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The Secret of “Flash-back” during the Third Stage of Approaching Death

Disadvantages of Artificial Intervention in the “Dying Process”

The “Buddha Jewel” has “Three Bodies”. What are Their Merits?

The “Sambhogabaya (Enjoyment Body)” of A Buddha has Two Forms. What are Their Characteristics?

What do the Ten Kinds of Special “Manifested Body of A Buddha” Represent?

Pha That Luang Stupa at Laos

Content (Press the titles to read the articles)



The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death:

The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (43)

- The Secret of “Flash-back” during the Third Stage of Approaching Death
- Disadvantages of Artificial Intervention in the “Dying Process”

*by Vajra Master Pema Lhadren,
translated by Simon S.H. Tang*

P.2 - P.17



The Application of Wisdom:

The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (43)

- The “Buddha Jewel” has “Three Bodies”. What are Their Merits?
- The “Sambhogabaya (Enjoyment Body)” of A Buddha has Two Forms. What are Their Characteristics?
- What do the Ten Kinds of Special “Manifested Body of A Buddha” Represent?

*by Vajra Master Pema Lhadren,
translated by Fong Wei*

P.18 - P.40



“Everything Comes from the Mind” (15)

*by Vajra Master Pema Lhadren,
translated by Various Disciples*

P.41 - P.43

Form For Donations, Subscriptions & Mail Orders

P.44



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**The Profound Abstruseness of
Life and Death**



The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (43)

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

- **The Secret of “Flash-back” during the Third Stage of Approaching Death**
- **Disadvantages of Artificial Intervention in the “Dying Process”**

Excerpt of Last Chapter:

Various Reasons on the Formation of Different Scenes at the "Moment of Death"

The “scenes at the moment of death” can be roughly classified in the following categories in accord with the varieties of the “main causes” and “auxiliary conditions”:

1. The “Separation of the Four Elements” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”, including all kinds of memories) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the ‘Separation of the Four Elements’ in the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issues 8 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



2. The “Endorphins Inside the Brain” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “endorphins inside the brain” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
3. The “Karmic Forces” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “karmic forces” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death”. This can be further classified into the following two kinds:
 - i. **Wholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) virtuous retributions (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and (b) the efforts of one’s Dharma practice (the main theme of this article in this issue).
 - ii. **Unwholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) vicious retributions; and (b) the forces of karmic creditors in seeking compensations on one’s karmic debts.

According to the records of different surveys, most of the dying people had seen the following scenes:

1. **Protectors or avengers:**
 - (i) **good ones** – saw kith and kin who had passed away, unknown protectors, deities or Buddhas coming to fetch for oneself.
 - (ii) **bad ones** – being besieged by a crowd of ferocious persons or beasts, and going along in company with groups of people who looked confused.
2. **Strange places:**
 - (i) **good ones** – saw pavilions, balconies, buildings, flower fields, rivers, light zones, towns or cities.
 - (ii) **bad ones** – saw wilderness, forests, darkness, caverns, hells.
3. **Messy Issues that cannot be recalled clearly.**



How would the Buddhist point of view comment on these phenomena? According to the Buddhist teachings, it was said that rebirth would take place within forty-nine days after a person has passed away, then why would a dying person see the kith and kin who **had passed away long time ago** still coming to fetch for him or her? Why had not the kith and kin taken rebirths after so many years posthumously? Are the appearances of these deceased persons merely the illusions of the person who is going to die? Or were they really true? Are there any other reasons? Are those strange places the destinations where they are going to be reborn into? Under what circumstances would the normal rebirth of a dying person be negatively encumbered? Is there any way to help a deceased person to avert sufferings and elevate to a better place of rebirth?

Human beings have four kinds of conditions of consciousness ([please refer to the article on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" in Issue 26 of the "Lake of Lotus"](#)) as follows:

1. **Beta β waves** – the "conscious condition" of daily living;
2. **Alpha α waves** – the relaxed "consciousness condition", such as in entering into the elementary stage of 'visualization", or at the first stage of "mental concentration"; or the condition when the "spiritual body" is **slowly separating** from the "physical body";
3. **Theta θ waves** – the peaceful "conscious condition" of having entered into higher levels of "visualization", or at the deeper levels of "mental concentration";
4. **Delta δ waves** – slow "conscious condition" of not having any dreams, and in a stage of slow-wave deep sleep.

In fact, how does the arising of the different stages in approaching death and its "transformation of consciousness" affect the thoughts and behaviors of dying patients? What are their relationships with the "scenes at the moment of death"? ([Please refer to the article on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" in Issue 29 of the "Lake of Lotus"](#)) How should the family and kin and kith who take care of the dying patients respond to the "transformation of consciousness" and change of "scenes at the moment of death" for guiding the emotions and spiritual direction of the dying patients? Could the "transformation of consciousness" and the change of "scenes at the moment of death" be complementary to each other? Furthermore, the "**disintegration of the Four Elements**" of the physical body **also affects** the "transformation of consciousness", as well as on the change of the "scenes at the moment of death". Hence, how should one support and provide guidance to a dying patient in order to **reduce or resolve** the predicament from these problems?



What is the Ultimate Assistance in the First Stage of Approaching Death?

The care-givers, kin and kith and professional counselors should perform the following steps when a dying person is approaching the "first stage of death":

1. **Accepting and Understanding** (please refer to Issue 30 of the "Lake of Lotus");
2. **Listening and Observing** (please refer to Issue 30 of the "Lake of Lotus");
3. **Analyzing and Adopting** (please refer to Issues 31, 32 and 33 of the "Lake of Lotus");
4. **Leading Out and Guiding In** (please refer to Issue 34 of the "Lake of Lotus");
5. **Accompanying with Unspoken Consensus** (please refer to Issues 35-40 of the "Lake of Lotus").

The General Change of the dying persons' Emotions (Please refer back to Issue 41 of the "Lake of Lotus").

What is the Ultimate Assistance in the Second Stage of Approaching Death? (Please refer back to Issue 42 of the "Lake of Lotus").



The Secret of "Flash-back" During the Third Stage of Approaching Death

To a dying person, the third stage of approaching death could be said to be the most crucial moment of determination of "life or death". Among the five stages of approaching death, this stage is right at the crossroad of life or death. The commonly used term "flash-back" occurs at this stage. The dying person would experience those final physiological energies.

The phenomena of "end of life" at this stage are mostly misunderstood by people in general. The sudden clarity of the patient's consciousness would be mistaken as a sign of improvement on the patient's condition. Some patients who were very close to death might stand up and live for few more days, few more months, and even few more years. In the professional articles, this kind of phenomenon of resurrection is known as "Lazaruspanomen".

Why have these phenomena occurred? It is because that the vitality of human beings is composed of great amount of energies. The energies exist all along but at times, due to the decay of the human bodies, these energies have not been "tightly linked together and applied". Just like a stashed pearl, its brightness cannot be seen.



But it is strange that when the dying person approaches the third stage, the residue energies remaining in the physical body are almost completely consumed and the “consciousness” is also **about to separate** from the physical body. The “consciousness”, which is in a dissociated condition, would **make way to start up** the tremendous amount of frozen energies. Once it starts working, the tremendous amount of energies **would be infused** into the physical body again. This is the reason why **auto-therapy** works on many critically-ill patients, as well as the **secret of auto-therapy** behind. In fact, how much longer the patient would live will depend on the **proportion of the amount of energies that can be triggered**. Many people who were successfully revitalized could accomplish unfinished matters in life. And then, without any solicitude, they did farewell to their relatives and friends solemnly and peacefully, and then entered into another stage of life -- **departing this life and entering into the next life**.

There is also certain explanation about this phenomenon in medical sense. Due to the secretion of endocrines from the adrenal gland, especially during an emergent situation, adrenaline and norepinephrine would be secreted from the adrenal gland. **Those endocrines can make the heart excited and blood vessel shrunk, as a result, the blood pressure would be elevated**. Thus, it could resurrect the person who has passed out. This makes a person who is in coma turned awakened, or one who cannot speak starts conversing, or one who cannot take meal starts eating, and so on.

Besides those above-mentioned situations, there is a substance called “adenosine triphosphate” in human cells which can store energy and provide energy. When a person is in emergency or near to death, **“adenosine triphosphate” would swiftly release a great deal of energies into the major systems and organs of the human body for physical powers**. This is the medical rationale on the phenomenon of “flash-back”.





Disadvantages of Artificial Intervention in the “Dying Process”



Amitayus Buddha

In case that it is infeasible to start up the gigantic amount of frozen energies, or that the person does not want to return back to life, upon encountering the pure and impeccable brightness, **the physical body might enter into the “deteriorating condition” at this stage.** Relatives and friends around observe the dying person externally and, sometimes, they might see the dying person cramping and yelling violently. Some dying persons might appear somewhat milder. They might open their eyes again and smile blissfully, since they might have found their inner peace of mind.

When you see the dying person screaming, groaning or twisting the body painfully, it is considered that the person is suffering from great pains. Some relatives and friends don't know how to react and become terrified and agitated. Those who are responsible for caring might become frightened and would stay away from the dying person since they could not stand it. They choose to avert the scene. They might put themselves in the frame of the terrifying scene of death, and merely give attention to the pain and agony, but ignore another positive facet of confronting it.

At this moment, the dying person is about to “leap over the barricade”. Due to the nearing of death, a great deal of inner energies is ready to be released out. The weak body cannot stand the impact of the upsurge of raging power, and as a result, the person's sensitivity about pain increases. Such condition is known as the **disassembly of the “Four Elements”**. (Please refer to the article “The Meaning of Near-death Experience” in Issues 8, 19 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Since most people do not realize the process, and have taken the idea that the dying person is struggling with the “God of Death”, **there is nothing much that they can do** about it. As such, they might not have given the dying person any **proper guidance and explanation**. At that moment, what the dying person most needs is caring and supporting. Relatives and friends should advise the dying person that there is **nothing to be scared of** as those are **natural phenomena**. During the occurrence of those phenomena, if the person stays **calm, relaxed and without panic-striking**, he **would be able to get over this stage safely**.

While at this stage, the dying person's “consciousness” might leave the physical body, and began to visualize the situation of the spiritual world. To someone having no experience about this, he/she may have the idea that this is symptom of schizophrenia and become frightened. Thus, even though the relatives and friends who nurse the person do not realize, nor understand, about the weird phenomena as described by the dying person, they should not make any negative comments to avoid putting the dying person in the situation of isolation, helplessness and panic.



Another point of attention is that the dying person's body would become more and more delicate and light-weighted at this stage. The Mother Nature could consume up the remaining energies in the body. At this stage, the dying person usually does not need to take any solid food so he might **refuse to eat**. However, under current practices, as well as the opinion of relatives and friends, the dying person would be compelled to tube-feeding at this stage. This sort of artificial intervention to the dying process would burden the patient and prolong the process. **This sort of artificial intervention would hinder the detachment of the "consciousness" from the body and mess up the energies. As a result, the dying person suffers. Therefore, we must respect the wishes of the dying person. This is an important point!**

Case 48

The Right on the Choice of Death for Aged People (Jiang Qing Lin, China Daily, 12th April 2009)

[This weekend was a consecutive holiday of Easter in England. On the eve of celebration for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a friend of mine received a letter from his aged father. The letter was attached with a "Living Will" regarding medical arrangement of terminal illness, which had been jointly signed by his wife to whom he had married for 52 years in the middle of last March.

In the "Living Will", the father had listed out specific conditions, such as serious brain damage, loss of consciousness, without hope of revival, etc. He refused to receive any **artificial intervention to prolong his life**. My friend's 83-year old father made a remark separately on a note, "Son, upon signing this piece of document, my golf game would go smoother".

Upon receipt of this letter, my friend felt like all sorts of mixed feelings and emotions arose.

Another friend's 78-year old mother was a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in England. She had taught violin for her entire life until she contracted Parkinson's Disease. After that, she stopped teaching and practicing violin. In the recent two years, her aging condition rapidly retrogressed. Gradually her abilities in memory, concentration and expression started to deteriorate, and the maintenance of her daily life became difficult. Last Christmas, the old mother proposed to her children cautiously: "I wish to go to the Dignitas Clinic in Switzerland to end my life over there."



The pair of son and daughter **became speechless** upon hearing this unexpected request of their old mother, who had been enthusiastic about music and education, and whose behavior had been conscientious and careful. After a good while, my friend uttered, “No such thing, you will not go there.”

However, in February this year, an old couple from Bath, England who had both contracted with terminal-stage cancers went to Dignitas Clinic in Geneva, Switzerland for help. When the news that they had chosen to finish their lives by injection was made known in England, my friend’s mother reiterated her wish for “dying with dignity”. Upon realization of the seriousness of their mother, **the children’s hearts were torn apart**.

It was really a heart-breaking dilemma to the children. As long as there remained a slight hope and existed a breath, who could want to make the decision to give up and let go of a close relative? However, if a person who had not been able to be independent, and had endured physical and mental sufferings badly, and had to live on mechanical devices and modern medical technology in order to bear with the painful procedures in sustaining life, the question then arises: in fact, for whom has she lived?

Before the death of Franco in 1975, the Spanish autocrat was under absolute unconscious, and depending on the aid of a number of advanced medical equipments, he continued to live for 475 days. This has become an often controversial issue among the scholars of modern Spanish history. During the extra 475 days that Franco had lived, was he in the state of a human being, or just under the control of a machine? The advancement in modern medical technology has gradually created the **conflicts in the “maintenance of life, and the maintenance of the quality of life” versus the “maintenance of the final dignity of life”**. This is also the reason why more and more British people choose to go to the Dignitas Clinic in Switzerland to end their lives there in recent years. The original meaning of **Dignitas** in Latin is **“dignity”**.

The current British Laws do not allow such “services” as “euthanasia” that were provided by the Dignitas Clinic. However, the number of supporters of Dignitas is rapidly increasing in England. A survey conducted earlier this year revealed that over 80% of the interviewers indicated that they should have the freedom of choice on one’s death when their lives come to an unbearable end.

“Death” is a traditional taboo in China. A “will” is considered to be directly related to inauspiciousness. As a matter of fact, **if death is not the last major issue in our life, at least it is the last issue that we should make pre-arrangement while we are still alive**.

Concerning the arrangement of an individual’s death, there are two items to be considered. One is to establish the **“will”** and posthumous issues to be taken care of. Another one is to sign a **“Living Will”** indicating that at the end of one’s life, the person expects to have a good death with dignity and less suffering. These two issues can be made when the person is in a **fully conscious condition**, and the “will” can be amended at any time as long as the person is under awareness. The main point is whether you have made arrangement about those issues for yourself, for people who love you, and for those people whom you love, while you are still in a conscious condition and be able to consider it very clearly.

The establishment of a “will” is already quite common in England. When a person comes to the matter on the purchase of a premise or an application for a loan, besides credit assessment, the most commonly asked basic question is: “do you have a will?” A “Living Will” about medical arrangement at the terminal stage of one’s illness is a relatively new concept. However, its rate of getting popular is surprising, especially among the aged people. More and more aged people in England request to accommodate the natural progress when approaching the end of life, so that the person concerned can depart in dignity and calmness.

Though the establishment of a “will” or a “Living Will” about medical arrangement at the terminal stage of illness is a personal arrangement and choice; yet, it is more of **an attitude towards life**. Allowing the beloved ones to leave according to their selected ways is, nonetheless, a kind of mercy unbearable ([to let go](#)). (clchiangr@yahoo.com)]

Committing suicide is not right. Therefore, “**euthanasia**” also becomes **a disputable and controversial issue**. In order to take “euthanasia”, a mother in good shape **disregards her children’s feelings, morality and ethics, and the negative influences on people**. No matter what the argument is, it is wrong. However, early arrangement of posthumous matters, establishment of “will” and “Living Will” about medical arrangement at the terminal illness is a wise action. Everybody has the need and ability **in making full efforts** to pre-arrange these things before one’s death

.....(To be Continued)

Remarks:

1. The newly-released book on “**The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)**” has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 1 to 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
2. The newly-released book on “**The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (2) – The Key Points at the Moment of Death and the Essential Revelations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead**” has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meaning of the Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 11 to 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
3. The newly-released book on “**The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (3) – The Various Ways of Realization and Rescue of Dying Kith and Kin**” has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 21 to 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”.



Summary on the Key Points of Each Issue

Issue 1

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

Issue 2

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

Issue 3

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

Issue 4

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

Issue 5

Reasons for the Generation of the “Light of Life and Death”	Illusions of the “Mind”
The Truth of “Prophecy”	

Issue 6

“Omniscience” and “Flash Foreword”	The Truth of “Predictions” and “Future”
Don't Become the Slaves of “Fortune-Telling, Divinations and Predictions”	

Issue 7

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

Issue 8

The Different Phases of “Death”	The Phase of Separation between the “Physical Body” and the “Spiritual Body”
The Phase for the Exposure of the “primordial Nature”	“Transitional Period” and the Phase of Standby for Rebirth
Shocking Revelations: Scenes Before Death	

Issue 9

One Out of Seven “Near-Death Experiences” is Negative	The Profound Meaning of Posthumous “Horrible Scenes” and its Relation with the “Resolutions by Dharma Practice”
Don’t Under-estimate the posthumous “Horrible Scenes”	

Issue 10

The Proportions of Negative “Near-Death Experiences”	“Near-Death Experiences” in the Realm of Specters
The Causes and Consequences of “Committing Suicide”	How to Avoid Entering into Evil “Spiritual Domains”
Misinterpretations on Negative “Near-Death Experiences”	The Consequences Induced by Contradictory Theories

Issue 11

The Reasons on the Causes of “Anxiety and Panic”	The Reasons on the Causes of “Near-Death Experiences”
The Crisscrossing Effects of the “Cardinal Mentality and External Forces”	The Crisscrossing Effects of Projections from “Main Force” and “External Forces”
The Crisscrossing Effects of the “Karmic Networks”	Highly Dangerous “Entrance Towards Rebirth”

Issue 12

The Damaging Power of Horrible Scenes	The “Wrestling Ring of Energies” of the “Posthumous World”
The Importance of “Up-to-the-Point” Trainings	The Dangers on Those Practices of “Shooting in the Dark”
The Meaning of Life	

Issue 13

The “Karmic” Threads that Control Everything	The Keys of Victory or Defeat in “Energy Wrestlings” of the Posthumous World
“The Few Against the Many”; “The Strong Suppress the Weak” – The Dharma Practice of “Vajrayana”	The Dangers of Enhancing the Incorrect Trainings of “Mental Strength”
The Serious Consequences of Having Blindly and Carelessly Receiving “Empowerments”	

Issue 14

Where the Future Well-Being of Mankind Lies	Illusions at the Brink of Death
Essence on the Revelations of the “The Tibetan Book of the Dead”	Whether a Person Would Really Meet the Deceased Family Members After Passing Away
What are the Decisive Factors for a Person’s Posthumous Destination?	

Issue 15

Special “Near-Death Experiences” of the “Psychics”	Just One Step Away from the Experience of “Attaining Buddhahood”
The Theories, Training and Practical Strategies of “Attaining Buddhahood”	

Issue 16

The True Face of Colors	The Abstruseness on the Creation of the Vajrayana “Mandala”
Re-orientation on the “Locus of Destiny”	Reasons for the Alterations in Colors
Specific “Cognitions” Would Lead to Deviations of “Mental Strength”	

Issue 17

“Dissolving into Brightness” Is Not the Same as “Recognizing Brightness”	The Paths of “Liberation from Samsara”
The Applications on the “Nine Levels of Samadhis”	Why did Lord Buddha Enter into Maha-Parinirvana from the “Realm of Form”?
A Case of “Near-Death Experience” in Crossing Over Various Higher Spiritual Domains	

Issue 18

Reasons for the Loss of Essences on the “Buddhist Teachings”	The Meanings of “Mental Concentration”
The Shortcuts for the “Attainment of Buddhahood” in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”	Do the “Pure Lands” Exist forever?

Issue 19

“Dissolution of the Four Elements” in “Near-Death Experiences”	Knowledge for “Self-Salvation” On Understanding the “Operations of Posthumous Life”
“Energy Protective Net” of the Spiritual Realm	What are the Key Points of “Spiritual Practices”?
The Major Deviations of Contemporary Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhist Practitioners	The Ten Kinds of Unlimited Powers of Wisdom Capacity

Issue 20

Detailed Analysis of the First Stage After Death in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”	The Fine Classification of the “Bardo of Dying”
Various Phenomena due to projections of the “Mind” under Influences of Posthumous Transformation of Energies	How to define on the “Definition of Death”?
The abstruseness of the “Scenes at the Moment of Death”	Reasons for the Causes of “Brightness” and Gods

Issue 21

The “Third Party” Who Appeared at the “Moment of Death”	Various Reasons on the Formation of Different Scenes at the “Moment of Death”
Scenes of Being Greeted by Kith and Kin at the “Moment of Death”	

Issue 22

“Scenes at the Moment of Death” formed by “One’s Own Forces of Dharma Practice”	Stray Methods of Dharma Practice and their Impacts
The Right Methods on Praying to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in Fetching for Oneself at the Moment of Death	The Using of Dharma Practice to Enter into “Near-Death Experiences”
The Knack of Pure Land in Vajrayana	

Issue 23

“Scenes at the Moment of Death” and “Rebirth Consequences”	Method to Avert Rebirth into the Realm of “Specters”
Amazing Impacts of “Mental Strength” at the Moment of Death	

Issue 24

How to Help a Panicky Dying Keith and Kin?	How to Deal with All Sorts of Difficulties “Before and After One’s Death?”
The Best “Method to Save the Dead” and “Services for After Death”	

Issue 25

The Influences of “Emotions at the Moment of Death” on the “Scenes at the Moment of Death”	Does “Hell” Really Exist?
“Scientific Nature” on the Settings of “Hell”	In What Way Do the “Buddhist Scriptures” Mutually Confirm with “Sciences”?
The Inter-relationship Between the “Body at the Bardo State” and the “Black Ear Hell”	

Issue 26

The Importance of “Emotions at the Moment of Death” and “Scenes at the Moment of Death”	The “High-Risk” Category of Easily Falling into the “Hell Realm”
The “Detonator” that Ignites the “karmic Forces” in Generating “Karmic Consequences”	What are the Real Needs of a Dying Person?
A Most Comprehensive Innovative Service in Covering the Periods from “Pre- to Post- Mortality” in Human History	Fund-Raising Plan for a “Perfect Hospital”
Buddha’s Revelation for the General Public’s Awareness on the Crucial Issue of “Life, Death and Rebirth”	

Issue 28

What are the Real Needs of Dying Persons?	Introduction of “Life and Death Education” and its Development
How to Deal with the “Pivotal Moment of Life and Death”?	

Issue 29

A Case of a Dying Person and Her Caretaker Being Confused and Disoriented	The Importance in Guiding the Emotions of a Dying Person and the Caregivers
“Scenes at the Moment of Death” and “Transformation of Consciousness”	

Issue 30

Different Stages in Approaching Death and its “Transformation of Consciousness”	How Should Those Care-Givers of Kin and Kith Receive and Deal With the “Signals of Death” for a Dying Person?
What is the Most Appropriate Way in Listening to and Observing the Abnormal Behaviors of the Patient?	

Issue 31

What is the Ultimate Assistance in the First Stage of Approaching Death?	What is the “Ultimate Tragedy and Ignorance” of Mankind?
The Importance of “Life and Death Education”	

Issue 32

Regrets and Traumas Due to Selections Made for the Dying Persons	Difficulties and Issues of Care-Givers of Dying Persons
What is “True Love”?	

Issue 33

Why should “Death” be a Must Task for “Life-long learning”?	How to open up More Windows of life?
The Grandest Series of Talks on “Near-Death Experiences” Ever in Hong Kong History	

Issue 34

How to Make the Best Arrangements on “Leading out of Pain and Guiding in Peacefulness” for Patients and Dying Persons	How to Prevent Wrong Decisions by Patients in Hurting Themselves
How to Help the Patients to “Live More Positively” and to Avoid Pointless Traumas	



Issue 35

What is Your Most Wanted Thing When You Come Across a Major Crisis?	How to Express your Genuine Concern to a Seriously-Ill Patient?
---------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------

Issues 36

How to Reveal Emotions and Pass on Positive Messages, of Acceptance, Understanding and Dedication to a Patient?	What Should be Taken as the First Priority When Caring for a Patient?
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Issues 37

How to Develop "Heart-to-Heart Unspoken Consensus" with the Patients for having no Regrets for both Parties?	How can we Cope with Grief and Bereavement at the Loss of Loved Ones?
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Issues 38

How to Express "Unspoken Consensus" to Patients so to Eliminate Regrets on Both Parties?	What are the Key Points on the Confession and Repentance of Wrongdoings?
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Issues 39

What is the Foremost Successful Condition for the Proper Caring of Seriously-ill Patients?	A Case of Failure in the Caring of a Seriously-ill Patient
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Issues 40

What are the Key Points in the "Disclosure of a Patient's Conditions"?	Whether the Relatives should Adopt the Strategy to lie when "Disclosing about the Patient's Conditions"?
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Issues 41

What is the Second Stage of Approaching Death?	What is the "Fundamental Life Education" that Cannot be Omitted?
------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

Issues 42

A Kind of Anomalous Expansion Being Developed in Mind Consciousness when Approaching the End-of-Life	Revelation brought about from "Tuesdays with Morrie"
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Issues 43

The Secret of "Flash-back" during the Third Stage of Approaching Death	Disadvantages of Artificial Intervention in the "Dying Process"
------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------



The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (43)

The Mind-Training Episode (6)

By Vajra Master Pema Lhadren
Translated by Fong Wei

- **The “Buddha Jewel” has “Three Bodies”. What are Their Merits?**
- **The “Sambhogabaya (Enjoyment Body)” of A Buddha has Two Forms. What are Their Characteristics?**
- **What do the Ten Kinds of Special “Manifested Body of A Buddha” Represent?**

Excerpt of Last Issue

For the general populace, and even up to the great Dharma practitioners, their objectives of Dharma practice should be more or less of the following types:

1. **Praying for worldly desires** – For example: to seek for oneself and one's own relatives to have “longevity, recovery from illness, success in one's career, good marriage, wealth increase, averting disasters and relief from sufferings, as well as reunion with those deceased loved ones”. Also, there are those who hope to get the “ease of heart and security at the present life”, etc.; or for “fame, wealth, respect” in order to study Buddhism; as well as for those who put in efforts to practice the Dharma.

2. **Rebirth in the good realms** – For example: to hope and pray for rebirth in the heavenly realm, or in the human realm, and not to fall into the evil realms (of animals, hungry ghosts and hells).
3. **Liberation from the tractions of the “cycle of karmic existence”** – to hope and pray for **the freedom** in deciding for oneself as to whether one would be reborn into the six realms (of heavens, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hells), or whether to remain in the highest level of the “Realm of Form”, such as the “Akanistha” (the “Heaven at the End-of-Form-Realm”), which is beyond the control of the tractions. (Please refer to the explanations on the “Three Realms” in the article on the “Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death: The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
4. **Attainment of Buddhahood** – The recovery of one’s “Primordial Nature” and the originally possessed and boundless capabilities, which are free from any bondages and to remain in the “Dharma Realm”. (The “Nature of the Mind”, also known as the “Buddha Nature”, or the “Primordial Nature”, refers to the **original possession** of that most crystal clarity of **awareness**. Please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 4 & 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

What are the methods that one can choose in order to achieve these four types of objectives? What will be their effects? What are the **critical key points** that one should pay attention to when judging upon and in choosing those methods of Dharma practice? Regardless of what kinds of religions, the practice methods can be broadly divided into the following types:

1. **Prayers** – Including confessions, repentance of one’s conducts, and in the making of aspirations and wishes;
2. **Recitations** – mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, or sutras;
3. **Visualizations** – themes include the formulae for different types of “meditation”, or even the making use of the internal functions of one’s body for coordination.

Irrespective of which types of practice methods, it must include the training of one’s “mental strength”. Otherwise, it would not be able to produce any effects. One of the important points for judging which of the practice methods are the most effective ones is the **degree of influence** that these can have **on one’s “mental strength”**? What percentage will they constitute?

The “Mind-Training Episode”



the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni

The focus of “mind-training” is on how to “visualize one’s mind”. Starting from [Issue No.38 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#), the various articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” have clearly described those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”, and is the important guideline in the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**. Then comes the question as to how to “visualize one’s mind”? Whether it will be fine by just “visualizing” oneself as the Buddha or the “deity”?

What are the contents and procedures of one’s “Visualization”? In modern terminology, it is the question of how to proceed with the programming of one’s “visualization” in order to be most effective? **There are countless and endless methods of “visualization”, and so which kinds of them are correct? To which levels of “visualization” do they belong? What kind of situations are they specifically for? How are their effectiveness being demonstrated? Are there any opposing effects, or side effects?** A series of such questions are the “important points for consideration” in choosing one’s method of “mental visualization” (please refer to the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” from Issues 38 to 41 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

In the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the due process and conditions of “Mental Visualization”. Hence, this Sutra can be said to be **a pivotal point and convergence of all kinds of “mental visualization” methods**, and is also the **foundational basis** for all the Dharma practices which can help all sentient beings to **swiftly attain Buddhahood**.

Then what actually are the grading/levels, procedures and conditions for these methods of “mental visualization” in Dharma practices? Can one jump some of the steps in these practices? Before further explanations are given, let us first have a look at the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”** to see how the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had generally classified the “mental visualization” methods, **from shallow to deep, and from the foundational basis to progressive elevation :**

1. Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issues 40 to 43 of the “Lake of Lotus”)
2. Mental Visualization on the Repulsion of Desires
3. Averting the Delusive Mind
4. Visualization of Entry into the Holy Wisdom
5. Visualization Method of the Mind Ground
6. Mental Visualization on the Bodhicitta
7. Visualization on the Three Great Secret Dharmas

In the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the **“Mental Visualization”** method for the **“Mind Ground Visualization on the Requit of the Four Kinds of Gratitude”**. These four kinds of gratitude and kindness that require one's requital are:

1. **Filial Gratitude to Parents** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issue 40 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
2. **Gratitude to all Sentient Beings** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issues 41 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
3. **Gratitude to the King** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issues 42 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and
4. **Gratitude to the “Three Jewels”** - the Gratitude to the “Buddha Jewel”, the Gratitude to the “Dharma Jewel”, the Gratitude to the “Sangha Jewel”.

The “Buddha Jewel” has “Three Bodies”. What are Their Merits?

In Volume One on the Preface Section No.1 [0294b22] of the “**Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us (in modern terminologies) as follows: "Because you worldly people 'do not visualize your own minds' (that is, not using visualization for mind-training purpose), hence you are subject to the cycle of karmic existence endlessly, drifting and floating in the Ocean of Life and Death. As all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are able 'to visualize Their minds' (for mind-training), they can thus cross over the Ocean of Life and Death in reaching to the other shore in the Pure Land, either to become liberated from the cycle of karmic existence, or gain entry into the "Dharma Realm". The Buddhas of the past, present and future worlds all practised their Holy Dharma in this way".

From this, one can see that "Mental Visualization" is extremely important and is the only method for Dharma practice. With regard to the foundational base of "Mental Visualization", one must first understand and repay the four kinds of gratitude and kindness, among which, the "Gratitude to the Three Jewels" can be said to be of "prime importance". The "Gratitude to the Three Jewels" refers respectively to "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel, the Gratitude to the Dharma Jewel, and the Gratitude to the Sangha Jewel". Let us first talk about "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel". The "Buddhas" appear to be very perfect, unreachable and also difficult to communicate as They are very far away from the sentient beings. Then how is "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel" formed, and how "deep" and "wide" is it?

In Volume Two on the Requital of Gratitude Section No.2 [0297a07] of the “**Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has made the following explanations (in modern terminologies): [What does “the Gratitude to the Three Jewels” mean, and why it is so named? It is because the 'Buddhas' are continuously doing things that are unimaginable and conducive to the attainment of happiness and benefits for all sentient beings, and They will never get rest. This is due to the genuine sincerity and extreme virtues of the Buddhas' Body which is free from any afflictions. To be able to do so, one has to undergo many large kalpas (in terms of countless hundreds of millions of light years) in order to attain the realization of Buddhahood.



In the course of the (Buddha's) Dharma practice, the situations whereby "the karmic fruitions" that are so drawn-in and accumulated from the enticing causes of "Greed, Hatred and Ignorance" in the "Three Realms" (of the "Realm of Desire, the Realm of Form and the Formless Realm") have been permanently removed without any residues. Hence, the merits of the Buddhas are like a treasure mountain with an unmatched towering height that are difficult to be understood and known by all sentient beings.

The virtues and merits that are accumulated by the Buddhas are as deep as an ocean. The wisdoms of the Buddhas are free from any obstructions and are as wide and broad as the whole universe. The manifestations and transformation of the Buddhas' supernatural powers fill up the whole universe. The bright light of the Buddhas shines upon the Ten Directions and the Three Realms. However, as all sentient beings are being blocked and concealed by the karmic forces of their own afflictions, they are unaware of these situations and thus sink endlessly into the sufferings of the Ocean of Life and Death. The Three Jewels, which emerge in the world as salvation mentors in a big vessel are able to help sentient beings to stop, and sever the torrents of lust and desire, and to transcend them to the other shore of the Pure Land. Thus, all people who have wisdom do pay their respects to all the Buddhas.

All you virtuous men, the unique "Buddha Jewel" has Three Bodies. First is the "Dharmakaya - the Truth (Intrinsic Nature) Body", the second is the "Sambhogakaya - the Enjoyment Body", and the third one is "Nirmanakaya - the Emanation Body".

1. The "Dharmakaya (Truth Body)" – also known as the "Dharma Body", is the first Body of a Buddha that possesses the "Great Merit of Eradication". It has the meritorious virtue of eradicating all kinds of afflictions vigorously. By adopting the "Dual Emptiness" of the "Emptiness of Self" and the "Emptiness of Dharma", the Buddhas would see everything that manifests and appears as being equal. Hence, all Buddhas are equal.
2. The "Sambhogakaya (Enjoyment Body)" – also known as the "Reward Body", is the second Body of a Buddha that possesses the "Great Merit of Wisdom and Virtue". This meritorious virtue of great wisdom is true and real, permanent and constant, as well as free from any afflictions. Hence, all Buddhas are of one and the same Mind.
3. The "Nirmanakaya (Emanation Body)" – also known as the "Manifested Body", is the third Body of a Buddha that possesses "Great Gratitude and Kindness". The Buddhas use Their "Mental Concentration" to pass through and transform into all kinds of things in their joint efforts of saving and assisting the sentient beings. They bestow great gratitude and kindness upon all sentient beings by way of Their "Manifested Bodies". Hence, the Buddhas are all achieving the same accomplishment.

Virtuous men, a Buddha's "Truth Body" is formed by the "Dharma Nature". As such, it has "no beginning nor an end". It is beyond all forms of appearances without any physical shapes, and is non-materialistic in nature. It is pervasive and exists everywhere (in the universe). It cannot be detected by any instruments, nor can the (human) power of observation and discernment detect its existence. It departs absolutely from various ludicrous statements without any affectations. It is all-embracing, perfect and complete. It has no limit and is boundless, constantly residing in the "Dharma Realm".





The “Sambhogakaya (Enjoyment Body)” of A Buddha has Two Forms. What are Their Characteristics?

With regard to the "Sambhogakaya (Enjoyment Body)", it is also known as the "Reward Body" and can be classified into two forms for the two-fold benefits of both self and others. One is the “(Buddha’s) Self- Enjoyment Body”, and the second one is the “Others’ Enjoyment Body”.

1. “(Buddha’s) Self-Enjoyment Body” – as (a Buddha) has to take a long time of "three asamkhya kalpas" to practise the virtuous actions of the "Six Paramitas", countless sentient beings have accordingly enjoyed the benefits, comforts and happiness so given. The "Tenth Ground" stage in (a Buddha’s) Dharma practice has transformed the functions of the "Mind" to become perfect and complete, enabling the delivery and transformation of a Buddha’s "Sambhogakaya", which is manifested **in the form of light**, to a direct entry into the "Akanistha".

(A Buddha) then leaves the "Three Realms", and sits on top of numerous large precious lotus flowers in the Pure and Wonder Land. The Buddha is surrounded by uncountable Bodhisattvas in the front and at the back as in the sea, each fastening their purified offerings to the top to pay their tributes and respects with praises. This situation is known as the **Benefits of Post Rewards**.

At the same time, the Bodhisattvas enter into the stage of "Vajrasamadhi" (Diamond-Absorption), eradicating and removing all the fine "Knowledge Hindrances" and various "Affliction Hindrances" for the realization of the "Anuttara- Samyak-Sambodhi" (that is, the "Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment"). Such a wonderful fruition is known as the **Benefits of Current Rewards**.

A "True Sambhogakaya" has a beginning but no end. There is no limit in the number of kalpas for its life span. It lasts until forever even in the early stage of "Perfect Enlightenment", and is unsurpassed in its various self-formed faculties and perfect appearance. It can still pervades in the perfect "Dharma Realm". The complete and perfect "Four Wisdoms" are the Dharma Pleasures that a "True Sambhogakaya" can enjoy and use. These "Four Wisdoms" are categorized as follows:-

- 1) The "Great All-Rounded Mirror-like Wisdom" (Ādarśa-jñāna) – It is attained by the transformation of the "Resultant Consciousness" [that is, the Eighth Storehouse Consciousness (vijñāna) of "Alaya"]. This type of wisdom is like using a large all-rounded mirror to shine and show up the images of various substances. This "mirror-like Tathagata’s wisdom" can exhibit various kinds of virtuous and evil deeds of the sentient beings, and because of this causal condition, this wisdom is known as the "Great All-Rounded Mirror-like Wisdom". By abiding to "Great Compassion", it can constantly bless and care for all sentient beings. By abiding to "Great Wisdom", it can constantly operate and transform without any obstructions as in the case of the "Dharma Nature". The dual visualizations of these two kinds of "Great Compassion and Great Wisdom" are operated incessantly without any break, regardless of the "Absolute Truth" (real, outer-worldly Dharma) or "Relative Truth" (mundane, worldly Dharma). It can constantly retain and hold onto the affliction-free root and body as the basis on which all merits lie.



- 2) **The “Wisdom of Equanimity” (Samatā-jñāna)** – It is attained by the transformation of the “Self-View Consciousness” (that is, the Seventh Afflicted Consciousness of “Manas”), and hence can be used for the realizations of the two types of “Non-Existent Nature of Self” and of the “Universal Equality”, namely: the “Emptiness of Self” and “Emptiness of Dharmas”. As such, it is known as “The Wisdom of Equanimity”.

- 3) **The “Wisdom of Wonderful Discernment” (Pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna)** – It is attained by the transformation of the “Discriminating Consciousness” (that is, the Sixth Mental Consciousness of “Citta”). This type of wisdom can visualize the “Particular Characteristics and Universal Characteristics” of all Dharmas. It is able to enter into the deep level and extremely fine parts, thus enabling (a Buddha) to transmit various wonderful Dharmas to all sentient beings in leading them to obtain a non-retrogressive mind. Therefore, it is known as “The Wisdom of Wonderful Discernment”.

- 4) **The “Wisdom of All-Accomplishing Activities” (Kṛty-anuṣṭhāna-jñāna)** – It is attained by the transformation of the “Five Sensory Consciousnesses” (that is, the first five Consciousness – of Eye, Ear, Nose, Tongue and Bodily Touch). This wisdom enables the manifestation (of a Buddha) in all different forms to ripen the virtuous actions of all sentient beings. Due to such causes and conditions, it is known as “The Wisdom of All-Accomplishing Activities”.

These **“Four Wisdoms”** are the most supreme kinds of wisdom which are endowed with the eighty-four thousand kinds of wisdom doors. All virtuous men, all the various aforesaid meritorious Dharmas is collectively known as the Tathagata’s “Self-Enjoyment Body”, while the other one is the Tathagata’s “Others’ Enjoyment Body”.

2. **“Others’ Enjoyment Body”** – this “Others’ Enjoyment Body” refers to that which is blessed with the eighty-four thousand kinds of (the Buddha’s) magnificent and solemn appearances. Residing in the real Pure Land, (a Buddha) propagate the Buddhist teachings of One-Vehicle for all the Bodhisattvas’ enjoyment of the wonderful Mahayana Dharma Pleasure. In order to educate and inspire those Bodhisattvas who are practicing in the “Tenth Ground”, all Tathagatas would manifest and emerge in the ten kinds of “Others’ Enjoyment Body” to give various sermons to the sentient beings of different levels.



What do the Ten Kinds of Special “Manifested Body of A Buddha” Represent?

The “**Enjoyment Body (Sambhogakaya)**” as mentioned above, is also known as the “**Reward Body**”, which is manifested mainly in the form of “light and energy”. Therefore, it has “**a beginning but no end** and there is no limit in the number of kalpas in its life span”. However, it can only be visible to, or felt, by high-level Dharma practitioners, while most of the sentient beings in general are difficult to receive their blessings and benefits. Therefore, a Buddha possesses a third kind of “**Emanation Body (Nirmanakaya)**”, which is also known as the “**Manifested Body**”. There are ten types of “Manifested Body” which would emerge and appear to all sentient beings in different Buddha Bodies corresponding to their different levels and different types.

In Volume Two on the Requital of Gratitude Section No.2 [0297a07] of the “**Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has enlightened us that (in modern terminologies): “The first Body of a Buddha sits on top of one hundred lotus flowers, preaching different levels of Buddhist teachings to the Bodhisattvas of the “**First Ground**” (that is, the “**Illumination Door of One Hundred Dharmas**”). The Bodhisattvas are thus enlightened with the emergence of great supernatural powers. Their changes fill up the worlds of one Hundred Buddhas, benefiting countless sentient beings with comforts and joy. The second Body of a Buddha sits on top of one thousand lotus flowers, preaching different levels of Buddhist teachings to the Bodhisattvas of the “**Second Ground**” (that is, the “**Illumination Door of One Thousand Dharmas**”). The Bodhisattvas are thus enlightened with the emergence of great supernatural powers. Their changes fill up the worlds of one Thousand Buddhas, benefiting countless sentient beings with comforts and joy. The third Body of a Buddha sits on top of ten thousands lotus flowers, preaching different levels of Buddhist teachings to the Bodhisattvas of the “**Third Ground**” (that is, the “**Illumination**

Door of Ten Thousand Dharmas”). The Bodhisattvas are thus enlightened with the emergence of great supernatural powers. Their changes fill up the Homelands of Ten Thousands Buddhas, benefiting countless sentient beings with comforts and joy. As this progresses one after another, a Buddha gradually increases the changes until the time to preach the Bodhisattvas of the “Ten Ground”, and thus transforming into a corresponding “Others’ Enjoyment Body”, sitting on top of the inexplicable wonderful precious lotus flowers and preaching the inexplicable “Illumination Doors of Countless Dharmas”. The Bodhisattvas are thus enlightened with the emergence of great supernatural powers. Their changes fill up the inexplicable wonderful Homelands of all the Buddhas. The benefits, comforts and joy are so immense that they are difficult to be proclaimed. Also, the sentient beings so benefitted are boundless and unlimited in types, such that they cannot be measured or quantified.

So the “Ten Bodies (of the Nirmanakaya)” all sit under the Bodhi Tree King of Seven Jewels to attain the realization of the “Anuttara Samyak-Sambodhi” (the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment”). All virtuous men, each individual flower and leaf represents one “Three-Thousand World”, each of which has ten billions of wonderful highest mountain kings, four continents, suns, moons, stars and constellations, and is fully-equipped with various Heavens in the “Three Realms of Existence”. Each leaf has various Jambudvipas and the “Bodhimanda” (Place of Enlightenment) of the Bodhi Tree King. Amongst them, there are tens of thousands, and up to inexplicable (numbers of) big- or small-sized “Manifested Bodies of Buddhas”, each of them destroys the evil troops within the nature of one’s mind under the Bodhi Trees to attain the realization of the “Anuttara Samyak-Sambodhi” (the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment”). Each of these big- or small-sized “Manifested Bodies of Buddhas” is blessed with thirty-two appearances and eighty types of good forms. For those Dharma practitioners of the “Two Vehicles” (namely: Hinayana and Mahayana) who are endowed with virtuous merits and four kinds of roots of goodness, as well as the ordinary beings, the Buddhas give them sermons on the wonderful Dharmas of the “Three Vehicles” (namely: “the Great Vehicle, the Middle Vehicle, and the Small Vehicle”) as according to their appropriate and corresponding levels.

(The Buddhas) preach the corresponding “Six Paramitas” to all the Bodhisattvas (the “Great Vehicle”), enabling them to attain the “Ultimate Wisdom of Buddhahood” on the realization of the “Anuttara Samyak-Sambodhi” (the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment”), and enter into the “Dharma Realm” for “Ultimate Nirvana”. For those seeking to become “Pratyekabuddhas” (the “Middle Vehicle”), the Buddhas teach them the corresponding “Twelve Links of Dependent Arising”. As for those seeking to become “Sravakas” (the “Small Vehicle” of Voice-hearers) in attaining “Arhatship”, they teach them the corresponding “Four Noble Truths”, taking them to cross beyond the ocean of “birth, aging, illness and death” and become liberated. For the rest of the sentient beings, the Buddhas transmit the “Human and Heavenly Teachings” (the “Human and Heaven Vehicle”) so that they can obtain the wonderful fruitions of human and celestial comforts and joy.



All these big and small "Nirmanakayas" ([Emanation Bodies](#)) of Buddhas are known as the "[Buddhas' Transformation Bodies](#)". Virtuous men, although these two kinds of responding "Nirmanakaya" – the two Manifested Bodies, in preaching either the "Buddhist Teachings" or the "Human and Heavenly Teachings", would show signs of death in their bodies, while the Dharma Nature of their Buddhahood will continue to reside within the "Dharma Realm". Therefore, virtuous men, even for one "Buddha Jewel", there would be such "boundless, limitless and inconceivable" great gratitude and kindness as mentioned above to benefit and bring joy to all sentient beings. As the merits are so deep and wide, a Buddha thus has [Ten Great Holy Names](#), namely: "[Tathagata, Arahant, Sammasambuddho, Vijacaranasampanno, Sugato, Lokavidu, Anuttaro, Purisadammasarathi, Sattha devamanussanam, Buddha Lokanatha or Buddha Bhagava](#)".

Virtuous men, there are six kinds of wonderful merits in one "[Buddha Jewel](#)". They are :-

1. [The Supreme Great Merits Field](#) - Making offerings to the "Buddha Jewel" can return great merits. Therefore, the "Buddha Jewel" is the most auspicious Great Merits Field.
2. [The Supreme Great Gratitude and Kindness](#) - The "Buddha Jewel" is blessed with supreme great gratitude and kindness due from sentient beings.
3. [No-Foot, Two-Foot and Multi-Foot Honored One Among Sentient Beings](#) - A Buddha is the most honored one among sentient beings standing on no foot, two feet, and many feet.
4. [Extremely difficult to Encounter an Epiphyllum](#) - just like seeing an Epiphyllum, it is extremely difficult to encounter the rare appearance of a Buddha ([commonly known as the short-lived appearance of the bloom of Epiphyllum](#)).
5. [Unique Appearance in the Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World](#) - The Blessed Honored Bhagava would emerge and appear uniquely ([only one of its kind](#)) in the Three-Thousand Large Thousandfold World.
6. [Abiding Base for All Perfect and Complete Merits of the Worldly and Other-Worldly Truths](#) - The worldly and other-worldly merits of a Buddha are so very perfect and complete that they become an abiding base for all truths and moral principles.

Since a Buddha is blessed with the aforesaid six kinds of merits and can always benefit, comfort and delight to all sentient beings, it is known as the "[Inconceivable Gratitude of the Buddha Jewel](#)". It is also for this reason that all sentient beings should repay their gratitude to all the Buddhas in order to inherit and receive the above-mentioned various benefits for the salvation of themselves and other beings.]

In Volume Two on the Requital of Gratitude Section No.2 [[0299b11](#)] of the "[Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation](#)", it is expounded ([in modern terminologies](#)) that: [At that time, the five hundred elders have raised with the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni the following question: "Blessed Lord, according to the words of the Buddhas, there are immeasurable 'Nirmanakayas' in one 'Buddha Jewel' which fill up the world to benefit all sentient beings. Yet, why is it that most sentient beings in the world do not see them and that they are subject to various kinds of sufferings and afflictions? The Lord Buddha told the five hundred elders: "Taking the example of the Heavenly God of Daylight who releases and radiates hundreds and thousands of light to shine upon the world, but then the blind

people cannot see any of the light. What do you think of this? Does the Heavenly God of Daylight have any fault?" The elders replied at that time: "No fault". The Lord Buddha informed the five hundred elders that: "Virtuous men, all Buddhas often speak and preach the right Dharmas to benefit and bring joy to all sentient beings. It is only the sentient beings who keep on doing evil karmas that have make them not realize nor aware of those right Dharmas. Also, they are neither remorseful in heart, nor are they willing to get closer to the "Buddha, Dharma and Sangha". As such, sentient beings are all deeply sinful in their roots.

Therefore, although after countless kalpas, (sentient beings) are still not able to see or hear the names of the **Three Jewels of "Buddha, Dharma and Sangha"**, just like a blind man who cannot see the light of the sun. If there are sentient beings who can respect the Tathagata, love and rejoice at the Mahayana Buddhist teachings, pay their respects to the Three Jewels, their karmic hindrances would be eliminated and removed. Their virtuous merits and wisdom will be greatly increased and enhanced. Their virtuous roots would also become more well-accomplished. Thus, they can see the Buddhas very quickly and get liberated from the sufferings of the Ocean of Life and Death permanently. They would certainly realize the perfect and complete Bodhi in the future.]

The methods for the requital of the "Filial Gratitude to Parents", as cited in the texts of the Sutra in the last few chapters, are of very high degree of difficulty! Now together with the requital of the "Gratitude to the King, the Gratitude to the Buddhas", will it form a kind of "attached mind" that will affect one's Dharma practice on "Emptiness"? How does one practice this "Mental Visualization on the Requital of Gratitude"? The five hundred elders had all said that "It is very difficult (to practise)!", but then the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said that this is a must. So, **are there any other solutions?** What about the other six methods on one's "Mind Training"?

.....(To be Continued)

(Notes:

1. The newly released book on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (1)" has already been published. The content includes the articles on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" from Issues No. 1 to 10 of the "Lake of Lotus".
2. The newly released book on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (2) - Seven Methods of Strengthening One's Mind to Counteract Adversities" has already been published. The content includes the articles on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" from Issues No. 11 to 20 of the "Lake of Lotus".
3. The newly released book on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (3) - One of the Pivotal Points in Practising the Holy Dharma: The Mysteries and Usage of the Mantras and Sounds" has already been published. The content includes the articles on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" from Issues No. 21 to 30 of the "Lake of Lotus".)

Synopsis of Each Chapter

The Skills in the Setting-up of “Plans”

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

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

Complementarity and the Enhancement of Effectiveness: The links between “plans” should have compatible, complementary and interdependent effects.....(please refer to Issue 4 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

A thorough elimination process to decide what to “adopt and abandon”: Irrespective of working out major, medium-term and small “plans”, there must be a process to prioritize and eliminate with regards to some designated elements and conditions. A thorough elimination process to determine what to “adopt and abandon”.

Designated Elements & Conditions in Determining What to “Adopt and Abandon”

- (i) **Importance:** To what extent would the “plan” help in achieving the “objective”? To what extent would this “objective”, in which one is prepared to achieve, help in achieving the major objective”?.....(please refer to Issue 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (ii) **The Price to be Paid:** Life is short and limited. All the resources that you presently possess could be lost at any moment. One must clearly understand the characteristics of the “Combination of Resources” and its relations with Destiny in one’s own life before making any changes, to realize the price that one has to pay for the different “plans”, and then go through the processes of elimination and deployment in order to “adopt and abandon” in these various “plans”. In this way, this would enable the limited resources to become “ever-renewing, inexhaustible and of unusual value for money” within a limited framework of time and space..... (please refer to Issue 6 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (iii) **Strength and Weakness:** Every person has his/her own strengths, merits, skills, as well as his/her weaknesses and the Achilles’ heel (weakest point). In order to achieve success of any “objective” or of any “plan”, one must be very clear of one’s own strengths and weaknesses; and then through various skillful arrangements,



try to complement and make use of one's strengths and weaknesses in designing the contents and procedures of the "plans". This is an "important strategy" in eliminating and deploying the "plans", and thus should not be underestimated.....(please refer to Issue 7 of the "Lake of Lotus").

- (iv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (1):** In drawing up any "plan", one must take into account the "planning of time". The "principles for the usages and wastages of time" must be clear, and have to be linked up with the effectiveness of the "plan". Hence, **time should be spent on those "plans" which are most effective and can bring the highest rate of return.** One should prioritize one's different "plans" according to the long or short durations of time used and their relative effectiveness. "Plans" that require one to put in a lot of time and effort, but with low rates of return and low effectiveness, should be scrapped. One should refine and improve one's "plans" by making reference to the "principles for the usages and wastages of time". This is a **major direction** in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one's "plans".....(please refer to Issue 8 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (v) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2):** Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one's lifetime, and if one's own objective is either to be "liberated from the cycle of transmigration" (known as "Samsara" in Sanskrit), or to attain "full enlightenment" ("Buddhahood") within this very life, then your "planning of time" and the "principles for the usages and wastages of time" for this life will become one of the critical points in determining whether you would succeed or fail. Hence one must be **very cautious and rational** about this. If your objective is "to be reborn into the Buddha's Pure Land" within this lifetime, then you would have had **greater flexibility in the handling of** your "planning of time" and the "principles for the usages and wastages of time", but they still should **not be neglected.** Hence, what will be the most wise and effective way in the "planning of time" for one's life while one is on the path for Dharma practice?.....(please refer to Issue 9 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (vi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (3):** Does it mean that if one is unable to undergo "long-term retreat", one would not be able to achieve the "objective" to become "liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime"? If you want to know the answer, please answer the following three questions first and to know about the "three essential factors" in the application of Buddhist teaching in our "Daily Living"..... (please refer to Issue 10 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (vii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (4): Wrong "Planning of Time":** It is no easy matter at all for one to be able to master the keys to success of "Dharma Practices" in one's "daily living" in order to have achievements, as well as to be able to achieve the "objective" of becoming "liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime". Even if one does possess the three best conditions (please refer to Issue 10 of the "Lake of Lotus"), it will still be unavoidable that one can fall prey and become lost again in this "tidal sea of sorrow in Samsara", as one goes through this **undulated waves of ever-changing life cycle.** If one tries not to fall again, and instead wants to further consolidate upon one's own foundation, one of the best methods is to **merge one's own "Dharma practices" into one's "daily living"** so as to ensure one's mastering of the "Planning of Time".

No matter in the setting of what kinds of "plans", one has to try and predict what would be the outcomes that would be brought upon you by this "plan"? What will be the side-effects and how many? One always hopes



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

- (viii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (5): The “Planning of Time” in One’s “Daily Living” (1) -- Linking up by the Main Theme, and Getting Through the Sequences of Events:** How can the “planning of time” in one’s “daily living” **be designed** so as to avoid the various wrong doings? How should we practice the “Holy Dharma” so as to make the “effectiveness of Dharma practices during meditation” be linked up and **steadily sustained** with that in “post-meditation daily living” so as to further it and let it become **fully “developed”**? If one wants the “success” to be speed up, how should it be planned so as to **remove those obstacles** that will hinder the “effectiveness”? How can the **sequence** of incidents to be traced out of those confusions, and the **key** positions to be found in solving the problems? How can a consensus be reached between one’s “cognitions” and “reality” so that the **“contradictions” can be resolved**? How can the **“devotion, pure state of mind and dedication”** of Dharma practices “during meditation” be linked up and be sustained with that in the “post-meditation daily living” with a **correct “state of mind”**? ... (please refer to the Issue 12 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (ix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (6): The Skilful Usages of the “Main Theme” and the “Sequences of Events”:** The **“cardinal mentality” is the major key in deciding on all things**, and so the **“planning of one’s Dharma practices”** in one’s “daily living” has to use the “cardinal mentality” as the “main theme” to link up the “static states of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic states of Dharma practices”, by connecting their “common points” so as to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time,” and thus opening and tidying up the disordered “sequences of events” in order to synergize the contradictions of these two and to make them to become complementary to each other, while using the “cardinal mentality” as the basis all through. This is, indeed, the **“main points of planning”** for one’s Dharma practices in “daily living”. Yet, how one focuses on the **“cardinal mentality” and the “planning of time”** would become the **main key points for one’s “successes and/or failures”**.....(please refer to the Issue 13 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (x) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (7): Flexibility in the Using of One’s “Mentality” for One’s Dharma Practice:** While practicing the Dharma during the undulated waves of “daily living”, one can hardly sustain one’s “meditational power” and the **degree of the steadiness** of one’s “Dharma practice’ by **relying solely on “Emptiness”**. In order to be able to continuously enhance and elevate one’s Dharma practice in “daily living”, one must have **to adopt “Emptiness” as the unchanging and everlasting “cardinal mentality”**. One further needs to flexibly make use of the “three main essential points” of one’s Dharma practice in “daily living” so as to **train one’s own “mind”** in addressing the problems of one’s “daily living”, as well as to transform one’s “emotions and feelings” in becoming the “driving force for one’s Dharma practice”.....(please refer to the Issue 14 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (8): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (1):** In the undulated journey in the course of one’s lifetime, it is **unavoidable** that one would meet with many adversities. If you encounter these adversities and could not handle them properly, they would become the



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

- (xii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (9): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (2):** Among the criteria for “Dharma Practices in times of Adversities”, one should pay attention and **adhere** to the following **procedures**: 1) to alienate from one’s role; 2) to remain calm; 3) to analyze accurately; 4) to act within one’s own capacities – this can be regarded as the “time planning for one’s Dharma practice during adversities”; 5) to take advantage of the different circumstances; 6) to learn from one’s own experiences; and 7) to elevate one’s own awareness, with particular reference to 3) to analyze accurately.....(please refer to the Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (10): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (3):** In times of favorable circumstances, it would be easy for one to achieve success regardless of what one does. One would **naturally** be successful without having to wait for the right opportunities, neither does one have to make any planning. This is because this will be the time for **the arrival of the “achieved rewards”**. The good deeds that you have accumulated in the past are the best planning for the “achieved rewards.” However, in times of adversities, no matter what one does, one would have encountered many obstacles and have one’s head badly battered. If one simply goes along naturally, it would lead one to a dead end. This is because, in times of adversities, it is the time **for the coming of one’s retributions due to one’s past bad deeds**. If one does not remain calm, wait for the right opportunity, and plan appropriately, it would be difficult for one to get out from the plight. The question, then, is **when will be the best time** to get out from the plight? And what would be considered as the **appropriate planning.....(please refer to the Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”)?**
- (xiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (11): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (4) – Making use of the Circumstances:** The characteristics for being in adversities are that one would be **beset with difficulties and will be unable to cope with the situations**. If one has to make use of the circumstances of that particular situation and time so as to break through the obstacles is basically an **extremely difficult matter to achieve**. Since it is **all that difficult**, the conditions that one would have to consider in order to complement the whole situation would be particularly even more so. There is an old Chinese saying that “Hero makes the trend of his time, and the trend of the time makes its own Hero”. After all, ‘the trend of the time and the environment’ together is one of the major elements for one’s success and failure. Hence, it is also **a necessary element** for one to get out from the plight by making use of the circumstances to break away from adversities. If one is to make use of the circumstances, one would adopt one of the following situations: (1) to **quietly wait** for the favourable circumstances to arise; (2) to **make use of** the existing circumstances; and (3) to **build up** favourable circumstances.....(please refer to the Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (12): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities”(5) -- Learn One’s Lessons from Past Experiences:** Failure is not necessarily a miserable thing. It can only be said as a blueprint which reflects on a series of **merits and weaknesses**. If one can learn one’s lessons well from past experiences in finding out the “reasons for one’s failures, as well as the **personal behavioral formulae** that led to such failures”, one’s “**wisdom of self-enhancement**” will be elevated by applying proper remedies to revise these **extremely concealed** and improper formulae, this would help to bring about one’s success in the next occasion. During this process of “self-enhancement”, it would enable one to live more happily and to have a direction, to have more meanings and values, and to be more proactive. In this way, what one would regard as failures have, in fact, now been changed into successes, and have brought about the essential elements for one’s future successes. The “state of invincibility” is the most lonely and painful experience. Too many successes and for too long will only make one to lose one’s sense of direction, and to easily lose oneself in one’s own “ego”. As such, one **would not be able to find out and revise the poor formulae**, and oneself would thus be easily bogged down in the mire of having too much “self-pride” and strong “arrogance” within one’s own “ego”, never being able **to see the real world in its totality**. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be **an extremely big failure.....(please refer to the Issue 19 of the “Lake of Lotus”)**.
- (xvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (13): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (6) – Enhancing One’s Awareness:** Many a times the formation of one’s mistakes and failures are due to the inadequacy of one’s own “awareness”. The biggest drawback was one’s own failure lied in not “being aware” of what and where had gone wrong in one’s own “behavioral formulae”. This would result in one’s repeating, or even expanding, of one’s mistakes and failures endlessly. Being faulty or carelessness for a short while is not the main cause for one’s mistakes and failures. **The main and real cause is the existence of deviations and defects in both the consciousness and the subconscious of one’s own “behavioral formulae”**. This would lead to a chain of wrong behaviors, which would form **an orbit which would lead to further failures, and that one would find it hard to depart from it**. Along with this orbit of failures, it would further extend to many more faults and carelessness, and the end result would be more and greater failures. Hence, to “enhance one’s awareness” is not only to elevate one’s attentiveness, such that the frequency of one’s making mistakes due to carelessness would be reduced, but the more important aspect is whether to have the ability for one’s “self-reflection”, for observing the minute details, and to carefully find out the deviations and defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”.....(please refer to the Issue 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (14): Simplifying the Complexities, Finding the Keys -** Due to the fact that one’s life span is **temporary and impermanent**, and so when one design and draw up a plan for one’s own Dharma practice, one should need to include the “factor of time and effectiveness”, all the more, as **the primary important point for one’s consideration**. Apart from having the “right mindset and criteria” in handling periods of “adversities or prosperities” so that one would be able to “master the factor of time” more accurately and to have **an edge, what other principles that one should need to pay attention to?** No matter what kinds of the “planning of time” that one has, they are bound to have both strengths and weaknesses. It is unavoidable that there will be some faults. However, the appropriate “planning of time” should be able to

reduce or lighten all kinds of faults and be able to speed up the process in the showing of “success”. An appropriate “planning of time” must make use of the following principles in its design: 1. Linking up by the Main theme, and getting through the sequences of events – target: daily living before one’s death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”); 2. Simplifying the complexities, finding the keys – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death; 3. Differentiation on the order of importance, Proper handling of the interferences –target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death.....(please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”).

- (xviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (15): Mastering of Time and Choice of Methods** – Irrespective of the objectives of one’s Dharma practice, one must choose the appropriate “methods of Dharma practice” that correspond with one’s objectives. The amount of time spent on these “methods of Dharma practice”, and the effects that one can achieve through them, are the key and critical points as to whether or not one can achieve the objectives, and so one should analyze them in more details. In order to have a quick and accurate way to analyze and measure the various “methods of Dharma practice”, one must first “bring out the chief points” on the “objectives” of the various practices, as well as the effective elements of the “methods of Dharma practice”, before one can correspondingly discuss and analyze the issues.....(please refer to Issue 22 of “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (16): The Highest Objective that “Prayers” can Achieve** – On the side of effectiveness, even though they consist the element of one’s “mental strength”, but since “prayers” do not involve any practice on “Emptiness”, and so they are neither direct enough, nor have they included any programming for the practicing of “Emptiness” that could counter-act the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic exercise”. Hence, though prayers can produce some effects, the highest level that they can achieve would only be limited to the “materialization of requests for worldly desires”, or for the “rebirths in some virtuous realms”. One would not be able to achieve the two objectives of: (1) liberation from the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence”; and (2) the attainment of “Complete Enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”). Hence, “prayers” will not be able to become the major item of Dharma practice in Buddhism, and that it can only be a supplementary method of Dharma practice.....(please refer to Issue 23 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xx) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (17): The Mystery of the Blessings of the Sound in the Recitations of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names or Sutras”** – The practice method of using sound to recite “mantras, names of Holy Deities, and scriptures” is one of the practice methods that have been adopted by most religions and ceremonies in this secular world. Does it consist of other deeper meanings? What are some of the effects that will be produced from this kind of practice methods? What are the degrees of influence that this has upon one’s own “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that it can achieve? What is the length of time that it will take up in order to achieve the objective?.....(Please refer to Issue 24 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (18): How to Make Different Mantras to Produce Effects** – the effects and energies that are produced from the “resonance” of sound can make the “electrons” at the outer layer of the “atom” to move over to the other “atom” next to it, or else the two “atoms” can share the same “electrons”. This kind of mechanism can help make “atoms” to become bondings in forming “molecules”, or other types of “compounds”. Through this process, different types of materials can then be connected, consolidated and formed. Yet, what types of pronunciation of “sounds” could match such particular effects?(Please refer to Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xxii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (19): What is the meaning of having received the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras in order that merits would be arisen which are remarkable and vast, particularly in the enhancement of one’s own wisdom which would be very significant, and would not be lost in one’s numerous lifetimes?** – There are numerous mentions of the “Dharani Samadhi”, the “Dharani Seal Samadhi” and the “one hundred and eight kinds of “Samadhis” in the different “Buddhist Sutras”, and so what are they? These are referring to the different “Mantras” within the hundred types of “Right Concentrations”, and so what is the mysterious rationale behind them? Should “mantras” be translated? What are the merits that can be arisen from the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of “mantras”?(Please refer to Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (20): How to Give Rise to the Wonderful Merits in “Pacifying/Averting Adversities” by Reciting the “Mantra Dharani”?** – There are many more conditions that need to be coordinated in order to give rise to the merits of “pacifying/averting adversities” by reciting the “Mantra Dharani”, as it would involve the “collective karma” of all those who are involved, that is, the “karmas” of each and every one that would be affected by those adversities combined together. As such, it would be much more complicated than the “karma” involved in both the “Dharma Dharani” and the “Meaning Dharani”, as for the latter two only the “karma” of the Dharma practitioner himself/herself would be involved. Hence, it would be relatively much easier to give rise to the merits of both the “Dharma Dharani” and the “Meaning Dharani”, and the level of “meditational power” that is required to match these Dharani is relatively lower. On the other hand, the level of “meditational power” that is required to match the giving rise of the merits of “pacifying/averting adversities” of the “Mantra Dharani” would be correspondingly higher.....(please refer to the Issue 27 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (21): The wonderful merits of the recitation of “Endurance Dharani”** – How to generate the merits of “Endurance Dharani”? “Endurance” has two meanings: one represents the “Endorsement Abler”, and the other represents a “Decision”. The “Endorsement Abler” means that “after the verification and endorsement, one has been confirmed to have such an attainment”. As for the “Decision”, it indicates that one has “surely and profoundly realized, and has thus affirmatively achieved a certain level of attainment, in a decisive and firm manner without any doubts”.....(please refer to the Issue 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (22): How to set up an all-rounded protection shield** - In the “Sutra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has proclaimed the Holy Names of thousands of Buddhas. If counting the compressed abbreviations, such as “Namo to the eight hundred billions of those designated Buddhas of the Second Kalpa who are having the same names with the same Dharma states” and so on, then the Holy Names of the Buddhas being mentioned are actually infinite in numbers. Hence, if all sentient beings could follow exactly what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has told us to recite and chant, then the causes of connections being sown with all the Buddhas could also be infinite. In the future, sentient beings could be taught by such a vast number of Buddhas, and could also receive sky-like protections from countless Buddhas and related protectors, such that it will definitely keep sentient beings away from all karmic obstacles, and certainly they will be able to practise peacefully without disasters,



difficulties and hindrances, until they will finally attain Buddhahood. In other words, the recitation and chanting of the Buddhas' Holy Names is a kind of Dharma practice with the nature of "praying, being blessed and protected". Yet, it does take a longer period of time and is a bit indirect.....(please refer to the Issue No. 29 of the "Lake of Lotus").

- (xxvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (23): Is there any difference in reciting and chanting the "Buddhist Sutras" when one has already got the wisdom seeds in one's unconscious - "Buddhist Sutras"**, as ancient books and records, actually stored the boundless wisdom of the Lord Buddha. By the using of words to show the Lord Buddha's wisdom to the world, it also wishes to let all sentient beings to truly understand the kind of wisdom that was unveiled by those words, so as to know how to apply them. Unfortunately, in achieving such kinds of results are not easy things, except for those ripe sentient beings who have the past causes and merits, and they also should have the wisdom seeds within their unconscious. Thus, even though people have been trying to abandon the ancient words, and have changed them into modern terminologies, it is still unable to make this wish come true. Yet, are there alternative ways to make this wish come true? For those who have already gotten the wisdom seeds in their unconscious and for those who do not, when reciting and chanting the **"Buddhist Sutras"**, would there be any difference between them?..... (please refer to the Issue No.30 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (xxvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (23): What is the "evil spirit within one's own mind"?** – Many people have mentioned that the practicing of the Buddhist Dharma is to overcome our own "mind", that is, the "evil spirit within one's own mind". Actually, what has created this "evil spirit within one's own mind"? In fact, this so-called "evil spirit within one's own mind" is some kind of a bad inclination within oneself, which has been reacted upon and projected from the bad "karmic seeds" that had been sown in the "field of the eighth consciousness" in one's endless past lives. In order to overcome this "evil spirit within one's own mind", many people will come to know that it will be very difficult to depend on others, but that one should "begin with one's own mind". However, if one has only very limited knowledge, with a weak capability to resist stress, then how could one "begin with one's own mind"? (please refer to the Issue No. 31 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (xxviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (24): How could one extend the life of a dying relative? How to use the four levels to help and save patients?** – When the signs of death of patients are shown and even unveiling that one is going to enter into the initial stage of either virtuous or evil judgment, that means even though this person has not yet formally died, he or she was already stepping into the edge at the "margin of life and death". As this is a critical position, that whether one could "recover from death, and to extend one's life" or not will have to depend upon how many merits this patient could have aroused or being induced at that very moment. (please refer to the Issue No.32 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (xxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (25) : How to directly elevate the functions and merits of one's own mind?** - Sound is a vibration with frequency. If the airflow and muscles of one's body are blown up to make the vocal cord vibrate, the sound so produced will have certain impact on the body, regardless of whether it has any meaning. This includes the impact on the spiritual level. Different degrees of sound would, of course, have different degrees of impact. Therefore, among the Buddhist practice methods, sound has been included as one of the important dimensions for its Dharma practices. What are the comprehensive merits of this kind of Dharma practice? (please refer to the Issue No.33 of the "Lake of Lotus").



- (xxx) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (26): The skills of chanting need to be adjusted and changed in accordance with “the characteristics of one’s habitual tendencies, features of karma, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentration** - Whether the “resonant frequency” of a particular “Mantra, Buddha’s Holy Name, or the Sutra” is suitable for the reciting person, whether it matches the “the characteristics of habitual tendencies, features of karmas, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentrations” of the reciting person and so on is a major factor that influences the effects. If the reciting person understands his own “ characteristics of habitual tendencies, features of karmas, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentrations” so well that he knows how to choose a “Mantra, Buddha’s Holy Name, or the Sutra” that is most suitable for himself to recite, then the skills of recitations will become the only major factor that influences the effects. Are there then differences in the skills for reciting the “Mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, or the Sutras”?..... (please refer to the Issue No.34 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (27): How to Use the “Sound of Mantra” to Transcend All Limitations of Dharma Practice** - “The Power of the Resonating Voice” is sufficient enough to make the long progress period of one’s Dharma practice to become a rapid achievement of goals. Why is it so? The most important key point for one’s real Holy Dharma practice is on one’s “mind training”. And the highest level of one’s “Mind” is to restore the state of “**Emptiness: Neither existence nor voidness**”. Then what is the “vibration frequency” that is closest to this state? A good mastery and application of this special “vibration frequency” is undoubtedly the “shortcut” for one to enter this state of condition. Therefore, the arising of human sounds, regardless of whether they come from the “conscious” level or from the “subconscious” level, will be extremely useful in one’s Dharma practice, if one knows how to use them.....(please refer to the Issue No.35 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (28): The interrelationships of the sounds of the human body with one’s Dharma practice and with that of the “Consciousness” and the “Subconscious”** - Other than for the use of talking, the sounds of human beings can also be used to express emotions, such as laughter, crying, moaning, sighs, cries of grief and even yawning etc. They all have the various functions to relieve our emotions, stress and tensions. Some of them are generated as the functions of one’s “conscious” level while others are generated as the function of one’s “unconscious” level. Therefore, the origins for giving rise to the sounds of human beings can be divided into those coming from the “conscious” level and those from the “unconscious” level. Can their interrelationships render assistance to one’s Dharma practice? (please refer to the Issue No.36 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (29): The use of the “core basic sound”. Its usefulness to sentient beings in elevating their lives and in practising the Holy Dharma** - The “core basic sound” represents the pure and natural sound of its original nature of each individual sentient being. From the physical structure to the spiritual dimension, their inter-dependence and co-existence are inseparable from the relationships on the movements of the “molecules” and “bio-energy”. Thus, the “vibration frequency” so generated will be that kind of “frequency vibration” that controls and affects the physical and mental conditions of that particular sentient being. When this kind of “frequency of vibration” expands to become sounds, this can be used to elevate both the physical and spiritual states of that particular sentient being..... (please refer to the Issue No.37 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xxxiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (30): Those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”**- Why “Visualization” is a method of Dharma practice that can mostly directly link to one’s “Nature of the Mind”? Where are the reasons and the evidences? In order to see the evidence, one should first look at what the “Buddhist’s Sutras” have to say. The **“Avatamsaka Sutra”** has mentioned: “Everything comes from the Mind”. This quote points out that the manifestation and emergence of all things are caused by the tractional forces of the “Mind”. In other words, the “Mind” is the source of everything. To catch all the thieves, one needs first to catch its chief. Therefore, in order to achieve success in one’s Dharma practice swiftly, not as slow as “ants crawling upwards from the ground”, one needs to deal with the “Mind”. In this regards, “Visualization” is a method of Dharma practice that can most directly link to one’s “Nature of the Mind”. Let us look at the following golden verses from the Buddhist Sutras that can provide us with guidelines ([as pointers](#)) towards the “Grand Boulevard of Golden Light”.....([please refer to the Issue No.38 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).
- (xxxv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (31): The “Mahayana Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplations” is an important evidence for the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni’s preaching on “Vajrayana” practices** – In the **“Mahayana Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplations”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the respective methods of the “Mental Visualization” through the “Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana” Dharma practices. This Sutra can be said to be a clear and simple overview of the Dharma practices on “mental visualizations”. The fact that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us in one and the same Sutra on the “mental visualizations” through the “Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana” practices is sufficient enough to be a strong and important evidence to prove against the wrong accusations from both the “Hinayana and Mahayana” that “Vajrayana” practices were “not preached by the Lord Buddha”. It also testifies that the defamation from some of the “Hinayana and Mahayana” practitioners against the “Vajrayana” practices will only constitute an evil cause for their downfalls ([to the “evil realms”](#)) due to their “slandering the Lord Buddha’s teachings”.....([please refer to the Issue No.39 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).
- (xxxvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (32): What are the methods of “Mental Visualization”?** – The previous two chapters have clearly described those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”, and this is also the important guideline in the **“Mahayan Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**. Then comes the question as to how to “visualize one’s mind”? Whether it will be fine by just “visualizing” oneself as he Buddha or the “diety”? What are the contents and procedures of one’s “Visualization”? In modern terminology, it is the question of how to proceed with the programming of one’s “visualization” in order to be most effective? There are countless and endless methods of “visualization”, and so which kinds of them are correct? To what levels of “visualization” do they belong? What kind of situations are they specifically for? How are their effectiveness being demonstrated? Are there any opposing effects, or side effects? A series of such questions are the “important points for consideration” in choosing one’s method of “mental visualization”. ([please refer to the Issue No.40 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).
- (xxxvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (33): The “Training of Mind” From the Core and Foundational Basis of One’s “Awareness”** - In the **“Mahayan Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the “Mental Visualization” method for the “Mind Ground Visualization on



the Requit of the Four Kinds of Gratitude". On the face of it, such kind of "Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude" appears to be of a high degree of difficulty. Yet, in terms of meanings and principles, it is indeed extremely deep and far-reaching. In view of the high degree of difficulty, the five hundred elders who were present at that time in hearing the Lord Buddha's preaching all said in unison that "It is very difficult (to practise)!" , but then the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said that this is a must. So are there any other solutions? Before further solutions are quoted, let us first look at how, apart from the "Filial Gratitude to Parents", the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had preached on the other three of "the four kinds of Gratitude", namely the "Gratitude to all Sentient Beings, Gratitude to the King, and Gratitude to the Three Jewels", and see whether they are also equally difficult to be repaid?.. (please refer to the Issue No.41 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xxxviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (34) - What is actually the "Gratitude to the King" that needs to be repaid by sentient beings as requested by the Lord Buddha?** - The mindsets and thinking patterns of most sentient beings today in this contemporary world focus mostly on the "self-centered, free and equal" kind of "liberated, confrontational and anti-authority" behavioural programming. It seems to be an extremely difficult thing to ask them to understand what is meant by the "Gratitude to the King", and even request them to make requital in their behaviours. Our current "century thinking" nowadays is "No king but elections". Is this kind of thinking actually a counterbalance to what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said without any commonality? (please refer to the Issue No.42 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xxxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (35) - The "Buddha Jewel" has "Three Bodies". What are their merits? The "Sambhogabaya (Enjoyment Body)" of a Buddha has two forms. What are their characteristics? What do the ten kinds of special "Manifested Body of a Buddha" represent?** - In Volume One on the Preface Section No.1 [0294b22] of the "**Mahayan Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**", the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us that: "Because you worldly people 'do not visualize your own minds' (that is not using visualization for mind training), therefore you are subject to the cycle of karmic existence endlessly, drifting and floating in the Ocean of Life and Death. As all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are able 'to visualize Their minds' (for mind-training), they can thus cross the Ocean of Life and Death to reach to the other shore in the Pure Land either to get liberated from the cycle of karmic existence or get entry into the "Dharma Realm". The Buddhas of the past world, the present world and the future world all practised their Holy Dharma in this way". From this, one can see that "Mental Visualization" is extremely important and is the only method for Dharma practice. With regard to the foundational base of "Mental Visualization", one must first understand and repay the four kinds of gratitude and kindness, among which, the "Gratitude to the Three Jewels" can be said to be of "prime importance". The "Gratitude to the Three Jewels" refers respectively to "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel, the Gratitude to the Dharma Jewel, and the Gratitude to the Sangha Jewel". Let us first talk about "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel". The "Buddhas" appear to be very perfect, unreachable and also difficult to communicate as they are very far away from the sentient beings. Then how is "the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel" formed and how "deep" and "wide" is it? (please refer to the Issue No.43 of the "Lake of Lotus").



 **The Essence of Teachings:**

Everything Comes from the Mind (15)

By **Vajra Master Pema Lhadren**
Translated by **Various Disciples**

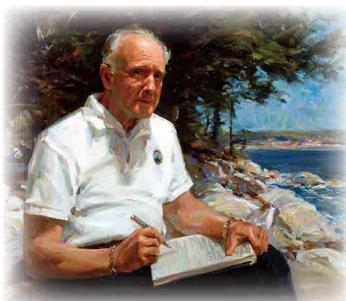
Excerpt of Last Chapter

The “**Avatamsaka Sutra**” mentions that “everything comes from the mind”. So, in order to explain that “**everything comes from the mind**”, we have to talk about the importance of “**mental strength**”. Since the “cycle of karmic existence” composes of strong “**tractional forces**”, which would subject all of us to its bondages, to be drawn into, and under the control of, the tractional forces of the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”. So, the kind of force we called “**mental strength**” is the only kind of force that can counteract the “**tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence**”, and can thus help us to be released and be “**liberated from reincarnations**”.

Since this kind of force is coming from the function of one’s own “**mind**”, and that is why it is called the “**mental strength**”, and is also a sign of “**everything comes from the mind**”. Furthermore, the “**tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence**” are, in fact, originated from the combinations and permutations of countless “**mental strengths**”, thus constructing a grand design and blueprint of “**everything comes from the mind**”, and also form the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”.

For what scientists to be recognized as the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”, the so-called “**Cause**” is one’s “**Observation**”. The “**energies**” coming from one’s “**sight**” and “**mental strength**” will bring about changes in the **observed** electron. This is a mutual “**interactions of tractional forces**”, and this is the “**Cause**”.

Then, what is the “**Effect**”? The “**thing**” that is being observed by you will **manifest itself in a certain shape**; or else the “**thing**” that is being observed by you, due to the energy that was added by one’s “**mental strength**”, will change its original “**speed**”, “**form**”, and “**direction**”, and all these are the “**Effects**”. Thus, this is recognized by the scientists as the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”. (Please refer to the article on “**Everything Comes From the Mind**” in Issue 36 of the “**Lake of Lotus**”).



“**Only when something is put under observation, it will then exist. If there is no observation, the matter will not exist**”.

(“**Nothing exists until it is observed.**” by **John A. Wheeler**)

The “False Ego”

The “greed, hatred and ignorance” of sentient beings will give rise to one’s “grasping”. These kinds of “grasping” will further lead to the formations of “tractional forces” to give rise to the “false ego”, which is the “grasping of the ego”, thus resulting in the “karmas of the mind” to be accumulated continuously.

What is meant by this “false ego”? Because all sentient beings would consider that: “I’ll forever be in possession of this body. I’m always in possession of my own name. The wealth that I have accumulated will forever belong to me. I have to revenge against those who have treated me badly.” As he/she always grasps and attaches to this “ego”, he/she does not know that when he/she passes away, he/she would be led by his/her own “karmas” to be attached to some other environments.

All the things that he/she had grasped upon would also change. The body that he/she would give birth to, or the space that he/she will be living in, will all be changed as well. He/she does not understand that all materials, when analyzed to their smallest and minutest parts, are of “Emptiness”, and in fact there is nothing in them. “Death” will change everything, and so this “ego” could never be everlasting. Hence, this “ego” is “false” and is not everlasting, and that is why the “Buddhist teachings” call this as the “false ego”.

However, all sentient beings would tend to grasp upon their bodies, which are formed by material substances, and all things as forever in their possessions. In order that they can continue to be in possessions of these things that they have grasped upon, they would engage in all types of bad behaviors. The end result of that would be that they would have an even more miserable future, which could hardly compensate for the efforts that they have put into them.



A modern statue of emperor Qin Shi Huang near the site of his tomb in Xi’an, China

For example, the Emperor Qin Shi Huang in China, who wanted to have longevity, and thus had asked his ministers to find medicines for him to live forever. In order that he could retain his body, kingdom, power and all kinds of grasping, he had done many horrible things. He went to wars and destroyed the six countries, and thus created many “bad karmas” because of his selfish wishes. Thus, all sentient beings are being controlled by this “false ego” and dragged down by it continuously, to be entangled in this ocean of sufferings. Yet, they did not understand that the “origin of sufferings” is due to this clinging, grasping and attachment of this “false ego”.

..... (To Be Continued)

Everything Comes from the Mind

Synopsis of Each Chapter

Chapter 1 (in Issue 29)

The Emergence of Lives - Quantity	The Emergence of Lives – Forms
All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Buddhist Perspective	All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Scientific Perspective

Chapter 2 (in Issue 30)

Earth Realm, Water Realm, Fire Realm, Wind Realm, Space Realm, Consciousness Realm	All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source – Different Interpretations Held by Buddhism & Science
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Chapter 3 (in Issue 31)

What is Meant by the “Cycle of Karmic Existence”?	The Three Key Points That Form the “Cycle of Karmic Existence”
The Cycle of Karmic Existence – From the Scientific Perspective	

Chapter 4 (in Issue 32)

The Cycle of Karmic Existence – From the Buddhist Perspective

Chapter 5 (in Issue 33)

The Karma of Killing	The Mental Strength
Different Interpretations of the “Mind” by Buddhism and Other Religions	

Chapter 6 (in Issue 34)

What is the “Body of the Bardo”?	What is the Difference Between the “Body of the Bardo” and the “Ghosts”?
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Chapter 7 (in Issue 35)

The Key Points of “Everything Comes From the Mind” The Mind (Mental Strength)

Chapter 8 (in Issue 36)

The “Law of the Cause and Effect”	The Recognition of “The Law of Cause and Effect” by Scientists
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Chapter 9 (in Issue 37)

The Buddhist Explanation on “The Law of Cause and Effect”

Chapter 10 (in Issue 38)

The Function of the “Mind”

Chapter 11 (in Issue 39)

The Power of the “Mind”

Chapter 12 (in Issue 40)

The Power of the “Mind” Upon the Mutual Causation of Matter and “Karma”

Chapter 13 (in Issue 41)

The Inconceivable “Law of Karma”

Chapter 14 (in Issue 42)

What is Meant by the “Collective Karma”?

Chapter 15 (in Issue 43)

The “False Ego”

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