physical body from the exit doors of life and death, one would encounter the "Light". The appearance of the "Light" is due to the fact that when all irksome negative feelings and energies (which are classified into eighty types and categorized under the three major negativities of "greed, hatred and ignorance") would all cease to exist at this very moment, and so the natural power (which has been existing in all sentient beings all along since time immemorial) would completely manifest itself as the "Light".

In Buddhism, this is known as "Svabhava" in Sanskrit, meaning 'intrinsic nature', or 'Buddhata' or 'primordial nature'. This "intrinsic nature"

possesses enormous power, and can be manifested in **three different ways**. They are:

1. **Dharmakaya (Truth Body)**: without any form or shape, and non-materialistic in nature. It is pervasive and exists everywhere throughout the universe. It cannot be detected by any instruments, nor can the human power of observation and discernment detect its existence.
2. **Sambhogakaya (Complete Enjoyment Body)**: it exists in the form of "Light". If a Buddha manifests in this "Complete Enjoyment Body", its intensity of light would be that of one thousand suns, and this manifestation is known as "the Buddha of Sambhogakaya". Since the light intensity is so strong that only those Eighth-stage Bodhisattvas or above can visualize only a fraction of this. (The "Eighth-stage" is an indicator on the attainment of the different "levels of realization", such that its "mental strength" can penetrate beyond the "visible light" spectrum of lights).
3. **Nirmanakaya (Emanation Body)**: it exists in materialistic forms, and can be manifested and reborn as various kinds of sentient beings of different realms.

The power of this 'intrinsic nature', 'Buddhata' or 'primordial nature' is tremendous. Its most fundamental **abilities and properties** include the following features:

1. **Realization of the truth of all matters**. Therefore one of the names of the Buddha is known as '**Sanyak Sambuddha**' in Sanskrit, which means to have an accurate and correct knowledge on the truth of all matters. The above case has confirmed that what the Buddhist teachings have revealed is the "truth" of the natural universe. The above-mentioned case study has proven that the Buddhist teachings have reflected only upon the "truth of the natural reality". The "Light" that was seen by the near-death experienced survivors was not the deities or "God", but is in fact from the 'intrinsic nature', 'Buddhata', or 'primordial nature' of the individual himself/herself.

Ms. Kimberly said, "**I felt that I had gained all kinds of knowledge**. Anything that I want to know, I could comprehend it completely. Even those things that I thought they were very difficult to

understand before, I could now understand them completely. After this kind of understanding, I started to **realize how simple these things are.**" It proves that Ms. Kimberly had recovered part of the super abilities of the 'intrinsic nature', but in no way **this was enduring.** Part of this super abilities is **one's own ability of cognition,** and it does not come from a deity or "god" which exists externally. This proves that the "Light" that exists upon one's death comes from one's own 'intrinsic nature' is indeed true, as has been mentioned in the Buddhist teachings. This kind of ability allows many near-death experienced survivors to review all the happenings of one's own life in an instant.

2. Unconditional compassion: The mercy so described in Buddhist teachings is a sort of compassion without 'greed, hatred, ignorance', unselfishness and the "unconditional great love". It is the basic quality of the 'intrinsic nature', 'Buddhata', or 'primordial nature'. The majority of the near-death experienced survivors can describe the feelings of intense love when being immersed in this illumination of the "Light".

Ms. Kimberly said, "**this light beam symbolized "rebirth" and was full of love.**" This again proves that Ms. Kimberly had recovered part of the special features of the 'intrinsic nature'. Hence, many near-death experienced survivors have undergone drastic changes in their "dispositions",

after experiencing revivals from death, to such an extent that their original working habits and life styles have all been changed. For instance, there had been cases of Triad members who had turned into counselors for children, while profit-oriented financial investors had turned into social workers for the poor, and so on. These cases are rather common, and they are the real life stories of near-death experienced survivors who had recovered part of their own 'intrinsic nature'.

The difference between "compassion" and "love" lies in the fact that compassion is not embedded with 'greed, hatred, ignorance', while love is to the contrary. Most religions generally emphasize on "love" as they cannot comprehend the 'intrinsic nature' properly, while Buddhism covers both the breadths and the depths of the "ultimate reality" of all things. Thus, it emphasizes on "compassion" in order to aim at the recovery of the purity of one's 'intrinsic nature'.

3. The intensity of one thousand suns: Ms. Kimberly said, "I believed that there were no other light sources to be more clean and pure than the lights of those "droplets of light..... **This light beam is so inconceivably brilliant.**" This is a description of the 'intrinsic nature', 'Buddhata', or 'primordial nature' of the special features of the "Sambhogakaya". For such an intensity of brightness, all sentient beings will generally not

With the purity of one's "mind" (**Emptiness**), which induces the transformation of "energies", to the stage of "**Dharmakaya**", and thus permanently uphold the abilities of one's "intrinsic nature", that is, to attain "Buddhahood". Manifested in this form is known as the "Dharmakaya Buddha".

Highest Levels of "Emptiness"



"**Sambhogakaya**"

Light: Manifested in this form is known as the "Sambhogakaya Buddha".

Changes in one's "mind" transform the "energies" into the "**Nirmanakaya**"

Lower Levels of "Emptiness"

"Nirmanakaya" of Purity: Without any "greed, hatred and ignorance" and entanglements in one's "mind", so that the abilities of one's "intrinsic nature" can be upheld permanently in the form of "Nirmanakaya", eg. Lord Buddha Shakyamuni himself, in his "Sambhogakaya" form is known as "Losana Buddha", and in his "Dharmakaya" form is known as "Vairocana Buddha".

Polluted Minds

"Nirmanakaya" of Impurity: With "greed, hatred and ignorance" and entanglements in one's "mind", the abilities of one's "intrinsic nature" will be hindered and limited in scope. In this way, they will become the different kinds of sentient beings in the six realms of the "cycle of karmic existence" (Samsara).

be able to see it. Since near-death experienced survivors have recovered part of the super abilities of their 'primordial nature', they can now see this 'primordial light' which comes from their own selves.

4. **Eternity and Boundlessness:** Ms Kimberly said, "It seemed that I **had lost the sense of timing and had entered into 'eternity'.**" The statement is, indeed, a pure description of the special features of the 'intrinsic nature', 'Buddhata', or 'primordial nature'.

The Application of Light

According to the guidance of the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", if a person can see the appearance of "Light" upon one's death, and if one already has adequate trainings on both "mental concentration" and on "Emptiness" (Sunyata) (please refer to the VCD on "Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness", published by Dudjom Buddhist Association), and further on if one could be able to merge oneself with the "Light", in such an instance, then one might be able to recover one's own primordial 'intrinsic nature' with freedom and autonomy, which is in fact the attainment of "Buddhahood" (or Perfect Enlightenment).

Therefore, the moment when this "Light" occurs is, indeed, the **VERY MOMENT that has been anticipated by all Dharma practitioners** who have been adequately prepared and trained for their entire lives. However, ordinary people have no way to **recognize this 'Light' as oneself and is one's own nature**, and also they do not have adequate trainings on both "mental concentration" and "Emptiness" to merge with it. Thus, when one's "mind" is starting off with any of the negative energies of "greed, hatred, ignorance", **the whole gigantic web of "karmic forces" would be triggered.** [The web of "karmic forces": a gigantic intricacy of a "web/network of energies", together with one's own energy. Due to both "virtuous and non-

virtuous deeds" amassed through countless cycles of past lives, the linkages of "causes and effects" are thus generated. The linkage of these two kinds of energies would jointly induce numerous "tractions", and thus weaving into a piece of gigantic web/network of "tractions", with extremely complicated structures and functions. Since these linkages are criss-crossing with each other in such a complicated manner that this is known as the so-called web/network of "karmic forces". (Please refer to the VCD on "The Inconceivable Law of Cause and Effect", published by Dudjom Buddhist Association.)]

It causes one's 'intrinsic nature' to be transformed again into a materialistic structure with "karmic forces". As this joint combination of one's 'intrinsic nature' with 'matter' is formed by **a gradual process of condensation**, and so the density of this body's materialistic structure is extremely thin. The body at this stage is called the **"body of the Bardo"** (the intermediate stage between death and rebirth) in Vajrayana Buddhism, meaning the "body of the transitional stage after death". It is in the earliest phase so the density of its materialistic structure is thin, and is in an existing form easiest to revive back to its 'intrinsic nature'. At the same time, however, it is also a form of existence to be most readily affected by one's own "mind", which can **trigger a gigantic web/network of "karmic forces"** at any time, and would thus be "fixated" into a certain material "life form".

Once a certain "life form" is being fixated, it resembles a case when one is being trapped inside a certain vessel, and so one might be able to be detached from it only after the vessel has perished. In other words, if you are being fixated as a mouse by the 'tractions', then you would have to go through the entire daily life activities of a mouse all through your life, and would have to live in a squalid environment until its death.

In a detailed analysis on the process of change, it can largely be divided into three stages:

SPARK OF WISDOM

According to the descriptions in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", when a person leaves one's physical body from the exit doors of life and death, one would encounter the "Light". The appearance of the "Light" is due to the fact that when all irksome negative feelings and energies (which are classified into eighty types, categorized under the three major negativities of "greed, hatred and ignorance") would all cease to exist at this very moment, and so the natural power (which has been existing in all sentient beings all along since time immemorial) would completely manifest itself as the "Light". In Buddhism, this is known as "Svabhava" in Sanskrit, meaning 'intrinsic nature', or 'Buddhata' or 'primordial nature'.

1. Drastic changes have taken place when the “spiritual body” leaves the “physical body”, and at an instant, all the “tractions” become malfunctioned and thus causing the “Dharmakaya” to re-appear.
2. The transformation from the “Dharmakaya” form into the “Sambhogakaya” form by displaying itself in the form of “Light”. Hence, all sorts of super abilities will be revived, such that all the events and happenings in one’s past life could be reviewed and realized at an instant.
3. **If a person does not have relevant trainings while alive**, during the “review of past life”, one’s “mind” will naturally trigger the gigantic web/network of “karmic forces”, such that the “Sambhogakaya” form is now transformed into the “Nirmanakaya” form, and there will be no way to revive back to the “Dharmakaya” form. As the density of the materialistic structure of the “Nirmanakaya” form is extremely thin, this is known as the **“Body of Bardo”** in Vajrayana Buddhism.

Thus, if one can return to the “Dharmakaya” form, then all sorts of super abilities can be recovered forever, which is the attainment of “Buddhahood”. In this regard, the attainment of “Buddhahood” means the recovery of one’s own ‘primordial nature’ and its ‘primordial abilities’.

Super Abilities, Supernatural Powers and Levels of Realization

From the “regain of freedom” as induced by death, to the helpless “reincarnation”, the whole process is totally without any “self-autonomy” and self-control. **The only method of rescuing oneself is to receive relevant trainings while one is still alive.** In Buddhism, this is called **“Dharma Practice”**. **As there are different schools in Buddhism, and so there are all sorts of ways for doing one’s “Dharma Practices”.** It is only in Vajrayana Buddhism that it can be so authentically and meticulously in describing all aspects of the “death” experience, and then carry out its trainings in accordance with each of the phases of death both theoretically and practically; while its methods of “Dharma practices” are synchronizing with the physical conditions of one’s body, such that these are mutually conducive to each other during their applications.

It is also only through the Vajrayana teachings that one can utilize scientific principles, and yet it transcends and goes beyond sciences to such an extent that even the levels of success can be further classified into advanced, medium and low levels. Merely the **superior wisdom** in the “utilization of death” through its frenzy changes for the attainment of “Buddhahood” already **goes beyond sciences**. It is also this kind of wisdom of “putting one’s energy right to the target” and of its relevancy that Dharma practitioners of Vajrayana Buddhism could “attain Buddhahood in a single lifetime”, and so do not need to go through billions of years of Dharma practices as in the cases of other schools.

Many Dharma practitioners would make major changes in their attitudes towards life and in their styles of Dharma practices, either if they could recover part of their ‘intrinsic nature’, or else to go through similar experiences that near-death experienced survivors have experienced through their “efforts of Dharma practices”. This kind of experiences that are acquired through “Dharma practices”, especially those experiences of “Emptiness” that was experienced steadily by slowly recovering one’s own ‘intrinsic nature’, can be called as the **“levels of realization”**.

This kind of “levels of realization” would generally be manifested in the deep and profound comprehensions of the Buddhist teachings by Dharma practitioners, who can use direct and simple approaches to elaborate and interpret the abstruseness of the Buddhist teachings, as well as to grasp the essence of the teachings – **“Emptiness”**. Exactly as having the same kind of experience that Ms. Kimberly had: “After this kind of understanding, I started to **realize how simple these things are.**”

However, most people have misunderstood that the “levels of realization” is the possession of super abilities. Followers of other religions, as well as those people who have supernatural powers, may also possess these capabilities, and so this is not the aim and purpose of doing “Dharma practices” in Buddhism, neither is it a “monopoly” of Buddhism itself. **The real “objective” of Dharma practices in Buddhism** is most unique and cannot be described, realized and understood by followers of other religions. It is to **recover one’s primordial ‘intrinsic nature’, or the attainment of “Buddhahood”**.

Yet, this attainment of “Buddhahood” must have to be achieved only through the trainings on and the realizations of “Emptiness”. It is only in the various ranges of experiences of “Emptiness” that one can call it as the “levels of realization” in Buddhism. Other kinds of “super abilities” and “supernatural powers” are those experiences or abilities that are associated with “greed, hatred, ignorance”, and so they cannot be considered as part of the “levels of realization” in Buddhism. This is, indeed, the greatest misunderstanding of Buddhism by both layman and the general public alike.

Therefore, those people who really understand Buddhism, as well as those who have actual experiences of “Emptiness”, would never talk about “super abilities” and “supernatural powers”. On the other hand, those so-called Dharma practitioners who do frequent utterances about “super abilities”

and “supernatural powers” are, in fact, more like a “modern sorcerer” (who just wants to make a living out of this kind of practice) rather than a genuine Dharma practitioner who really possesses certain “levels of realization”, and is more like a follower of other religions than a genuine Buddhist Dharma practitioner. If one can truly understand this very simple fact, then one would not have made a mistake and would not have been cheated when distinguishing between an authentic Dharma practitioner or Guru (spiritual teacher) and a fake Dharma practitioner or Guru. (Please refer to the articles on “Authentic versus Fake Gurus” in both Issues 3 and 4 of the “Lake of Lotus”, as well as in the CD with the same title, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association.)..... *(to be continued)*



SPARK OF WISDOM

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The web of “karmic forces”: a gigantic intricacy of a “web/network of energies”, together with one’s own energy. Due to both “virtuous and non-virtuous deeds” amassed through countless cycles of past lives, the linkages of “causes and effects” are thus generated. The linkage of these two kinds of energies would jointly induce numerous “tractions”, and thus weaving into a piece of gigantic web/network of “tractions”, with extremely complicated structures and functions. Since these linkages are criss-crossing with each other in such a complicated manner that it is so-called as the web/network of “karmic forces”. (Please refer to the VCD on “The Inconceivable Law of Cause and Effect”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).



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The Application of Wisdom



The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (4)



By **Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren**
Translated by **Amy W. F. Chow**



The Skills in the Setting-up of "Plans"

The primary condition for "success" is the setting-up of an "objective". 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", 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**. Why is this necessary? Wouldn't it be better if the "plans" are independent of each other? It would be too troublesome to have

so many considerations in drawing up the various "plans". Since many people find it troublesome to do so, they would only take the major "objective" as the main direction, and would indiscriminately follow one's preferences in drawing up the numerous "plans", resulting in the overlapping of resources among the numerous "plans", or that the "plans" were to become mutually impeding, **wasting a lot of limited resources like manpower, materials, time and efforts**, and thus making these "plans" to become obstacles to effectiveness. As such, the network of inter-connected highways is constantly being congested and blocked, making it impossible to reach the destination of "success". This is most counter-productive as one would have to put in huge amount of efforts for a small achievement. Such an approach would add further pressures to one's already heavy burden, lengthen the time in achieving the "objectives" and make the already strained mental pressures to be more stringent. What will be the outcomes if these happen within the "plans" for one's Dharma practices?



• Kyabje Chadrang Rinpoche

a) Wastages and the Overlapping of Resources:

Take the example of a Dharma practitioner who wants to practice on one's "mental concentration". His/her "objective" of practicing "mental concentration" is, within a year, to be able to enhance his/her "wisdom" in such a way that he/she would be able to think clearly and act calmly even under chaotic situations. His/her "plan" to achieve this "objective" is to practice "meditation" for an hour per day. Another one of his/her "objectives" is to be liberated from the "cycle of karmic existence" (samsara) within this life time, and thus his/her "plan" for this other "objective" is to have one hour of "Dharma practices" everyday. However, due to the fact that one needs to go to work, he/she does not have sufficient time to complete both the meditation and the Dharma practices in the morning. Hence, he/she can only meditate for an hour in the morning, and then does another hour of "Dharma practices" in the evening.

In Vajrayana Buddhism, a complete session of a full-set of "Dharma practices" should consist of various trainings on the "concentration of the mental strength", on the wisdom-realizing of "Emptiness", as well as on the clearing of the "meridians" (Sanskrit: Nadis; Tibetan:Tsa) through the recitation

of mantras. Yet these trainings of the three focal points must be supported by "mental concentration" in order to get the optimal effects. Only in this way would one's state of "realization" (result) be slowly increased, day by day, until one's own wisdom clearly manifests itself.

The function of "mental concentration" is to enable the confused "mind" to have a space of peace. By purposely isolating it from the disturbing conditions, the "mind" can focus on a specific "objective". This will enable oneself to see more clearly so that a perfect answer can be slowly evolved freely and naturally under a systematically-organized way, which is how "wisdom" is to be manifested. This is just like a glass of muddy water which could not be seen through clearly. After allowing it to stand still, the disturbing muddy particles would slowly settle down and deposit to the bottom of the glass. By this time, the glass of water will become crystal clear and you can see it through!

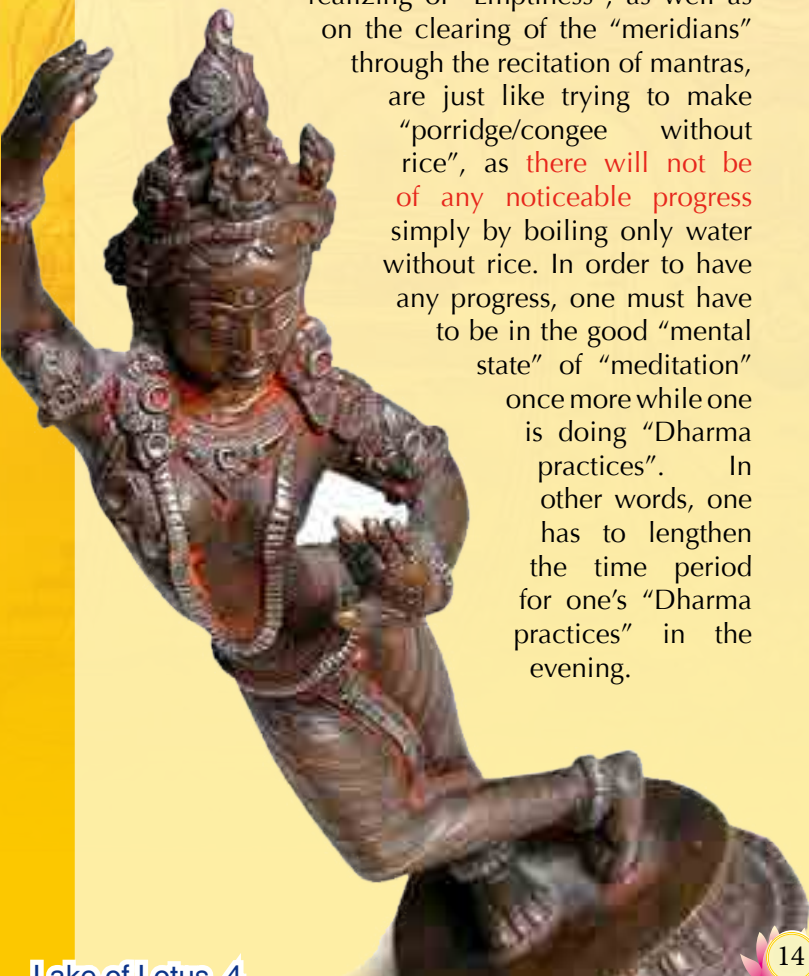
After "meditating" for an hour, the state of "mind" is in its utmost clarity. If this state of "mind" is then being used to further facilitate on the various practices on the "concentration of the mental strength", on the wisdom-realizing of "Emptiness", as well as on the clearing of the "meridians" through the recitation of mantras, the achievements will then be twice that of the efforts that were put into it. Both meditation and Dharma practices aim at training the "mind" to become much clearer and are thus complementary to each other. Hence, if the Dharma practices are undertaken immediately after the meditation session, it not only doubles its effects but can in fact produces enormous powers and forces which far exceed the amount of efforts put in, just like the adding of more fuels into an existing fire. Hence, if the two are undertaken together side by side, one's "wisdom" will be manifested naturally through the accumulation of years of repeated efforts, one's "mental strength" will be continuously strengthened, and one's "visualization" will become much clearer. One would gradually tune in towards the experience of "Emptiness", while one's "meridians" would become cleared and thus



give rise to the “power of mantras”.

However, if after “meditating” for one hour while the “mind” is at its clearest state, when it has to be affected by the disturbing mentality of having to hurry to work, then the good effects from “meditation”, though may not be lost immediately, but **little of these would be left behind**. While the residual “mental concentration” may, to some extent, help in one’s dealings with the daily chores, it would not be sufficient and effective enough in facilitating the generation of one’s own wisdom. Hence, it is only through years of perseverance in one’s undertaking of the various “Dharma practices” everyday that one may eventually expect and be able to slowly generate one’s own wisdom. In fact, if one really has the wisdom, one would have already put one’s own efforts and time into good use.

Similarly, without the tuning-in of one’s “mental state” through “meditation”, the various practices on the “concentration of the mental strength”, on the wisdom-realizing of “Emptiness”, as well as on the clearing of the “meridians” through the recitation of mantras, are just like trying to make “porridge/congee without rice”, as **there will not be of any noticeable progress** simply by boiling only water without rice. In order to have any progress, one must have to be in the good “mental state” of “meditation” once more while one is doing “Dharma practices”. In other words, one has to lengthen the time period for one’s “Dharma practices” in the evening.



If one is to take substantial effectiveness as a standard of assessment, the effect of having both meditation and Dharma practices to be undertaken together in an uninterrupted session of two hours per day would be far greater than if they are to be undertaken separately, with one hour for each, within a one-month’s span. Even though the same amount of time is spent each day, that is having the same “quantity” of two hours, there would be a marked difference in terms of the “quality” of the outcomes between the two. In general, the effect of undertaking both meditation and Dharma practices in an uninterrupted session of one-and-a-half hours per day is far greater than if they are to be undertaken separately, with one hour for each, for half a month’s period. In other words, at least half an hour is wasted every day. Even though one may have spent lots of time and efforts and toil like a cow, or even be praised by others as being hard working, the speed for one’s progress on one’s Dharma practices will be very slow. In this way, it is most likely that one would not be able to experience any “realizations” by the time one dies. The efforts that one has put in are incommensurate with the gains. **Such kind of “plan” that has been drawn up without the wisdom of thinking is more apparent than real, and thus one would not have much to achieve even with the continued efforts of “Dharma practices” in one’s lifetime.**

Hence, the skills needed in the drawing up of a “plan” must assess in details the commonalities among different “objectives”. When drawing up the time-lines of a “plan”, emphasis should be put on maximizing the utilization of resources and making skillful arrangements in such a way as to meet the needs of different “objectives”, as well as to draw on the strengths of some “objectives” in order to make up for the inadequacies of the others. **If one can draw up one’s “plans” by making good use of the time, the effective utilization of resources and without wasting one’s efforts, the “plans” being set would then be highly efficient and pragmatic to achieve success easily as some kind of “chain strategies”.**

b) Mutual Impediments and Contradictions: Some people would like to have both successes



in their careers as well as in their Dharma practices. Their major “objective” is to be liberated from the “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara) in this life, while their medium-term “objective” is to have a successful career. Hence, they would tend to say “as long as I have the money with no worry for my living, then I can focus on my Dharma practices”; or “with a successful career, I can focus on my Dharma practices”; or “I’ll focus on my Dharma practices after retirement”. Thus, their original plan each day is to undertake one hour of Dharma practices, while spending another ten hours on their career. Then, when they find that there is insufficient time, they will either cancel or shorten the time for one’s Dharma practices. And if there is still insufficient time, they will even shorten the time for sleeping, resulting in their feelings of extreme tiredness both physically and mentally, helplessness and self-blame. The outcome is that they may not be successful in their careers. Even if they are successful, they will be so exhausted that they could no longer focus on their Dharma practices, which will bring them guilty feelings. Such kind of “plans” would be so full of contradictions and are mutually impeding.



• *Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche*

Then, which is more important: one’s career or Dharma practices? While they would like to have both, but this is impossible due to their limited capabilities. For these people, they are rather **confused and greedy in their time management**. They understand very well that Dharma practice is very important and is an integral part of their trainings to become liberated from the “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara). Without this training, they will not have the active controlling capability to be

freed from the “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara), and thus will be helplessly subject to the forces of the “law of cause and effect” (karma). As a result, they will end up, without any choice, to be continuously reincarnated into different realms of living beings. While they may said that they will “focus mainly on Dharma practices”, yet in actuality, their “objective” is to “put their careers before Dharma practices”. Their priority, in terms of their mindset and behaviour, is to solve the problems right in front of them. All the rests, including Dharma practices, become only secondary.

With this kind of subconscious mentality, all **their “plans” have been rendered meaningless and full of contradictions**. The Lord Buddha has mentioned, time and again, that life is “impermanent”, and that death is unpredictable and may come at anytime. If one waits until one’s retirement, one’s bodily and health conditions would no longer be in the prime stage. To practice under such a state of health **will be hard to yield any good results**. If one wishes to wait for success in one’s career, one should be aware that perhaps **death may come earlier than expected**.

It takes time to train and accumulate one’s own “concentration”, the “mental strength” and wisdom. **The earlier one receives the various trainings and practices, the greater the chances for one’s success**. Hence when one makes “plans” for one’s “objectives”, and puts “career” before “Dharma practices”, it can be foreseen that one’s expected achievement on the major “objective” of being liberated from the “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara) will be doomed to failure. The medium-term “objective” of having a successful career has conversely become the obstacle for achieving the major “objective”. The “plans” that were set up for achieving these two objectives will now be **mutually impeding upon each other**.

Is there any way of resolving this? Yes, there

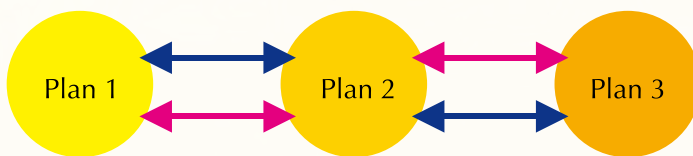


is a way out, but the **crucial point** is that the executor must have to be determined and persistent. All “objectives”, be they medium-term or short-term ones, should be set up in such a way that they can help and facilitate the attainment of the major “objective”. Hence, whether one’s “career” will be successful or not is not an important matter. The key point is whether the “plans” that one makes for one’s “career” can help and facilitate the attainment of the major “objective” on being liberated from the “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara). This is, indeed, one of the main commonalities for the different “objectives”.

the “career” as part of one’s “daily life”, where it is a training ground for one’s own “concentration”, the “mental strength” and wisdom. When one encounters any problems on human relationships or other difficulties of one’s “career”, one can learn how to solve them slowly through analyzing the problems calmly, thinking through them carefully in a cool-headed fashion, and adopting an accommodating approach. This process is a process for one to train and apply one’s own “concentration”, “mental strength” and wisdom. So long as one can link up **the two together in one’s mindset, and then apply them in one’s daily life**, then slowly one will be able to elevate these three aspects to a higher level.

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Resolution of Contradictions: In assessing carefully, with details, the commonalities of the “objectives”, through skillful arrangements in order to draw on the strengths of different “objectives” to make up for the inadequacies of other “objectives”, it is indeed the best way to resolve contradictions and mutual impediments among the various “plans”.



Commonalities:

- Compatible
- Complementary
- Interdependent

Contradictions:

Carefully assess the commonalities among different objectives, resolve the contradictions through skillful arrangements.

In assessing carefully, with details, the commonalities of the “objectives”, through skillful arrangements in order to draw on the strengths of different “objectives” to make up for the inadequacies of other “objectives”, it is indeed the best way to deal with the contradictions and mutual impediments among the different “plans”. **All things will be set up in accordance to the final attainment of the major “objective” as the focal point.** If one does not have adequate time, one should first of all consider how to re-arrange the time for one’s “career” as to whether one should shorten the time spent on it, instead of trying to shorten the time on one’s “Dharma practices”. Enough sleep is an important step in stabilizing one’s emotions and in regulating one’s psychosomatic state of health. Hence, it is also one of the commonalities for the all the “objectives” and so must be maintained. If the time for sleeping is reduced, then one’s decisiveness, alertness, as well as one’s powers of thinking and of decision-making, together with one’s health conditions, will all deteriorate. **This will directly affect the speed and quality in attaining all the “objectives”.** Hence, the time for sleeping should not be reduced in regard to its important impacts upon all other aspects.

The key point for “Dharma practices” is the enhancements of one’s “concentration”, the “mental strength” and wisdom. Apart from having **intensive “professional trainings”**, one can also strengthen one’s abilities in these three aspects **through the penetrative influence of normal training** in one’s “daily life”, and thus further help to consolidate these three aspects through their “applications”. **The skill needed is to have the right “mindset”, in recognizing**

Whether one’s “career” is successful or not is unimportant, simply because its failure will not directly affect the attainment of the major “objective”. It will only affect one’s financial ability, face, quality of life and the views from



one's relatives. Even if one sacrifices the time of one's sleeping and of Dharma practices for his "career", there is no guarantee that his "career" will then be successful. Conversely, **if one can have the mindset of having the courage to readily "pick things up and put them down" without any attachments, then all these so-called obstacles will only become an enabling force to help oneself for the further elevation of one's power of "concentration", "mental strength" and wisdom.**

Many people have mistakenly thought that the effects of spending so much time on "Dharma practices" can only be realized when one dies, and that these will not be helpful to one's works during one's lifetime. As they fail to see the functions and pressing needs for "Dharma practices", they will tend to either shorten both the time and quantity of practices for, or shelf off, or even give up altogether, their "plans" of "Dharma practices" when they encounter unfavourable circumstances such as insufficient time, heavy work pressures, or objections from family members.

Many great people, including successful persons in the present world, would like to have some regular time periods off, or even daily, for "quiet thinking". During these periods, they will not be disturbed irrespective of what happens. **Many constructive, innovative and systemic plans are bred under such kind of environments.** Tsang Kwok Fan, one of the great officials of the Ching Dynasty, had the usual practice of sparing two hours per day for meditating in a quiet room. Bill Gates, the CEO of Microsoft, spends two days per week

in a quiet place to review his thinking process. In modern terminology, we call it "quiet thinking", while it can be called as "quiet filtering" in "Dharma practices".

While reducing disturbances, one starts to pause and ponder with deep "concentration", focusing on the thinking through of a particular situation or issue is termed "quiet thinking". **If the issue that one thinks through is related to the freeing from the "cycle of karmic existence" (samsara), such that one can be ultimately freed from all bondages, with great liberty and autonomy, and would not be troubled by any issues that will arouse one's emotions. Such kind of a thinking process, which can thoroughly help to uproot all of one's troubles, can thus be called as "quiet filtering".**

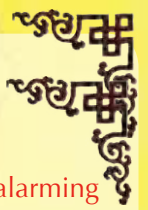
Both "quiet thinking" and "quiet filtering" are products of "concentration", with their differences only lie in the degree of "concentration" required. The levels of "concentration" for both can be enhanced through years of daily and habitual practices on their applications. **In this respect, "wisdom" is the crystallization of "quiet thinking", "quiet filtering", and the power of "concentration".** Hence,

the three focal points of "Dharma practices" (namely: "concentration", "mental strength" and wisdom) are, indeed, **significant enabling forces** to substantially help one's works while one is still living. Even though they may seem to be invisible, they are in fact **substantial enablers.**

If one is merely concerned about the immediate benefits, toils like a cow, lacks of thinking like a pig, uses "being busy" as an excuse, and thus do not allow oneself to have any space for "quiet thinking", it will only lead to the suffocation of one's own "wisdom". One will eventually give up "Dharma practices", and thus will not even leave an "escape path" for



Padmasambhava with his 25 disciples in a Chimphu cave



The Lord Buddha with other Bodhisattvas

at an unpredictable time with an alarming speed. Those who give up “Dharma practices” are fools who only attend to trivialities at the expense of the most crucial. Those who shelf off “Dharma practices” are merely “coward escapers”. Those who shorten the time for “Dharma practices” claim themselves to be intelligent people, but in fact they are just “self-defeatists”. All these three types of people are doomed to failure at the end of the day, and both “this-worldly” and “other-worldly” pursuits would become fruitless and meaningless.... (to be continued)



Guru Rinpoche, the Second Buddha of Our Time

oneself. As a result, one will be “reincarnated” life after life in this endless “cycle of karmic existence” (samsara). There will be never-ending careers and work pressures, indefensible obstacles from family members, with endless troubles and emotional conflicts all through these countless lives. There is no ending to it! However, one might still think that he/she is an intelligent person who has “already tried his/her very best” in life.

Faced with endless troubles, one will normally look for a temporary release by just finding a breathing space, so to speak. Then, one would only try to solve those problems that are in front of him. However, without the “mindset” to deal with issues on a long-term basis, both “this-worldly” career and the “other-worldly” Dharma practices will have the “domino effect” to be collapsed together, since the two can no longer be complementary to each other. “Dharma practices” is the only way out to end all those endless troubles, which is like the knife in cutting out the root of the troubles, as well as the hand of wisdom which uproots all these troubles. “Dharma practices” is more pressing than any other worldly careers and concerns because death comes

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Chain Strategies: The skills in the drawing up of “plans” is to carefully assess in details the commonalities of different “objectives”. In drawing up the time-lines of the “plans”, try to maximize the utilization of resources through skillful arrangements in order to meet the needs of different “objectives”, as well as to draw on the strengths of some “objectives” to make up for the inadequacies of other “objectives”. If one can draw up one’s “plans” by making good use of the time, the effective utilization of resources and without wasting one’s efforts, the “plans” being set would then be highly efficient and pragmatic to achieve success easily as some kind of “chain strategies”.



“Authentic” versus “Fake” Gurus (Spiritual Teachers) (2)



By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye
Translated by Byron K.K. Yiu

Classifications of the Different Kinds of “Gurus”

Generally speaking, for the practice of “Vajrayana” Buddhism, there are six different types of “Gurus” (spiritual teachers). But, in essence, there are three major types.

(A) For the General Classification of “Gurus”:

- 1. General “Gurus”:** this refers to those “Gurus” (spiritual teachers) who are experienced in Dharma practices. “Spiritual teachers” can be further classified into four types: general Dharma practitioners of sentient beings, Bodhisattvas who have already attained the stage of the “First Level (Bhumi)”, “Nirmanakaya Buddhas” and “Sambhogakaya Buddhas”. Even for those general Dharma practitioners of sentient beings, one needs to match the eight basic criteria as listed in the *Bodhisattvahood Sastra* in order to be considered as a “perfect” teacher. These eight criteria are: (i) One should have profound knowledge of the Mahayana Sutras; (ii) One should have kept the “Bodhisattva Vows” strictly; (iii) One should have achieved certain “levels of realization” in one’s Dharma practices; (iv) One should possess great compassion in helping all sentient beings; (v) One should have great courage without fear of anything; (vi) One should possess great patience and condescension; (vii)



• The Great Master of Ka’ dampa :
Lord Atisa Dipankara



• *Jetsun Milarepa, the Saint of Tibet and the Great Master of Kagyudpa*

One should not have regrets and doubts on one's practices; (viii) One should have good communication skills in both speaking and writing. Hence, this kind of Guru can be compared to the king of a country, whose relationship with us is very far away.

2. **“Gurus” who can guide others through the teachings of the Holy Dharma:** Dharma practitioners of both lay and monks who have taken the “Pratimoksa Vows” and kept them strictly, and who have also fulfilled the eight criteria mentioned above, can be classified under this type of “Gurus”. This means that if one has already taken the “Pratimoksa Vows” and kept them strictly, whether one is a “lay” or a “monk” is not important, and that one can be a “spiritual teacher” who can guide others through the teachings of the Holy Dharma. Hence, this kind of “Guru” can be compared to one's uncle, whose relationship with us is still a bit distant.
3. **“Gurus” for the Confessions of One's Sins:** this is the kind of “Gurus” to whom one can confess and repent one's sins, in order to help cleanse one's own transgressions of vows. Hence, this kind of “Guru” can be compared to one's mother, whose relationship with us is already very direct.
4. **“Gurus” who Give the Ripening Empowerments with Samayas**
5. **“Gurus” who Transmit the Liberating Instructions of the Tantras**
6. **“Gurus” who Transmit the “Pith Oral Instructions” and Make Prophecies**

Among these six types, the first three types of “Gurus” can be considered as the “outer” ordinary “Gurus” who can

teach the Holy Dharma in accordance with the different levels and conditions of the sentient beings. On the other hand, the latter three types are considered as the “inner” extraordinary “Gurus”, who are the specific kinds of “Gurus” so often mentioned in the Tantras of “Vajrayana Buddhism”. Due to the fact that the Dharma practices of “Vajrayana Buddhism” are very unique, and so it very much emphasizes on the actual practices of the Holy Dharma. Judging upon the qualities, abilities and dispositions of the disciples, the Guru then decides whether he will accept a disciple or not; and so a “Guru” can refuse to teach if a person does not possess the right and necessary attitudes, qualities and qualifications. This has nothing to do as to whether the “Guru” is compassionate enough or not, and so in this regard, it is most unique among the various schools of Buddhism. Hence, the requirements for allowing a “Guru” to teach and transmit the Holy Dharma to others are very strict, indeed, as one should possess the true authorizations from one's **“Lineage Gurus”** in order that one can teach the Holy Dharma and to accept others as one's own disciples.

On the other hand, there are no requirements as to whether a “Guru” needs to be a “monk” or not, as “Vajrayana Buddhism” emphasizes on the axiom that one's “mental defilements are indeed one's own enlightenment (Bodhi).” Therefore, whether it be good times or bad times, whether it be the “three poisons” or all kinds of virtues, whether it be love and desires, as well as all the trivial matters of a normal “daily life”, can all become the targets for one's own Dharma practices of “mind-training”. Hence,



• *Je Tsong-Kha-Pa, The Founder of Gelugpa of Tibetan Buddhism*



• *The late Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche (left) with Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche*

there is no need to require a person to be a monk so as to help him/her to go for Dharma practices through the cutting off of all these “mental defilements”, as in the case of “Hinayana”.

Here, we would like to elaborate further, in more details, concerning the specialities of the latter three types of “inner” extraordinary “Gurus”.

(B) For the Specific Classification of “Gurus” in Its Essence:

1. **“Gurus” who Give the Ripening Empowerments with Samayas (Commitments)** : With the instructions and guidance from this kind of “Gurus”, the disciples can receive the “ripening empowerments with samayas” so as to become authorized to enter into the Mandala of the “Yidam”(deity), and to accept the “Samayas” (commitments). In Tibetan, this is called “WANG”. Hence, this kind of “Guru” can be called as the “Guru of the First Great Kindness” and can be compared to one’s own father of the “inner” level (whose relationship with us is most direct by ripening our faculties), as one’s total reliance on this kind of “Guru” with pure and clean “samayas” will enable oneself to achieve attainments in “this very lifetime”. Thus, the disciples should pay great respects and make prostrations and offerings to this “Guru”, and should perceive him as the real Buddha himself.
2. **“Gurus” who Transmit the Liberating Instructions of the Tantras** : After receiving the “ripening empowerments with samayas”, some of these disciples can further receive the authorization of “oral instructions and transmissions” in order that they are allowed to formally practice those particular Dharma practices. In Tibetan, this is called “LUNG”. These disciples must further receive the liberating instructions of the Tantras, and learn how to apply them in practicing the “Sadhanas” (ritual texts on practices), and so on. By following the instructions and teachings of this kind of “Guru” with pure and clean “samayas”, the disciples can achieve attainments “with this very body”. Hence, this kind of “Guru” can be called as the “Guru of the Second Great Kindness”

and can be compared to one’s own eyes of the “secret” level (which is that part of ourselves to direct us). Thus, the disciples should pay great respects and make prostrations and offerings to this “Guru”, and should perceive him as the real Buddha himself.

3. **“Gurus” who Transmit the “Pith Oral Instructions” and Make Prophecies** : In order for a few disciples who have already received the teachings and instructions on the “Sadhanas” to progress even further on their paths, it is necessary for them to receive more detailed instructions from one’s own “Guru” on the further elaborations of the various practices, as well as on the “pith oral instructions”, and the direct “pointing-out” instruction on one’s “mind”. In Tibetan, this is called “TRI”. Furthermore, one’s own “Guru”, in verifying the “levels of realization” of a disciple, may particularly grant the making of prophecies for a special disciple. All these means can help the disciple to speed up one’s attainments on the various practices, and can thus avoid his long time of groping with doubts. By following the instructions and teachings of this kind of “Guru” with pure and clean “samayas”, the disciple can achieve attainments “with this very body”. Hence, this kind of “Guru”, who particularly gave the direct “pointing-out” instruction on one’s “mind”, can be called as the “Guru of the Third and of the Utmost Kindness” in becoming one’s own **“Root**



• *Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche*

Guru” (Tsa’wai Lama), and can thus be compared to one’s own heart of the “innermost secret” level (which is the most important part of ourselves for giving us our own “life forces and wisdom”). Thus, the disciple should pay great respects and make prostrations and offerings to this “Guru”, and should perceive him as the real Buddha himself.

The Root Guru (Tsa’wai Lama)

If a disciple can simultaneously receive all the complete teachings and instructions of the three categories of “empowerments”(wang), “oral transmissions”(lung), and “pith oral instructions”(tri), as well as the direct “pointing-out” instruction on one’s “mind”, from one and the same “Guru”, then this “Guru” will become one’s most beloved **Crowning Jewel – the most important “Root Guru” with “the utmost loving kindness of all”!** One should realize that one’s own “Root Guru” is the “Total Embodiments” of the “Three Jewels” (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) and the “Three Roots” (Lama, Yidam and Khandro). Furthermore, one’s “Root Guru” has aggregated in him all the noble qualities of the “body, speech, mind, qualities and activities” of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in this entire universe, and is, in fact, the source and the root of all blessings, accomplishments and activities. Hence, the extreme and utmost kindness of one’s “Root Guru” is even far more immense and vast, both in terms of its depth and breadth, than any oceans in this world and is thus totally boundless, immeasurable and incomprehensible to the human cognition. Hence, the disciple should try one’s best to most respectfully make offerings to, to serve and to become close to, and to generate strong devotion, fervent regard with pure and complete faith and reliance upon, one’s “Root Guru” as the most treasured and unique **“Wish-fulfilling Jewel”** (“Rinpoche” in Tibetan means the “most precious gem”) in this entire universe!

A Dharma practitioner should choose to follow a “Guru” according to one’s own levels and stages of “Dharma practices”. It is just like after finishing “primary school”, one should then further study in “high school”, and so on. By the time when one moves on to the postgraduate level of a “doctoral candidature”, then it is now the time when one should start choosing a “doctoral supervisor” (that is,

the “Root Guru” for one’s own “Dharma practices”). After finding one’s “Root Guru”, the disciple should try his/her utmost to preserve **the purity and cleanliness of one’s own “Samayas” with his/her “Root Guru”**. “Samayas” refer to all those “commitments” that the disciple has made in front of the “Guru”. These “commitments” can be all sorts of things, including all the “Three Vows of the Three Yanas”, as well as those “vows” that need to be fulfilled while practicing the “Sadhanas”, or for doing long-term retreats, or for the recitations of a certain amount of mantras, and so on.

The term “Samaya” has been most commonly misunderstood to be that a disciple can only be allowed to follow one “Guru”. These days, such kind of misunderstanding has been used and manipulated by some people for their own ends. In fact, Dharma practitioners should first consider their own capabilities and actual needs in order to decide on the number of “Gurus” that they want to have for their own “Dharma practices”. **Once a disciple has decided that a certain “Guru” is to become one’s own “Root Guru”, then he/she should stop further observations, and should put in “one hundred percent” of one’s own faith for the “Root Guru”**. Otherwise, it would be quite difficult to have any progress in one’s “Dharma practices”. In the past, some Dharma practitioners would have to observe their “Gurus” for as long as twelve years before they finally make the decision.



• *Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche*

Once a disciple perceives the “Guru” as one’s “Root Guru”, one should know how to shorten one’s own distance and be in harmony with him, to understand and know the characters and thinking patterns of one’s Guru, and even to have “mind-to-mind communications” with him, which is the exact meaning of the practice of “Guru Yoga”. This is, indeed, one of the many “pith oral instructions” in all “Vajrayana practices”. As the “Guru” is the “treasury of the Holy Dharma”, just like the huge snowy mountain, while the disciple’s strong faith is like the sunlight which can melt the snowy mountain to release its water in order to moisten all living creatures in the entire universe. **Once the strong faith of the disciple touches the “heart of the Guru”, all the “blessings” of the Lineage Masters would come shining in like sunlight to engulf the disciple**. But, one should bear in mind that this “Guru” must have to possess all kinds of virtues, wisdom, realizations, pure and clean “lineages”,



• *Guru Rinpoche, the Second Buddha of Our Time*

and should be a “great Dharma practitioner” with excellent “mind-training”, in order for this argument to be valid.

Another reason is this: **if and only if when the disciple sees the “Guru” as one’s “Root Guru” that the “Guru” would think that the disciple is a suitable vessel, mature enough and fit to be transmitted the whole lot of Dharma practices including “empowerments, oral transmissions, detailed instructions and pith oral instructions” to this disciple.** Before receiving these precious teachings, the disciple should make enormous offerings (not only material offerings, but more importantly spiritual offerings) to one’s “Root Guru” in order to accumulate enough merits and wisdom. If one does not do so, it will only wear down one’s own virtuous effects. Sudhana said, “The great ‘bodhi’ (enlightenment) of all Buddhas comes from their making offerings to all of their Gurus.”

Regardless of what kinds of offerings one is making, whether it be one’s own wealth, or knowledge, or power, or through the “practices of body, speech and mind”, the disciple should make the entire offerings to one’s “Guru” with the utmost sincerity of heart. **But, the most splendid of all offerings is “Dharma offering” which is to diligently “practice the Holy Dharma” for the benefits of all sentient beings.** The *Jataka Sastra (or Stories of the Buddha’s Previous Incarnations)* says, “If the disciple would like to repay the kindness of one’s “spiritual teacher”, the most splendid offering is to follow exactly what the “spiritual

teacher” teaches one to practice. To follow what the “spiritual teacher” teaches one to practice without even a single minor breach is the best kind of offerings, and is also the best way that the Guru would like to see happened.”

When a disciple really considers such a “Guru” as one’s “Root Guru”, and thus makes offerings to the “Root Guru” whole-heartedly in one’s “body, speech and mind”, and yet if the disciple still cannot receive the whole lot of Dharma practices including “empowerments, oral transmissions, detailed instructions and pith oral instructions” from one’s “Guru”, then it may be due to one or two of the following reasons:

1. Because you do not have strong faith or enough merits, and your behaviours **do not meet the requirements of being a “Root Disciple”**.
2. Because you do not have the **right levels and abilities**, and lack of wisdom and efforts on “Dharma practice”.
3. As this “Guru” may not have enough practices of his own, **and so he might not be able to give you the whole set of teachings and instructions.** The reason is that most of the ordinary “Gurus” will only have the teachings on how to practice the “Sadhanas” for “empowerments and oral transmissions”, but only a very few of them will have the actual experiences and realizations in order to teach the “detailed instructions and pith oral instructions.”
4. There are many levels of the “detailed instructions”, and **those ordinary “Gurus” only will have the most basic level of the “detailed instructions”**. The profound levels of the “detailed instructions” should be closely related to the “training of one’s mind”, and should also be tied up with the “teachings of the Bardo”.

The So-Called “Casual Empowerments”

The so-called “casual empowerment” (which is not a normal practice in traditional practices of “Vajrayana Buddhism”, but is now happening so often all over the world) does not transmit “Vows”, and so there is no linkage of “Samayas” between the one who gives the empowerment and the one who receives the empowerment. **This is, indeed, a big question as to whether these so-called “casual empowerments”, with no “Vows” and “Samayas” to be taken during the process, can still be considered as valid kinds of “empowerments” at all?**

Anyway, according to some people, the rationale for this kind of so-called “casual empowerment” **can be viewed as a good connection of a virtuous deed between the “Guru” and his disciples**, but then one will have to wait for a long time in the unknown future – whether it be this life or even after countless lives – in order that one day this condition may mature and become the “cause” for them to meet again. As from the point of view for the spreading of the Holy Dharma, a wide connection of virtuous deeds between the “Guru” and his disciples maybe a good thing, as this may help to plant the seeds of “bodhi” (enlightenment) inside the sentient beings’ minds

such that the sentient beings can generate joy and belief towards the Buddhist teachings. However, this is rather futile if one is in the process for the actual request and practice of the Holy Dharma.

However, when the one who receives the “empowerment” generates greedy desires, and wishes to use the strength and power generated by the “empowerment” to fulfill one’s own desires for either the increase of one’s benefits, blessings, longevity and wealth, or of one’s control over other people, or else to defeat one’s own enemies or those people who usurp one’s loved ones, or to use this as a means to show one’s own pride and prejudice, and so on, in such a way and to such an extent that one will slowly develop the mentality of thinking that the more “empowerments” one receives, the better it will be for oneself. If this is the case for many people, then this kind of so-called “casual empowerments” will only increase the “greed, hatred and ignorance” of the individuals and will further distort the “mindsets” of these people by giving wrong conceptions of what “empowerments” are supposed to be. This is totally contradictory to the real meaning of what “empowerments” are supposed to be in the Buddhist Dharma. Hence, for those who have wrong conceptions when receiving this kind of so-called “casual empowerments”, this is, indeed, a great tragedy!

On the other hand, if the main goal for the one who holds and gives out these so-called “casual empowerments” is for one’s own “fame, benefits, respects, and offerings from others”, and if these “empowerments” and Dharma teachings transmitted are held in the name of “increasing one’s wealth, longevity, power and desires” so as to attract a lot of people in receiving them, then these “gurus” themselves are already transgressing their “Vows” and breaking their “Samayas”. Whether their lineages and/or authorizations are true or not are no longer relevant now since they have already broken their “Vows” and

“Samayas”, and so one can still classify these “gurus” as “fake” ones. Not only these “empowerments” and Dharma teachings are of no benefits for both the “givers” and the “receivers” of these “empowerments”, but these will become the “causes” for all of them to fall into the “three lower realms” in the future. Hence, if the lineage of the one who holds and gives “empowerment” has already been polluted, or if the lineage and authorization of the “guru” are both false, then “those who receives” these “empowerments” and Dharma teachings would be hurt to such an extent that it will be numerous times beyond one’s imagination.

Kyabje Chadrak Gyel Dorje Rinpoche, who is recognized as one of the greatest realized masters of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, constantly reminded us that: “For those “gurus” who transmit Dharma teachings and practices but don’t follow the rules of transmissions, or don’t have the necessary qualities and qualifications as “gurus”, when they casually transmit the “empowerments” and “teachings”, they will all get into troubles with the different “negative karmic consequences” of short life-spans, numerous illnesses, and many obstacles while they are still alive. These “negative karmic consequences” will also be applied to those who receive their teachings and transmissions. All the “empowerments” should have all those necessary “Vows” and “Samayas” (commitments) that go along with them, and should also be kept by both the “guru” and the “disciple” during the process of the “empowerment”. Otherwise, they will all get into troubles, that is, all those “negative karmic consequences”! Once the “empowerment” is granted, the relationship between the “guru” and the “disciple” in the form of “Samayas” will be naturally and instantaneously established, and should not be broken by either party.”

Hence, while a Dharma practitioner’s “views and knowledge” can be extensive and vast in scope, one’s “Dharma practices” should be very focused, proficient and with great depths. If one does not know who these “gurus” are supposed to be, and if there is no such necessity to do so, one should not casually receive “empowerments” from them. To this end, the so-called “casual empowerment” is even more so.



The “Four Principles of Reliances and Non-Reliances”

Our Original Master, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, had already set out “Four Principles of Reliances and Non-Reliances” to assist all Dharma practitioners as how to distinguish between “true” or “false” Dharma teachings:-

1. To rely upon the meanings that lie beyond the words, but do not rely upon the words alone: the understanding of Dharma should be from their meanings, but should not cling onto the wordings or the metaphors that were used by those who explain the Dharma. In other words, “not to use the words to impair upon the dictions, and not to use the dictions to impair upon the meanings.”



FIVE DHAYANI BUDDHAS

2. **To rely upon wisdom awareness, but do not rely upon ordinary consciousness:** “wisdom” refers to one’s spiritual wisdom, while “knowledge” means one’s worldly intelligence. One should use one’s wisdom in order to understand the Buddhist Dharma, but should not use one’s worldly intelligence in distorting the true meanings of the Buddhist Dharma. For example, when selecting a “Guru”, one should be using one’s spiritual wisdom instead of using one’s feelings and emotions.
3. **To rely upon the “absolute meanings”, but do not rely upon the “interpretable meanings” alone:** when our Original Master, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, first taught the Holy Dharma, he tried to use some adapted “interpretable meanings” (Drang Don) of the Buddhist Dharma in order to help those sentient beings to understand more easily so that they can concentrate on their practices. However, once the disciples’ levels had been advanced, they should be able to correctly apprehend the “absolute meanings” (Nges Don) of the Buddhist Dharma, in order that they can follow the “true meanings” of the Buddhist Dharma, through the practices of which it could lead them to enlightenment.
4. **To rely upon the Dharma, but do not rely upon the person who expounds it:** the “Holy Dharma” has its “true meanings”, which will not change according to the different interpretations by various people. The “person” is what we generally meant by the common people. As different persons, who have different levels of wisdom, would understand the “true meanings” of the “Holy Dharma” differently, and so they will have their own interpretations of the “Holy Dharma”. Hence, the final answer is to follow the “true meanings” of the “Holy Dharma”, and not upon the interpretations of the various people.

[These four principles can be found from the following sources : *The Southern Version of the Great Entrance into Extinction and Cessation Sutra (the Mahaparinirvana Sutra) Vol. VI; The Sutra of the Great Assembly of Bodhisattvas from Every Direction (Mahavaipulya Mahasamnipata Sutra), Vol. XXIX; The*

Sutra of the Great Upaya of the Required Favours by the Buddha, Vol. VII; The Sastra for the Greater Prajna-paramita Sutra (Mahaprajnaparamita Sastra), Vol. IX; The Yogacarabhumi Sastra, Vol. XLV; The Essay on the Meaning of Mahayana, Vol. XI; The Teaching on the Ritual for Taking Refuge and Paying Respects to Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, Upper Section.]

Hence, for “Vajrayana Buddhism”, a “Lineage Guru” is one who has a pure and clean lineage, has been authorized for the transmissions of teachings and practices, has possessed both qualities of virtue and wisdom, as well as well-versed in the teachings with realizations, and should be perceived as the “Total Embodiments” of the “Three Jewels” (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), and thus should not be seen as just any other ordinary person. Therefore, to follow such kind of a “Guru” to practice is no different as to follow the “true meanings” of the “Holy Dharma” for one’s own “Dharma practices”. The “truthfulness” of the “Holy Dharma” cannot be directly explained by words. Indeed, there is no one who can clearly and directly explain it all. It requires a person to have the actual practice of the “Holy Dharma” in order to generate personal realizations as criteria for its verification. But, then, who can verify the degree or level of realizations that you have? And who can guide you to upgrade such realizations?

Therefore, the source of the “Holy Dharma”, particularly the criteria used for the “verification on the realizations of the actual practice”, does not have any “Sutras” to rely upon, and so it still has to rely upon the “Guru” who is experienced and realized. In order to leave the labyrinth in this life so as to be liberated from “Samsara”, one still has to rely upon the “Guru’s” genuine Dharma teachings. For example, on the “theoretical underpinnings of actual practices” of the “Holy Dharma”, on “the levels of actual practices” of the “Holy Dharma”, on “the pith oral instructions of actual practices” of the “Holy Dharma”, on “the verifications of the realizations” of the “Holy Dharma”, and on “the elevations of one’s realizations” of the “Holy Dharma”. For all these different aspects, if one solely relies upon the knowledge level of the “Holy Dharma” by referring to the Sutras, and then try to grope your way through this maze, you will need to go through

countless lifetimes within the time span of “Three Great Kalpas” (meaning millions and millions of years) with unexpected consequences, which means that you will have to continue wandering for a very very long time before you might be able to get liberated from “Samsara”. Hence, the teachings of “Vajrayana Buddhism” can be described as “to follow both the Dharma and the Person”, but here this so-called “Person” is not just any other ordinary person, but is an authentic “Guru” who is, in fact, the “Total Embodiments” of the “Three Jewels”!

“WHO” is the Transmitter of the “Lineage”?

The “Guru” is most emphasized in “Tibetan Buddhism”. Guru Padmasambhava, the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism, had said: “All of our spiritual attainments come from the ‘Guru’!” Hence, the transmission of a “lineage” must come from one’s own “Guru” or “Root Guru”, who has been teaching the various teachings and practices all along to the Dharma practitioner who is now receiving the “lineage”, in order that this can be effectual. It is only so because only this “Guru” knows his disciple so well while nobody else can in this whole wide world, in terms of the level of his disciple’s realization of the “Dharma practices” (if any). Furthermore, this “Guru” must be an “authentic Guru” who has all the authorizations, qualifications and realizations of the “Lineage” in order that he can bestow and transmit this particular “Lineage” to his disciple. Otherwise, it will be just a “fake guru” transmitting a “fake lineage” to another even worse “fake guru”!

If there was no witness during the process in the transmission of the “lineage”, but then the “Guru who bestowed the “lineage” had already passed away, the disciple who had already previously received the “lineage” must now have to find another “Guru” who belongs to, and has the authorizations, qualifications and realizations of, the same “lineage system” to publicly announce his recognition of such a “lineage holder” to all Dharma friends. It is only through such a procedure, and with the recognition and support from this other “Guru”, that such a disciple can now be really considered by all as an “authentic Guru” who holds the “true lineage”! This is so because, not only was the fact that he was already being transmitted the “lineage” by his original “Lineage Guru”, he was then also further certified, recognized and verified by another authorized, well-qualified and realized “Guru” of the same “lineage”.

Conclusion

In observing and understanding the similarities and differences between “Mahayana” Buddhism and Vajrayana” Buddhism, it can help to eliminate the fundamental differences and disputes between the two. While both are belonging to the “Greater Vehicle” of Buddhism with the same theoretical approach, their methods of Dharma practices are rather different. “Different routes will eventually lead to the same final destination”, and so the differences in their methods of Dharma practices would make a difference on their “paths” in terms of “either distant or near”, and “either fast or slow”.

Similarly, because of these differences which have aroused the controversy on the issue of the “Guru”. In addition, with the appearances of so many “fake gurus” nowadays, this has created even more misunderstandings. As the actual practice is most crucial in “Vajrayana Buddhism”, and so the existence of the “Guru” is most important and cannot be missed out in its Dharma practices.

“Mahayana Buddhism” is based primarily on the understanding of the meanings of the theoretical underpinnings, and so one can rely upon one’s level of wisdom to search through the maze. Hence, the dependence on the “Guru” is relatively small, and so there is less controversy on the issue of the “Guru”. As for the “worldly knowledge”, we still need our teachers to teach us; and so it will be even more important to have “spiritual teachers” to guide us in this limitless ocean of wisdom for the “Spiritual Dharma”. The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had instructed us: “Birth and death are important issues.” To be liberated from “Samsara”, or even to be able to attend “Buddhahood” (perfect enlightenment) will be the most important issue among all other things. Hence, how can things get done without a “Guru”? It will require oneself to have great merits in order to meet with an authentic good “Guru”. Furthermore, it will require one’s own wisdom in order to search for and choose the best “Jewel” among all human beings: one’s own “Guru”!

If there is great “aspiration”, there would have accomplishments. But one without “faith” will surely fail in one’s endeavours. Here, I sincerely wish all those who have great aspirations to be able eventually to leave this ocean of sufferings through Births and Deaths, and be able to find one’s own “Guru of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel” !

I humbly record the following teachings, from both the Sutras and the Great Masters, in order to share with you the real taste, the great joys and benefits, of the Holy Dharma:

“Entry into the Realm of Reality (Gandhavyuha) Section of The Sutra of the Garland of Flowers (Avatamsaka Sutra)” says, “A bodhisattva [starting from those sentient beings who have generated the ‘Bodhicitta’ (the altruistic enlightened mind) who have already received ‘Bodhisattva Vows’, and would pass through the ‘five paths and ten supreme levels’ (bhumi), and finally to the ‘path of no more learning’] who has been accepted and taught by a ‘spiritual teacher’ will not fall into the lower realms. If the bodhisattva has been protected by the ‘spiritual teacher’, the bodhisattva will not be attracted by ‘evil friends’. If the bodhisattva has been blessed by the ‘spiritual teacher’, the bodhisattva will not be reverted back from the Greater Vehicle. If those bodhisattvas’ thoughts are well-protected by the ‘spiritual teacher’, those Bodhisattvas should be liberated speedily from the ‘Pithagjana’ (those ordinary people who still have desires and will be reborn into the six gati).”

The Sutra of the Immaculate Emptiness of the Sky says, “Ananda ! All the Buddhas have not appeared before all

sentient beings. But then the ‘spiritual teachers’ have come to teach the Dharma teachings completely so as to lay down the seeds of liberation. Because of this, please treasure the ‘spiritual teachers’ more than all the Buddhas.”

The Mahavaipulyamaha Sannipata Sutra says, “Virtuous man ! One should have respects for the ‘spiritual teacher’, and one should always take refuge from the ‘spiritual teacher’. Why? It is because all the merits of a sage come from the ‘spiritual teacher’.”

Chapter of Untouched Upasika says, “The ‘spiritual teacher’ is the guardian who leads us to the ultimate level of enlightenment... If there was no refuge place for the protection, having a ship would still be very difficult to travel to the other shore. Even though one may completely possess different merits, it would still be difficult for one to be liberated if one does not have the ‘Guru’.”

The Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion (Gurupancasika) by Bodhisattva Ashvagoshya, says, “The Acharya has held and taught the precious Holy Dharma, therefore exert oneself whole-heartedly and never to belittle one’s tantric master. Always pay due respects to the Acharya and reverently present offerings to him, then such harm as plagues will not befall upon you.... Always pay respects to the Acharya, for he is the same as all the Buddhas, ... as the best field of merits.”

The Way of the Bodhisattva (Bodhicharyavatara) by Bodhisattva Shantideva, says, “Always stay close to one’s ‘spiritual teacher’ in order to understand the meanings of the Holy Dharma according to the Greater Vehicle. This is the splendid act for a Bodhisattva to keep, even though it may be at the risk of one’s life.”

The Thirty-Seven Stanzas of Bodhisattva Practices by Ngulchu Thogme Zangpo, says, “From whom to take one’s refuge would help to eliminate one’s sins, and would increase one’s merits like the crescent moon? The bodhisattva way for such is to love one’s ‘spiritual teacher’ more than oneself.”

The Eight Thousand Stanzas of Prajnaparamita (Astasahasrikaprajnaparamita Sutra) says, “If a Mahabodhisattva want to attain ‘perfect enlightenment’, first of all, one should respectfully serve one’s ‘spiritual teacher’ in order to take refuge from him.”



The Forty Volumes of the Avatamsaka Sutra says, “Virtuous man, one should look at oneself as the sick person; one should look at the Holy Dharma as the medicine; one should look at diligent practice as the treatment of illness; one should look at the ‘spiritual teacher’ as the king of all doctors”.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Through the kindness and wisdom of the “Three Jewels”, this article was thus generated;

If there are any faults, I will heartily confess; while if there are any merits, I will dedicate all the merits to all sentient beings;

I sincerely pray to the “Three Jewels” and request them to stay long and permanently in this world;

To grant all sentient beings the chance of taking refuge, and pray that all the “Gurus” will make prophecies for their liberations;

To generate one’s “Bodhicitta” in order to benefit all others is the most important thing of all in this world;

Hoping that the “Six Paramitas” and the tens of thousands of virtuous deeds will all be perfectly accomplished;

Pray that all Dharma friends can learn like being personally taught by the Buddhas and the “Gurus”;

To study, reflect and practice successfully, and may all attain the prefect enlightenment of “Buddhahood” !

Perfect Auspiciousness For All ! (SARWA MANGALAM)

[This revised edition was completed on 28th December, 2005, the same day when my wife and I were personally led by Kyabje Chadrang Sangye Dorje Rinpoche and His daughter Tsemo Saraswati to an Indian Holy Place, on which the great treasure revealer Dudjom Lingpa had made a holy prophesy long time ago that if one practices the Black Wrathful Dakini in this Holy Place, it will be much easier to achieve accomplishments. Here, I whole-heartedly pray and dedicate all the merits, if any, to the health and longevity of our most beloved Crowning Jewel Kyabje Chadrang Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, so that His Holiness can uphold the Victory Banner of the Holy Dharma in the ten directions and at all times, and to turn the Wheel of the Holy Dharma for the sake of all our motherly sentient beings, in order that they can become liberated and enlightened at the earliest possible time! Tashi delek!]





RECENT HOLY MIRACLE OF THE ARYA GREEN TARA IMAGE AT BODH GAYA

Dudjom Buddhist Association



Drops of Nectar coming from the forehead of the Arya Green Tara Image at Bodh Gaya

A great holy miracle occurred on 10th February, 2006 when there were drops of nectar found to be coming out of the forehead of the Holy Image of the noble Arya Green Tara at the Mahabodhi Temple of Bodh Gaya (please see the photo).

This particular image of noble Arya Green Tara was revered as a Holy Image (as has been recorded), since the time when this Holy Image of Arya Green Tara suddenly spoke to Lord Atisa, while he was paying his pilgrimage to the Holy Place of Bodh Gaya where the Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment.

The Sanskrit root for Tara is târ, which means "to traverse" or "cross over", as in using a bridge to ford a stream. In the Indian sacred tradition, Târâ refers to the second of Ten Means to Realization. As a Târîni, she carries you across; she serves as a bridge for you to get to immortality. In Tibetan, she is called Drolma or Do'ma.

It is said that, despite his having taken a vow before Amitabha Buddha to enable everyone without exception to achieve liberation from the endless round of rebirth, Avalokiteshvara (Tib. Chenrezi, or Guan Yin in Chinese) became so discouraged at the untold numbers of sentient beings that he began to cry. From his tear was formed Arya Tara. Thus, **The 21 Praises to Tara** says "On the face of Chenrezi, she is born from a tear as a bud from a lotus" or "born from the opening corolla of the lotus face of the Lord of the triple world."

Hence, in her iconography, the association with the red Buddha Amitabha is usually indicated by a tiny image of him in her topknot. Arya Green Tara is typically pictured as a

young lady wearing striped leggings and with her shoulders covered. She wears the many characteristic ornaments of the samboghakaya.

Arya Green Tara has her right foot extended as if about to rise. Her left hand, in the gesture of granting refuge, holds the stem of a blue water lily, or utpala, that waves over her left shoulder, while her right hand is also holding a flower, offers that which we desire, a boon.

The practice of Arya Green Tara, which is most common in Tibet just like Guan Yin in the Chinese soil, helps to overcome fear and anxiety. At the same time, devotees also believe that she can grant wishes, eliminate sufferings of all kinds and bring happiness. When called upon, she instantaneously saves us from the eight specific calamities, namely:

- 1) lions and pride;
- 2) wild elephants and delusions;
- 3) forest fires and hatred;
- 4) snakes and envy;
- 5) robbers and fanatical views;
- 6) prisons and avarice;
- 7) floods and lust;
- 8) demons and doubt.



In times of great difficulty, millions of people call upon this "Great Noble Tara" for their protections.

This recent miracle of the Holy Image of Arya Green Tara at Bodh Gaya is indeed a rare occasion. **"Nectar" represents the "true essences of the Buddhist teachings", which is a Holy Medicine to cure and liberate all kinds of sufferings.** Hence, this recent miracle has important symbolic meanings to it: **that the true meanings of the Buddhist teachings in its correct modern interpretations, which will eliminate all doubts and liberate all misled and deluded minds, will be propagated by the noble Arya Green Tara Herself.**



Arya Green Tara

Short introduction of Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye



The Coronation Ceremony of Yeshe Thaye by H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche (2003)

Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan (alias Guru Lau Yui Che), the Spiritual Representative of the late His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche (Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje) in the Far East, both of whom were Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye's Root Gurus (Tsawai Lamas).

For 30 years, Guru Lau had taught him the complete system of Vajrayana teachings and Dharma practices, and Guru Lau had *bestowed upon him all the highest initiations and the ultimate authority*. The late His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, the then Supreme Head of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, personally conferred upon him the Vajra Acharya Authority and Empowerment while visiting Hong Kong in 1972, and he was given the Dharma name of "Yeshe Thaye" (meaning one with "boundless wisdom") by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche. *It was back in 1986, and again later in 1996, that Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye was twice asked by his Root Guru, the late Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan, to uphold his two major lineages of the "Narak Dong Truk" cycle and of the "Dudjom Tersar" in the Far East.*

The present Root Guru of Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye is the contemporary great realized Dzogchen Master, *His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche*, the most respected and world-renowned Master and Elder of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. *His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche has most kindly and personally written two important letters in his own handwritings, signed and sealed by Rinpoche himself, acknowledging and authorizing Yeshe Thaye as the authentic Dharma Heir of the late Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan. Furthermore, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche has also given the Coronation Ceremony, by bestowing upon Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye the Pandita Hat and Dharma robes, as well as the Enthronement Ceremony to Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye in Rinpoche's own monastery in Siliguri, India.*

In response to favourable circumstances, as well as to uphold and spread the Holy Dharma, Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye established the Dudjom Buddhist Association (International) in early 1998, while commencing public Dharma activities in 1999. A three-months' intensive course, consisting of 12-lectures, on "Mind Training and Dharma Practice" was delivered by Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye, which was subsequently regarded as a "complete set of 10 CDs" to be published and disseminated for the propagation of the Holy Dharma in world-wide distribution. Since early 1999, the Association has published an English and Chinese bilingual journal of the "Light of Lotus" (Pema Osel), and the different issues were available as bound hardcover series. In 2006, the Association launched another full-colour bimonthly publication of the "Lake of Lotus" (Tsopepa), which contains articles in Chinese, English and Tibetan. It is widely available at all convenience shops in Hong Kong and thus becomes easily accessible to the general public.

At present, the major Dharma activities within the Association are the various teachings, with detailed explanations from the most fundamental concepts of Dharma practice to the most important "visualizations and oral instructions", starting from the basic "Preliminaries" to more advanced teachings of both the "Narak Dong Truk" cycle and of the "Dudjom Tersar" Lineages. Large-scale public activities of the Association include large gatherings on the Freeing of Lives and Lamp Offerings at various festivals, as well as other public lectures, seminars and meditation classes. Topics of public lectures and seminars include "The Attainment of Buddhahood in One's Lifetime in Tibetan Buddhism", "The Essences of the Tibetan Book of the Dead", "The Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion", as well as elementary and advanced classes on "Mind Training and Dharma Practice", and so on. In following the footsteps and teachings of the Lord Buddha, as well as the instructions of Guru Lau, the Association conducts monthly confessions and repentance of sins (sojong) by reciting the various disciplines (silas) and commitments (samayas) of the Three Yanas, as well as the tsok offering ceremonies (pujas). The above only serves as a short introduction of Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye, who is whole-heartedly committed to the spreading of the Holy Dharma and working for the benefits of all our motherly sentient beings. All of you are most welcome to make contributions, in whatever ways you can, for helping to spread the Holy Dharma, such that it will bring enormous benefits to both oneself and others, as well as to accumulate countless merits.



H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (right), Guru Lau (middle) and Yeshe Thaye (left) taken in Hong Kong (1972)



H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche with Yeshe Thaye in Hong Kong (1984)

Short Introduction of Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren

Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren has followed the late Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan (alias Guru Lau Yui Che) in practicing Vajrayana Buddhism for more than 20 years, and Guru Lau had personally conferred upon her the Authority of the Vajra Acharya with Empowerment. Meanwhile, back in 1981 and 1984, she had received empowerments and teachings from the late His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche (Jigdral Yeshe Dorje), the then Supreme Head of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, and was thus given the Dharma name of "Pema Lhadren". His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, the most respected and world-renowned Dzogchen Master and Elder of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, is the present Root Guru of Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren, and His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche has most kindly bestowed upon her the Dharma robes.

Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren is also the co-founder of the Dudjom Buddhist Association (International), and she has been committing and dedicating all her efforts to the spreading of the Holy Dharma for the benefits of all our motherly sentient beings. Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren adopts a very unique and concise approach, which is in-depth and yet easy to understand, in her way of explaining Buddhism to both Dharma practitioners and laymen alike. Through this unique approach of exposition, Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren would use various accounts of personal experiences, as well as explanations from science, different kinds of human behaviours, classic stories and quotations from the Buddhist sutras, in her structural analysis and logical deduction which is in-depth, right to the core of things, and covering different perspectives at different levels. She translates the hard-to-understand Buddhist teachings into laymen concepts of everyday life experiences, such that her unique and concise approach of explanations can be easily understood and remembered. Even for those who have some basic knowledge of Buddhism will be inspired by her insightful approach with a deeper level of understanding on Buddhism.



The Bestowal of Dharma Robe to Pema Lhadren by H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche (2003)

Short Introduction of the Dudjom Buddhist Association (International)

Dudjom Buddhist Association (International) is a non-profit making, charitable, religious organization which aims mainly to spread the Buddhist teachings of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. Our Root Guru and Spiritual Leader is His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche. The Instructor-in-Charge of the Association, Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye, is the Dharma Heir of the late Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan (alias Guru Lau Yui Che), the Spiritual Representative of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche in the Far East.

In following the footsteps of His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche and his style of teaching the Holy Dharma, the Association is well known for its stringency in its admission of members and disciples, as well as on how well they perform their daily activities. The ways and orders of teaching the Holy Dharma are very systematic, in a step-by-step approach, and also use the most effective and direct methods for the "mind training" of its members, which include "meditation", "mental concentration", "teachings on the liberation from samsara", with particular attention on "Dharma practices for one's freedom at the moment of death". Both the theory of Mahayana Buddhism and the practice of Vajrayana Buddhism are valued and well-integrated in order that members can practice these two together side by side, and thus enable them to mingle the Buddhist teachings into their daily lives: to rid oneself of the evil deeds and to acquire the "good qualities" of a Dharma practitioner. Hence, when the time comes when one will be passing away, with one's own long-term "training of the mind" (as the main cause), together with the blessings from the Lineage Gurus (as the auxiliary condition), one could then be readily liberated from this cyclic existence of reincarnations (samsara).



The Premise of the Dudjom Buddhist Association



Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren presiding at a Puja Ceremony

The magazines and journals of the Association are published bilingually in both Chinese and English, while the CDs, VCDs and DVDs are distributed in a trilingual manner of English, Cantonese and Mandarin. Your contributions, in terms of financial and other supports, for the publications of these products are most welcome, as your can thus help to spread the Holy Dharma for the benefits of all our motherly sentient beings.

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 and VCDs, either free of charge or with a cost.

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

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