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**Scenes at Death and Revelation of
Sharing Death Experiences**

Abductor in the Spiritual World

**The Lord Buddha Said That "Jewels"
Have Ten Kinds of Meanings.
What Are They?**

**How Could One Repay
the "Four Kinds of Gratitude"
Without Affecting One's Dharma
Practice On "Emptiness"?**

**Phra Pathom Chedi in
Nakhon Pathom, Thailand
(the tallest Buddhist monument in the world)**



Content (Press the titles to read the articles)



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- Scenes at Death and Revelation of Sharing Death Experiences
- Abductor in the Spiritual World

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

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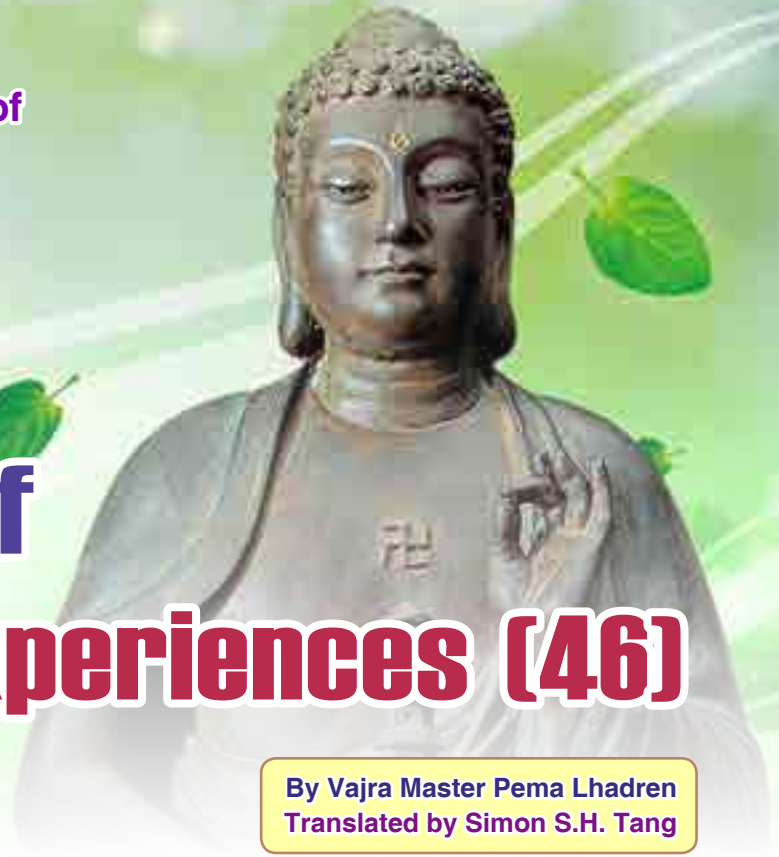
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**The Profound Abstruseness of
Life and Death**



The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (46)

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

- **Scenes at Death and Revelation of Sharing Death Experiences**
- **Abductor in the Spiritual World**

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

(Please refer back to Issue 43 of the "Lake of Lotus").

Various Adventures While Progressing towards the Fourth Stage of Death

(Please refer back to Issue 44 of the "Lake of Lotus").

The Actual Departure When Approaching the Fifth Stage of Death

(Please refer back to Issue 45 of the "Lake of Lotus").

Scenes at Death and Revelation of Sharing Death Experiences

"Death" is inevitable to all the living beings. No matter whether it is for the sake of oneself or for caring of a dying relative or friend, one should have certain understanding about the process of "death", as well as the risks and opportunities of the "posthumous world". Otherwise, **all sorts of regrets, and risky situations rather than opportunities**, would certainly arise. After all, opportunities are for the persons who are ready for it.

As a matter of fact what are the "dangers", and what are the "opportunities"? We start with a real case from which we can have a peek about it. A female reader wrote a letter to the "Spiritualist Association of Great Britain" about a case of 'sharing death experiences'. The 'sharing death experiences' refer to a dying person with a living person, being induced by death, are under the condition of clear mind and rationality, jointly going through a strange situation involving the world of both spirituality and reality.



William Barrett was the first physician involved in scientific studies on the "psychical experiences of dying persons". Basing upon his scientific works, he had written a book titled **"Death-Bed Visions: The Psychical Experiences of the Dying"**. Many of the cases listed in this book involved the joint experiences of "death-bed visions" of medical personnel, relatives and friends of the dying, as well as the deceased.



Case 52

A female reader wrote a letter to the editor of “The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain” as follows:

[Dear Ms Editor:

The case I am going to tell you happened several years ago. The following is the actual situation:

While my daughter was at seventeen years old, I lost her. Intermittently, she had been sick for five years. Before death, she had been struggling for eight months. During that period of time, she had kept her keenness and mindfulness in a good condition.

During a night about two weeks before her death, I was close to her bed and noticed that she was attracted by something. I asked her what she was thinking. She replied, “Mom, look over there,” and pointed to the curtain over the bed. I stared at the direction accordingly, and saw a male figure, all in white, and standing in front of the dark window curtain.

I have no idea about soul, and thus I was somewhat nervous. I closed my eyes and didn’t want to look at it. My child asked me, “You didn’t answer me.” I dared not tell her, but said, “I saw nothing.” But my trembling voice had betrayed me. My daughter said with a sense of accusation: “Oh! Mom, I have seen the same thing at the same period of time for over three days by now. That is my dear father coming to fetch me.”

15 days later, my daughter passed away. The specter did not appear again. Or maybe it had reached its highest intensity on the day I saw it.]

Abductor in the Spiritual World

This case has revealed several points:

1. The lady was not able to clearly identify who was the white figure, even though her daughter said that the image was her deceased father; in other words, her own husband. As close as her own husband, she should not be afraid of it. And even so, she should have the same induction as her daughter, and should be able to identify the white image to be her own husband. However, if she was unable to identify it, then this showed that it was only the cognition of her daughter. This sort of individual cognition could be a **wrong cognition**, owing to her own desire for it. In other words, this white specter was not her father, and that it could have been another specter who took the opportunity during her death. While she was approaching death and was about to enter into the spiritual domain, she might **blindly follow anyone** who came forth to fetch for her, as she was **“entirely naïve and innocent”** about it. Someone was taking advantage of this chaotic situation in order to abduct the girl.



2. The lady thought that the specter only showed a white image could have been due to its dim intensity. As a matter of fact, the specter did not want the lady to see it clearly, so as to avoid being identified by her. The specter had been hiding behind the dark curtain ever since, but unfortunately it was discovered by her daughter. Then, even if the specter showed up thereafter, it was even the more unclear. Therefore, the lady said, "After my daughter had passed away, the specter has never shown up again. Or maybe, it has reached the highest intensity on the day that I saw it." If the specter was really the lady's own husband, how could it not take this rare chance of having reunion together, and instead would not show up again? How would it be possible **only** when the specter was suddenly being pointed out by her daughter, that it was being located by her at its peak of intensity?

3. In many cases of 'sharing death experiences', a living person can **clearly** see what the dying person has come across without any differences. The common characteristic is that: "a specter only appears in image and without a sound". All communications depend on "telepathy". And the special feature of "telepathy" is that: a **wrong cognition** has arisen through "**mixed images**" that have been derived from "the **memories, desires and unconsciousness** according to each individual", when fusing with the **objective** outside world. In other words, "these projections and the cognitions of the deceased person" did not represent the real situations. **Even clear images could be unreal, not to mention those unclear images.** In this case, the deceased person had deep affection with her deceased father, and so she mistook the white image as her own father. She said, "Oh! Mom, I saw the **same thing** at the same period of time for over three days by now. That is my dear father coming to fetch me." She used the word 'the thing' to describe this white image, showing that she was also not so clear about the image. All these were the results of projections coming from her own desire through "speculations".

In the "**The Sutra on the Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva**", the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni alerted peoples of the world by saying that: "Even for those philanthropists of this world, when they approach the end of their lives, there will be hundreds and thousands of demons from the inferior domains who will conjure up figures of their parents or relatives in order to fetch them to the inferior realms (**namely: hell, hungry ghosts and animal realms**), let alone those who have committed evil deeds."

The specter as described in this case appeared to be dishonorably tricky, and so definitely it was not a benevolent one. **There are abductors in this secular world of ours, and there are even several million times more so in the spiritual world.** In other words, while you are alive, you might never come across any abductors as you are very familiar with your environments, and you know how to protect yourself. But then, at the end of life, you are in a flurry situation, and would be unfamiliar with the "process of the posthumous world". As a result, you would not know how to protect yourself. Under such kind of a situation, it is an excellent chance for those **thousands and thousands of specters who are afloat in the spiritual realm.** How could they ever want to miss this great opportunity?





It is a pity that the lady of this case had no idea about the possible danger of her daughter who was **under the watch of the abductors**, while she was only preoccupied with puzzle and could not provide any help.

Mothers used to tell their children to be careful about wolves. Now that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had told all sentient beings to be cautious about **the abductors** in the spiritual world. In this regard, what can the deceased persons do when they saw their relatives after their deaths? This is, indeed, the biggest problem and difficulty for those who have never studied Buddhist teachings, or who merely have superficial knowledge in Buddhism, or who have **never practised “the methods to deal with the varying conditions in the posthumous world, so as to attain real liberation from the cycles of life and death.”** Hence, **what can one do about this?**

For those readers who would like to have the answers, please visit the **‘Video Series on the Posthumous World’ on YouTube**. You will be greatly inspired with wisdom. The following is the link to those videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DudjomBuddhist>

.....(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”**.]



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The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (46)

The Mind-Training Episode (9)

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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 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 **“Mahâyâna 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 **“Mahâyâna 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 **“Mahâyâna 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 44 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; and**
7. **Visualization on the Three Great Secret Dharmas.**



In the **“Mahâyâna 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 Issue 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 Issue 42 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and
4. **Gratitude to the Three Jewels** -
 - (i) **The Gratitude to the “Buddha Jewel”** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 43 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
 - (ii) **The Gratitude to the “Dharma Jewel”** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 44 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
 - (iii) **The Gratitude to the “Sangha Jewel”** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 45 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

The Lord Buddha Said That “Jewels” Have Ten Kinds of Meanings. What Are They?

“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 the four kinds of gratitude, the “Gratitude to the Three Treasures” has been regarded by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni as the precious **“Jewels”**. He instructed



sentient beings to **cherish them tremendously**. The elders then pleaded to ask the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni about the meanings of the precious “Jewels”. Why do sentient beings have to treat the “Gratitude to the Three Treasures” as the precious “Jewels”? In so doing, would it not surpass “the Filial Gratitude to Parents, the Gratitude to all Sentient Beings, and the Gratitude to the King”?

In Volume One on the Preface Section No.1 [0300a22] of the “**Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us (in modern terminologies) as follows: [The questions on the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas” that you have asked about are similar to those **extremely profound and subtle teachings** as expounded by the Buddhas. These can benefit and comfort all sentient beings in future generations. Like the **foremost jewellery** in the worldly realm, the Buddha Dharmas are **endowed with ten kinds of meanings and principles**, enabling the adornment of the national boundaries and benefitting all sentient beings. This is the same for the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. These **ten kinds of meanings and principles respectively are**:

1. **Strong and firm** – Same as the ‘Wish-fulfilling Jewel’ (“**Cintamani**” in Sanskrit), the Buddha Dharmas are indestructible. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. No outside (**non-Buddhist**) heretics and heavenly demons are able to destroy them.
2. **Immaculate** – Similar to the most auspicious jewellery in the worldly realm, the Buddha Dharmas are clear and pure, bright and clean, uncontaminated by dust with no cumulative dirt. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They are all distant and free from all defilements and grimes.
3. **Joy-giving** - Similar to the “Bottle of Heavenly Merits”, the Buddha Dharmas can offer comfort and happiness to all. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They can bestow worldly happiness, as well as other-worldly virtuous wonders and comforts upon all sentient beings.
4. **Rare to encounter** - Same as very auspicious treasures, the Buddha Dharmas are rare and hard to be obtained. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. It is difficult for sentient beings with karmic obscurations to encounter them even after cycles of karmic existence in a hundred millions of kalpas. Only those who are endowed with great virtuous conditions are able to encounter the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”.
5. **Able to eradicate** - The Buddha Dharmas are like a “Wish-fulfilling Gem” that can eradicate one’s poverty. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They can remove and eliminate the causes for various kinds of impoverishment and sufferings in the worldly realm.
6. **Awe-inspiring Virtues** - The Buddha Dharmas are like the “Sage Kings in Turning the Dharma Wheel (**Chakravartin**)”, and the “Wheel Treasures” can suppress various foes and enemies. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They possess “six kinds of Supernatural Powers” which can subdue the “Four types of Demons”.
7. **Wish-Fulfilling**– Similar to the “Mani Precious Pearl” (the “Wish-fulfilling Gem”), the Buddha Dharmas are wish-fulfilling according to one’s desire, enabling one to attain treasures as abundantly as the falling rains. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They can complete and realize the virtuous wishes practised by the sentient beings.
8. **Solemn** – Same as the treasures in the worldly realm, the Buddha Dharmas can adorn the palaces with solemnity.



The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They can solemnly adorn the precious Bodhi Palaces of the Dharma Kings.

9. **Most wonderful** - The Buddha Dharmas are like the precious heavenly treasures that are most wonderful and subtle. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They surpass and excel various kinds of most meritorious treasures in the worldly realm.
10. **Unchangeable** – Same as the real gold, the Buddha Dharmas remain unchanged even under the heat of fire. The same are with the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas”. They cannot be toppled over or shaken by the “Eight Winds” in the worldly realm.

As the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas” are so fully endowed with immeasurable supernatural changes to benefit and comfort all sentient beings without temporary repose, the various “Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas” are thus known as the “Jewels” by virtue of these ten kinds of meanings and principles. Virtuous men, I have briefly explained to you **the four kinds of worldly and other-worldly gratitude indebted to you**, and you should know that **these four kinds of gratitude and kindness should be repaid by practising the Bodhisattva deeds.**]

How Could One Repay the “Four Kinds of Gratitude” Without Affecting One’s Dharma Practice On “Emptiness”?

The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni remarked that the repayment for these four kinds of gratitude is of very high degree of difficulty! As such, would it form some kind of an “attached mind” that will affect one’s Dharma practice on “Emptiness”? How could one actually practise the “Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude”? The five hundred elders

all said that “It is very difficult (**to practise**)!”, but then the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had mentioned that this is a must. So are there **any other solutions**? The elders raised such difficult questions to the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni at that time.



In Volume One on the Preface Section No.1 [0300b20] of the “**Mahâyâna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us (**in modern terminologies**) as follows: " Virtuous men, there are **three kinds of “Ten Paramitas”** in seeking to attain one’s “**Enlightenment (Bodhi)**”, namely:

1. Ten kinds of **Almsgiving Paramitas** – “Paramitas” means “reaching to the other shore”. This refers to the ten methods for crossing over to the other shore by “giving alms”.
2. Ten kinds of **Close Paramitas**
3. Ten kinds of **True Paramitas**



If there are virtuous men and virtuous women who can, upon the strengths of their aroused “Anuttara-Samyaksambodhi Minds” (that is, the arousal of their aspirations to accomplish the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment”), make offerings of the seven jewels to the entire Three-Thousand Large Thousand-fold Worlds as almsgiving to immeasurable poverty-stricken sentient beings, such kind of “offerings” can be called “Almsgiving Paramitas”, but they cannot be regarded as the “True Paramitas”.

If there are virtuous men and virtuous women who, in aspiring for the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Compete and Perfect Enlightenment”, have aroused a great compassionate mind by offering their wives to others with no grudge nor unwillingness, or giving out their own flesh, limbs, heads and eyes, bone marrow, brains and so on, and even offering their own lives as almsgiving to those who seek for them, such kind of “offerings” can be called “Close Paramitas”, but they are not yet regarded as the “True Paramitas”.

If there are virtuous men and virtuous women who have aroused the “Most Supreme Great Bodhicitta” [“Bodhi” is known as “Enlightenment”] with their minds “staying at ease” in such a way that there is nothing for them to attain, nothing for them to grasp onto; who have also urged all sentient beings to arouse the same state of mind together; have offered to teach sentient beings the “Four-Verses Hymn of the True Teachings” that can make one to practise in the direction of an “Awareness Mind” of the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Compete and Perfect Bodhi”; then this (kind of offerings) can really be called as the “True Paramitas”.

The first two kinds of “offerings” cannot be called as the “Requital of Gratitude”. If virtuous men and virtuous women can practise the third kind of the “True Paramitas”, then it will be regarded as a “true repayment for the four kinds of Gratitude”. Why is it so? This is because in the first two kinds of “offerings”, there still exists an attached mind. While for those people who are making the third kind of “offerings”, they have no attached mind in using the True Teachings as “almsgiving” to a sentient being, enabling one to arouse the “Most Supreme Great Bodhicitta”. This sentient being, upon the realization of the “Unsurpassed, Well-Balanced and Equally-Abiding, Complete and Perfect Enlightenment” in the “attainment of Buddhahood”, will extensively ferry over (save) countless sentient beings with no ends and without limits. Hence, the seedlings of the Buddhist Three Jewels will flourish and thrive, while the seeds of the “Three Treasures of the Buddhas, Dharmas and Sanghas” will not be severed. By virtue of this causal condition, it is known as the “Requital of Gratitude”.]



This kind of practice belongs to the Dharma practice on “**Emptiness: Neither existence nor voidness**”. The sermons of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had suitably answered the questions that “the requital required for these four kinds of gratitude is of very high degree of difficulty! As such, would it form a kind of ‘attached mind’ that will affect one’s Dharma practice on ‘Emptiness’? ” This has also answered the question on how could one practise the “**Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude**”?

This practice is not difficult and is easier when compared to the first two kinds of “offerings”. Therefore, when the elders heard of these teachings, they all cheered together and praised them. Then, what about the other **six kinds of 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 chant-



ing 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 Re-



quital 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”](#)).

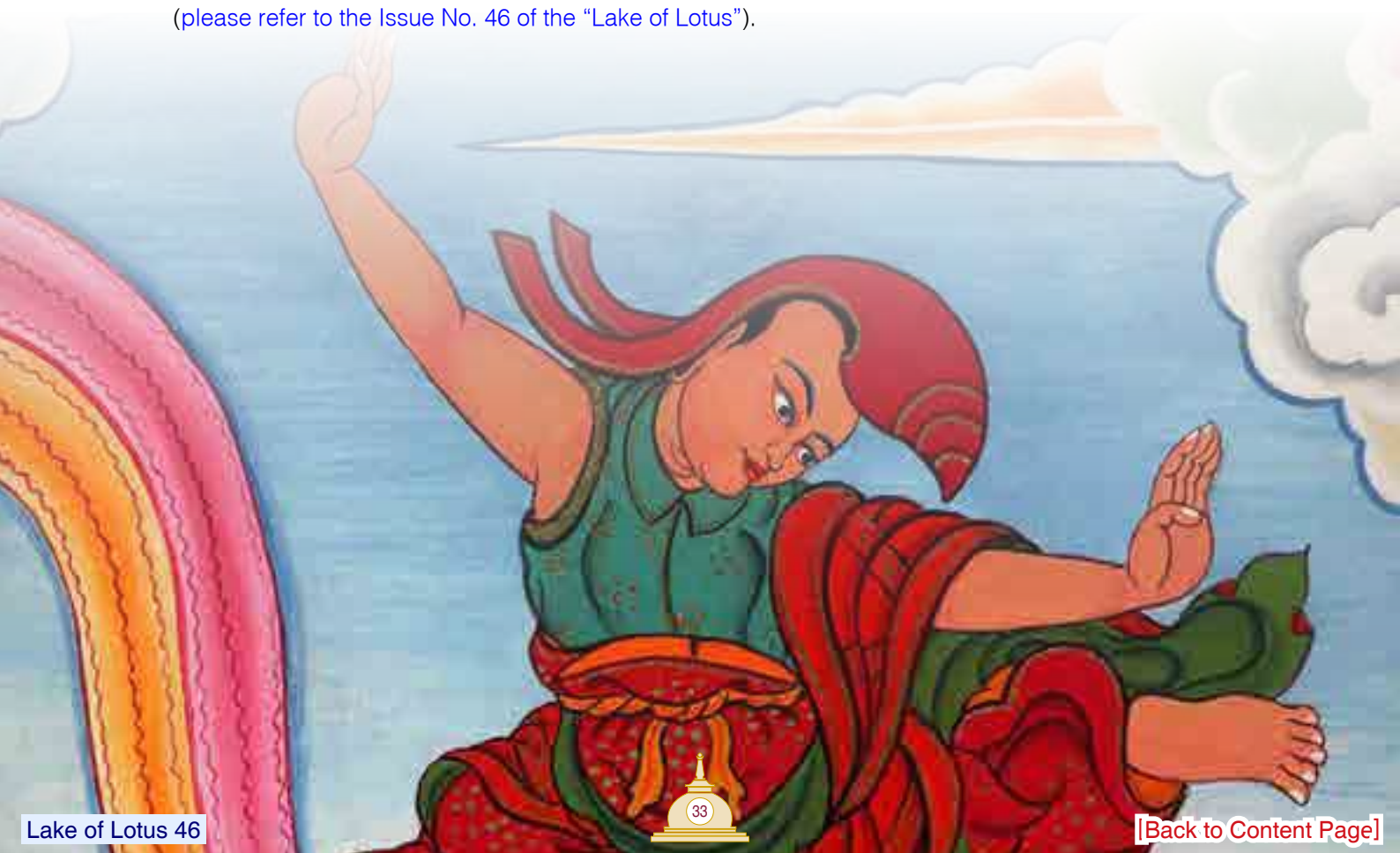
(xxxx) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (36) – There are “Four Kinds” of “Dharma Jewel”. What are Their Merits? Who Are the “Gurus” of the Various Buddhas of the Worlds of the Three Times?** : Among the four kinds of gratitude and kindness, the “Dharma Jewel” is the teacher/mentor of various Buddhas of the Worlds of the Three Times. So how important is it actually? As all Buddhas have to rely on the “Dharma



Jewel" to attain "Buddhahood", then what actually are the substances of the "Dharma Jewel"? What are the efficacies of the "Dharma Jewel", and how "deep" and "wide" is it?(please refer to the Issue No. 44 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xxxxi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (37) - The Lord Buddha said that there are four kinds of "Sangha Jewel". What are they? Are those Dharma practitioners not undergoing "Pabbajja" to be regarded as the "Sangha Jewel"? What are the real reasons for the "Sangha Jewel" to be able to save and help sentient beings?** : Among the four kinds of gratitude and kindness, the "Sangha Jewel" is the treasure that is most accessible to and easy for sentient beings to produce virtuous merits in this worldly realm. Whether or not sentient beings can benefit quickly from difficulties and miseries, whether or not they can become liberated speedily from the cycle of karmic existence, whether or not they can attain "Buddhahood" swiftly would all depend on the existence of the "Sangha Jewel". So actually how important is the "Sangha Jewel" to the sentient beings? What actually are the substances of the "Sangha Jewel", and how "deep" and "wide" is it?..... (please refer to the Issue No. 45 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xxxixii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (38) - The Lord Buddha said that "Jewels" have ten kinds of meanings. What are they? How could one repay the "Four Kinds of Gratitude" without affecting one's Dharma practice on "Emptiness"?** : The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni remarked that the repayment for these four kinds of gratitude is of very high degree of difficulty! As such, would it form a kind of "attached mind" that will affect one's Dharma practice on "Emptiness"? How could one actually practise the "Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude"? The five hundred elders 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? (please refer to the Issue No. 46 of the "Lake of Lotus").



EPILOGUE

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

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