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Authentic Versus Fake “Lineages” and Their Related Meanings (1)

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When practicing “Tibetan Buddhism”, one will always come across this terminology of “Lineage”, which may include a series of names of the various masters, names of the different Dharma Practices, its origin and the history of its various sources. Those who received the teachings of the “Lineage” for its Dharma practices would be warned that they should only carefully choose and select those **authentic, uncontaminated and effective** “Lineages”, especially when trying to confirm on the authenticity of the “Lineage” Holders.

Why should one be so cautious about it? As most people would have thought that, so long that someone possesses the “ritualistic texts” (Sadhanas) and knows how to teach others about them, then this should be good enough for that someone to be a “Guru” to teach others. Then, why is it that we should still have to confirm on the authenticity of the “Lineage” Holder? Generally, the history on the sources of a Lineage is very long, and so how can we confirm it? Is it true that so long that someone is a “Lineage” Holder, then he or she must be considered automatically as a qualified teacher? However, if one does not hold the “Lineage”, but then he or she knows how to teach the Buddhist teachings, or that he or she knows how to teach the actual practices of it, will this someone to be then considered as a qualified teacher? Furthermore, many “Lineages” have been described as the best ones, and so what kinds of criteria can we use to differentiate among them? Many “Lineage” Holders of the same lineage have been described as the best ones, and so **what kinds of criteria can we use to differentiate among them? In fact, how can one become a “Lineage” Holder?**

The Tragic Results in Following “Fake Gurus”

Before we actually start to investigate into the above-mentioned questions, we would like to begin by exploring on the consequences of following “Fake Gurus”, upon which we would then have a deeper understanding of the equal importance on distinguishing between the

“Authentic and Fake Gurus” and “Authentic and Fake Lineages”. **“The Buddha-Garbha Sutra”** (or **“Buddha Pitakadu hśilanirgraha Sūtra”** in Sanskrit) has the following descriptions:

“The enemies of this world could merely take your life away, and only lead you to lose your body, but they could not cause you to fall into the lower realms.

But those ignorant people who enter the wrong paths would lead those who are seeking virtuous meanings to fall into the Hell Realm to be suffered for a thousand kalpas.

Why is this so? This is because they practice the “doctrines with existence” and give “teachings which reverse the truth of all things”.

If one gives teachings which lead others to the wrong paths, one's sin is even greater than that of the cutting off of the lives of all sentient beings.”

The meaning is that the greatest damage for the ordinary worldly enemies could merely take a human's life, and make him/her to lose his/her physical body. So long as the victim's “state of mind” has not been distorted, the victim would not fall into “hell”. Why? Because after one dies and before one takes rebirth, when one has lost the support of the coarse substance of the physical body but has not yet regain a new materialistic bodily structure, one's life will be determined by one's own **“mind”** (or **the “spirit”**) as one's “main structure” during this transitional period, and is also **the main “prime force”**.

Because the one who had received the guidance from those who taught the wrong Dharmas would have an evil mind, became very vicious, and highly attached to “greed, hatred and ignorance”, and if these poisons have become one's “prime forces” in leading one's own “mind”, then one's “mind” would then be very distorted. As one would use the daily inertia, and their magnetic fields, in dealing with things while wandering in the “spiritual domain”, one would then be attracted to the similar kinds of “negative magnetic fields”, and so one would fall into the “hell realm” to endure billions and billions of years (**thousand kalpas means a very long period that is beyond calculation**) of endless sufferings. **This is simply a physical phenomenon of Nature – “like attracts like”.**

Hence, as mentioned from the above-mentioned Sutra,

in the using of wrong Dharmas and teachings that are contrary to, or have deviated from, the genuine Holy Dharma, it will simply distort the “minds” of sentient beings, and will make them suffer for a long period of time. This kind of sin is even much greater and heavier than the sin of killing someone. Therefore, **no matter** what sorts of religions, what schools of thought, what kinds of lineages, or the following of what kinds of teachers during one’s own life-time, one **should be extremely careful in differentiating their teachings**. Why should one be so cautious about this? Because a wrong decision could lead you to **fall into a place doomed “eternally”, and could never go back again, which will be “too late for one’s regret”!** As the saying goes, “Do wrong once and you will never hear the end of it. Looking back is already billions of years after.”

The Necessary Factors and Criteria in Distinguishing Between “Authentic vs Fake Gurus” and “Authentic vs Fake Lineages”

So, actually how can one distinguish between the two? The method used is to distinguish **“the truthfulness of those teachings, its impacts towards one’s own “mind”, and the nature of the magnetic field that one is situated”**. These three factors are the necessary factors and criteria in order to distinguish between “Authentic vs Fake Gurus” and “Authentic vs Fake Lineages”.

A. Truthfulness

How would it be to become “True”? Generally speaking, it can be divided into three layers:

1. The Authorization by the “Lineage Guru”

The practicing methods of a Dharma practitioner are supposed to be transmitted from his/her own “Guru”. Thus, all the disciples that had been transmitted the same kinds of teachings from the same “Guru” should know the same practicing methods. Yet, every person should have certain **large and small differences** in terms of **one’s own ability for comprehension, the degree of understanding of the Buddhist Dharma, the degree of practice as revealed from one’s behaviors, and whether one has achieved some kind of “realization” or not through the actual practices (the necessary sign of reaching some states when practicing to certain stages)**.

When searching for a successor, a “Lineage Guru”, who has been charged with the important responsibility of “inheriting from the past in order to pass it on to the future, thus helping to lighten up the Holy Lamp of the Buddha’s Mind”, should use his **most prudent criteria** to measure all his disciples in accordance with the daily contacts with his disciples in order to select a successor who can uphold the “lineage”. In fact, only the “Lineage Guru” would have such a qualification as well

as the conveniences to **frequently contact the “mental” responses of his disciples**. If someone who claims himself to have the lineage authorization of a certain “Lineage”, but **surprisingly his authorization is not coming from his most direct and frequently contacted “Lineage Guru”, but instead his so-called authorization is coming from someone who does not even have the “Lineage” itself**, then such a “child’s game” of the so-called “lineage holder” **cannot be** regarded as a “genuine” and “correct” one.

There must be reasons behind it if his most direct and frequently-contacted “Lineage Guru” did not authorize him to uphold the “Lineage”. This is simply because of the fact that, if transmitting the “Lineage” wrongly to some unsuitable persons, it will harm many sentient beings and will lead them astray **to fall innocently into “hell” in taking on the sufferings for tens of millions of kalpas**. Those who followed these unrecognized and improperly authorized persons will be like the person himself, and **will be tied up with him** to fall into “hell” for sufferings. Hence, those who are seeking for a “Guru” to follow should remember this key point: do not follow those who **do not have the true and correct “Lineage” authorizations**.

If someone gets those “ritual texts on practices” (or “Sadhanas”) and knows how to teach others, that is already enough for one to teach, right? Then, why should we still have to confirm on the “truthfulness” of the “Lineage” holder? This is because the knowing of how to practice and teach “ritual texts” does not in itself mean that this person would not use his **incorrect personal understandings, his distorted teachings, and his manipulations with “unlawful intentions” to guide you**, particularly those crooks who cheat other people **by using unscrupulous efforts** so as to get their positions of the “Guru”. Their so-called “authorizations” are **“fake” and “incorrect”**, and their ways of teachings have not been confirmed and recognized. Therefore, it **will not be having any effects** even if one has learnt and practiced those teachings from them. In fact, it will be a **fatal blow** to learn from them as **their teachings have already been distorted, and thus these will only twist your minds, and will eventually lead you to fall into “hell”**.

Guru Padmasambhava, the Great Master of Vajrayana Buddhism, has warned us time and again: “To follow evil teachers is like the drinking of poison, and will break one’s Wisdom Life of the Holy Dharma.”

The Tibetan Saint Jetsun Milarepa had sung in his “Song on How to Benefit”: “If the lineage of the Guru is impure, what benefits does one have to receive initiations from him?”

2. The Confirmation from the “Lineage Masters”

Each of the “Lineages” would have a series of “Masters”

all through with their formal authorizations. To be claimed as such “Lineage Masters” would normally be **widely and universally acclaimed and recognized** as the **role model** Dharma practitioners with **“great realizations”**. Sometimes, such a “Master” is even considered as the Holder of the “Vajra Regent” of that particular “Lineage”, or simply the **“Dharma Leader”**, which means the **“Highest Leader”** and the Holder of the **“most complete and most perfect teachings without any faults”** for that “Lineage”.

It is because, as a complete system in itself, the teachings within a “Lineage” normally comprise a very broad spectrum and basis of various teachings. Generally, an ordinary “Lineage” holder may have received the authorization of some of the teachings within the “Lineage”, but not the complete whole set of teachings. Thus, in this case, it can be called as the “branch”, similar to the branch of a tree. Whereas, the “most complete and most perfect teachings without any faults” means that **“one possesses all the authorizations and has already practiced** all the teachings within the lineage”, including the teachings of “empowerments, oral transmissions, spiritual guidance and practices, oral pith-instructions, and so on”. Of course, in order for such a Dharma practitioner to become a great practitioner **with “great realizations”**, it must require him to practice for a long time for such a large amount of teachings in order to achieve such “great realizations”. Hence, for those who were considered as the “Masters of the Lineage”, they are just like the “trunk” of a tree.

For example, **His Holiness Kyabje Chadrak Gyatso Rinpoche**, the universally acclaimed contemporary Mahasiddha of the Nyingmapa’s Elder with “Great Realization”, is **one of the Great Masters of the “Longchen Nyinthig Lineage”** of “Great Perfection” (please refer to the two articles on “The Lineage Traditions of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism (4)” and “Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyatso Rinpoche (6)” in Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”). He is also the **Holder of the “Vajra Regent”, “Dharma Leader” and “Lineage Master”** of the **“Dudjom Tersar Lineage”** (please refer to the article on “Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyatso Rinpoche (4)” in Issue 9 of the “Lake of Lotus”)

As the “Master” of the “Lineage”, one naturally understands the “truthfulness” of each of the “branch” lineage holders. Therefore, being recognized by the “Lineage Master” **is equivalent to the recognition of the “truthfulness” on the series of the different “branch” lineage holders**. The effects and influences are indeed immense.

For the numerous “branch lineage holders”, even though they have already received the authorizations from their own “Gurus”, they **would still very much want** to receive the **recognition by such a high level of “Lineage Master”** like His Holiness Kyabje Chadrak Gyatso Rinpoche. The situation is like a university professor, who not only being

recognized as an “excellent accomplished professor” from the local universities, but is also being universally elected by the international academic community of scholars to be the **most honorable and distinguished “Nobel Prize Winner”** of a certain discipline in order to commend one’s highest level of accomplishments and attainments in the academia.

If a “lineage holder” has received the authorization, both from his most direct “Guru” and also from the “Lineage Master” (which means to have **the recognition from the “Highest Leader”**), then this “lineage holder” should well be considered as a perfectly **“authentic”** and “correct” teacher, as well as a “lineage holder”. As a “Lineage Master” with “great realizations”, of course, one will have such “a perceptive wisdom” and the “capacity of recognition” to go one step further in confirming the “authorization of such a lineage” for either his **own disciple or for a disciple of others**.

This kind of recognition **must be in “black and white” of “clear delineation”, and have to list out the “identity of the Lineage Holder” while making its affirmation and confirmation**. Hence, this could not be just some kind of “an empty talk with no evidence of approval, or a photo to be taken with the Guru, or a phrase of blessing, or one or two gifts, or a letter of blessing, or a video-clip that records a common conversation” in order to “pointing to a deer but calling it as a horse” by deliberately misrepresenting and misleading other people in believing that it is an evidence of proof for the “Authorization Letter of a Lineage Holder”. **Many “fake gurus” have used these tricks in order to deceive many ordinary people**.

There are, indeed, many such kinds of “fake gurus” in this whole wide world who use various kinds of “evil means” in pretending to have “supernatural powers”. They



would mention that they have “seen the Buddhas during meditation, or have wonderful experiences in dreams, etc.” in order to cheat others in believing them. These are all “self-editing, self-directing, and self-performing”, all done by themselves. Yet, the contents of genuine Buddhist Dharma are very few, if any; and even if so, they are usually very superficial in nature. These people usually “talk in one way, on the surface; but, in actuality, they will act in very different ways, deep down inside”.

Recently, a similar kind of thing had happened in Taiwan. A Tibetan person who proclaims himself to be the xth reincarnation (tulku) of such and such a high lama. He also publishes different books, which speak by himself for himself, saying that he is the disciple of His Holiness Kyabje Chadrak Gyatso Rinpoche and has received the confirmation and the granting of the “Lineage” by His Holiness. He further shows “a phrase of blessing, with one or two gifts” as evidence of proof. These so-called evidence are, indeed, very superficial and so fragile. Yet, it wins the trusts from all people. Many victims have been cheated on both their monies and bodies, but they find nowhere to seek for help, and thus are very painful.

In this regard, the mass media in Taiwan have recently and openly disclosed such kind of events to the general public, but this has somehow brought about a great harm to the propagation of “Tibetan Buddhism”. If the believers can keep their heads cool by insisting to hold firmly the rule of “comprehensively observe the truthfulness” of those people, then they would clearly understand that such kinds of evidences are indeed not the genuine proof for the “Authorization Letter of a Lineage Holder”.

While in Hong Kong, there is someone who also claims himself to have been granted a particular “Lineage” from the wife of a Dharma King, which is even more absurd to hear about. Surprisingly, a person with no “Lineage” can appoint and authorize another person to hold a “Lineage”. Even though this is extremely absurd, this “fake guru” could still use this trick in order to gain the trust from others, and thus he could smoothly control a list of religious properties, so as to consolidate his power of influence.

Furthermore, in order to further expand his sphere of influence, he even “goes along with the polluted tide” by willfully collaborating with those people who are just using Buddhism as a means in order to gain their ulterior motives. Among these people, there is one who had been charged by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for a two-months’ imprisonment

due to his “misbehaviours of sexual harassments to female disciples, in the name of practicing Buddhism”.

Since this “false guru” is a wily person who knows only dirty tricks, superstitions, with very little knowledge about Buddhism, and is very wicked and dangerous in both his heart and mind, and so even though he had followed his “Guru” for more than 30 years, his “Guru” had decided not to let him uphold the “Lineage” so that he could not mislead other innocent people to suffer in the “hell realm” for thousands of kalpas. And so he had used his dirty tricks in order to get the so-called “Lineage” from the wife of a Dharma King, which will probably bring about the danger of misleading many people to enter into the “hell realm”.

The situation is something similar to the case of the wife of a US president, who could have the authority of a president to organize the cabinet, as well as to authorize other people to have such kind of authorities. This simply does not make sense at all ! Yet, in reality this happens, and it seems that it could only happen in the Chinese world with such odd phenomena of “only aiming for superstitions, without caring for the factual reasons”. No wonder there are so many such kind of “fake gurus” and victims in the Chinese world. Was it because the believers in the Chinese world “just like superstitions”? Or, whether those “fake gurus” believe that the Chinese world is their “cheating paradise”? This is a question of which comes first, the “chicken” or the “egg”? If, according to the concept of the marketplace, this is simply a question of “supply and demand” ! Hence, believers in the Chinese world should seriously think deeply about this question.

The following is a paragraph which has been extracted from an article on “The Opening of Your Wisdom Mind” from a book entitled “Searching for the Traces of the Mind” by Do Khyentse Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche.

“In our hometown, there is a so-called “Living Buddha” who has gone to various places such as Wuhan, Shenzhen and so on to “transmit the Dharma”. He always told those people who had met him that: “Your previous life is such and such a ‘Guru’, or such and such a ‘Dakini’, and so we have some very special predestined relationship with each other.” Then, he would foretell many things.

I would like to ask those “fake supernatural persons”, who are so accustomed to declare those things, that



“if you even do not know what you are going to eat tomorrow and do not have any ways to foresee things, then how could you tell who that person was for his / her previous life. In your hometown, no one believes in your supernatural powers. Then, how come, all of a sudden, you show your supernatural powers in the Chinese world? Isn't that just a pure imagination on the so-called “predestined relationship between you and your believers”, if stray from their money offerings?”

When I was asking such a question at one time, the lamas around us were all laughing. While this so-called “Living Buddha” is shyly telling me from his mind that: “If you are not good at words, those believers in the Chinese world will not pay attention to you. But when I foretell something, and pretend to possess great wisdom, believers will be in a mad rush to be the first to get close to me. And then they will talk to each other saying that this “Guru” has such and such supernatural powers, which are so incredible. Then I can get some offerings.”

When he was saying these words, the actions of so many believers in the Chinese world appeared before my eyes. Many believers would like the kind of “unconfirmed rumours” that were being spread across. When they hear that a “Guru, Living Buddha” has come from Tibet, they will come like a swarm of bees. After visiting him, they will blindly evaluate him merely basing upon whether the behaviours and dressings of this “Guru, Living Buddha” meet their criteria, but they would not want to know this “Guru” at all as to whether this “Guru” has the “ability to control oneself, how good is his learning, and any realizations at all”?

Here is another real case: In Kham (Eastern Tibet), a common layperson had been caught stealing and was fined for 20,000 RMBs. This person then made a trick by wearing a Buddhist monk's robe and go to the Chinese world, pretending himself to be a “Guru” in transmitting the Dharma. He has cheated many believers and thus received hundreds of thousands of RMBs for offerings. Eventually this person makes a joke that, “Because of my wisdom and talents, together with the blessing of the “Buddhist monk's robe”, a thief in Tibet has now become a “Guru” in the Chinese world !”

This happening has become a very popular joke in our hometown. Those believers who blindly put their trusts on this person have made themselves fools to be deceived simply because they merely paid attention to the external behaviours, but did not even try to do a little bit of investigation and judgment on what this person's “practice, lineage and past history” was supposed to be. Indeed, these believers in the Chinese world have regarded a thief as a “Guru”, which not only makes many Buddhists to be shameful of themselves, but have also smeared the image of the sacred “Buddha's teachings”. Things like these have happened all the time, and it will be difficult to completely put an end to them in the

future.”

Hence, we ask for all virtuous believers to “carefully investigate, verify and reflect” in all aspects on the “truthfulness” of all the “Gurus”. Even for those “Gurus” who already have the “confirmation certificates”, we still need to use the following ways to further observe them. All those “confirmation certificates” should not have come from a self-acclaimed “Rinpoche” but is, in fact, a “Mr. Nobody”. Even for those “Tibetans” who are wearing the lamas' clothings, it does not necessarily mean that he is a master with “great realizations”. This is just like an American who, wearing a western-style dress, is self-proclaiming himself to be the president of the USA, but in fact nobody recognizes him at all. As an US president, how can nobody recognize him and without any recorded documents? Hence, it is not difficult at all to distinguish among these various documents of certification. All you need to do is to simply ask a few “well-known” persons within this particular “Lineage System”, and you will definitely have the answer. As “Lineage Masters” normally would have their levels, qualifications and history listed out on the “reputable, respectable and representative” books and websites, and so it will definitely be unlikely to have “nothing to be verifiable” at all !

3. Confirmations of “Teachings and Realizations”

Is it true that those who hold the “Lineages” would automatically be qualified teachers? The answer is negative. Even for a “lineage holder” who already has the confirmation on the authorization from one's own lineage “Guru” (but definitely not from the different ways of “by hook and by crook”, such as stealing, robbery, cheating, and so on), and has fulfilled the most basic requirements on “truthfulness”, as well as having the confirmation of such authorization even from the “Lineage Master”, yet as Dharma seekers, you still need to employ an approach of continuously observing the “behaviours, teachings and realizations” of one's own “Guru” for a very long period of time in order to play safe. There are several reasons for this:

- (1) **The Truthfulness of the “Lineage Teachings”**: Each “lineage” would have a series of teachings, and there are many “Lineages” in Tibetan Buddhism. However, one has to ask oneself: whether these teachings fulfill the truths of the Holy Dharma? Whether these teachings can help you to become liberated from the “cycle of karmic existence” (Samsara)? Whether these teachings will lead to the distortions of your “mind”?
- (2) **The Purity of the “Lineage Teachings”**: After many years of its spreading, even for those well-known “lineage teachings”, can the purity of these “lineage teachings” still be preserved without being polluted or distorted in any ways? Whether there were some masters, within the series of Masters of the Lineage itself, who

had either “interrupted, violated or broken their vows (samayas)”? Did the Guru’s “Guru” have fulfilled all those criteria in terms of comprehensive examinations and verifications?

(3) **The Level of the “Lineage Holder”**: All the affairs in the world are impermanent in nature, and so do people as well. Whether this “Guru’s” “behaviours, teachings and realizations” have reached the level of “no-return”? Whether this Guru has reached the stage of “absolutely trustworthiness”? or whether this Guru may slowly change and become degenerated?

The above-mentioned article has some further comments:

“Many people, while learning Buddhism, like to aim for high but yet without the basic foundations, and only indulge themselves in empty talks about the breadth and depth of their views, as well as on the degree of the levels of the teachings. But, they do not pay enough attention to the “preliminary basic teachings”, which are most indispensable for practices. Many beginners would like to request their “Gurus” to transmit the highest teachings in Tibetan Buddhism. If a “Guru” is coming from the lineage of the Nyingma school, then they will definitely ask the question: “Is ‘Great Perfection’ the most splendid teaching in Tibetan Buddhism?” ...

A disciple who has just started to learn about Buddhism, and particularly not knowing much about “Tibetan Buddhism”, would often believe that each one of those “Gurus” who are coming from Tibet will automatically become practitioners of the “Great Perfection”, and that they would necessarily have the qualifications and capabilities to transmit the teachings of the “Great



Perfection”. But, in reality, even for those who are coming from within the lineages of the “Nyingma” school, and not to mention those “Gurus” who are coming from other schools, those Gurus who can teach “Great Perfection” in accordance with the different levels and capacities of their disciples are as few as the morning stars....

There is a real case: a so-called “Living Buddha” from other schools went to the Chinese world to transmit the Dharma. When he was asked about the questions related to the “Great Perfection”, this so-called “Living Buddha” did not know what “Great Perfection” is all about, and so he just replied carelessly by saying “Is ‘Great Perfection’ something that we can eat?” Whereupon, reading the astonishing expressions on the faces of his disciples, he cleverly said, “Ha! Ha! I just made a joke. Because of this ‘cause’, I will now give the empowerment of the ‘Great Perfection’ to you all !”

With the disciples’ devoted await, this so-called “Living Buddha” had used his native Tibetan dialect to sing a popular Tibetan folk song which says, “White goose, please lend your two wings to me. Not too far away from this place, but just to Litang and then come back.” He then made some gestures on the “mudras of the empowerment”. In this way, he finished the empowerment for the transmission on the teachings of the “Great Perfection”, and thus received many offerings from his disciples. In Tibet, this has become a popular joke that was being gossiped by many “Living Buddhas”. This kind of things is actually a very big stain for the “Buddha’s teachings”, and is a shameful cheating to the general populace.”

Many people just cannot distinguish on the truthfulness of the “Lineage Teachings”, and they are also too lazy to make the distinction anyway. When hearing that the “Great Perfection” is the highest teaching for the “Nyingma School” of “Tibetan Buddhism”, with great vanity, greediness and pride in their hearts and minds, they will not care about their own foundations and capabilities but will only chase after the teachings of the “Great Perfection” with so much confusions that they do not even know what routes they can go for. As a result, they have become preys to be freely exploited by other people.

So, actually, how can one distinguish the truthfulness of the “Lineage Teachings”, as well as how to examine and verify a Guru’s “Teachings and Realizations”? The answer to this is to enrich yourself through knowledge, first by starting with the studies on the theories of the “Sutrayana and Vajrayana”. Why is this so? This is simply because whichever distinguishing methods cannot be separated from the scope of “knowledge and wisdom”. Many people, under the sway of emotions, would like to hear from others’ recommendations. They will then use their personal biases of “greed, love and hate”

as the lead, and thus try to stride over the processes of observation, inspection and rational analysis, while jumping into conclusions too quickly, that is, **getting into “superstitions” which are created by their own personal “subjectivity”**.

No matter what teachings that one is practicing, one must first have to understand “what is the Buddhist Dharma? Why one needs to practice the Buddhist Dharma? What is the essence of the Buddhist Dharma? If one wants to be liberated from Samsara, then what is the key to it?” If one does not know the answers to those questions, no matter what teachings one is practicing, it **cannot produce the “correct and effective” use**. There are no teachings in this world that “one can get without any labour at all”. Only when one has those knowledge on hand can one begin to know how to distinguish the truthfulness of various “Lineage Teachings”. Whether they are diverging from the main focus? Or whether they are too indirect? Or whether they are too high and too difficult? Or whether they are the correct path of the Holy Dharma? And whether they are suitable to you or not?

The source and origin of the “Lineage Teachings” can be examined and verified through the historical records and representative books. One can take as references on the biographies of the Great Masters. If one aims to “succeed at one shot” and not wasting time by treading on the wrong paths, without taking the risk of “falling into hell”, one **must have to work hard**. For one to examine and verify one’s Guru’s “teachings and realizations”, one **should take an even longer period of time for a long-term observation**.

How to examine and verify? If someone tells you that he is a pianist, one will still find it difficult to realize at what level he is in even by just inspecting on his certifications or citations. The most thorough way is to let him perform. A continuous performance is like a continuous examination, assessment and verification. And then you will start to **understand his level under such kind of a long-term observation**.

Therefore, in the tradition of the “Tibetan Buddhism”, it will require one to observe a “Guru” for six to twelve years. After the most thorough and **careful observations**, one will then need to view one’s “Guru as a Buddha”, in order to develop one’s **trust, as solid as a vajra**, for one’s practices to proceed in high speeds in order to achieve success. **(Please refer to the articles on “Authentic Versus Fake Gurus” in Issues 3 and 4 of the “Lake of Lotus”)**. One can then truly understand the **“depths of the Buddhist Dharma, the clarity and realization of the practices”** of their Gurus through their interpretations of the teachings.

“Realization” is referring to **the signs of having reached certain states when practicing to certain levels**. Basically, this is very difficult to measure. Neither can it be compared



by using “supernatural powers”, as “supernatural power” in itself is not the “Buddhist Dharma”. Through spiritual trainings, practitioners of other religions can also have these “supernatural powers”. “Realization” is the **practicing of “Emptiness” on “Neither Existence, Nor Voidness” so as to recover one’s “intrinsic nature”** **(Please refer to the article on the “Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 4 of The “Lake of Lotus”)** as a sign of reaching such states.

Hence, if the interpretations of the teachings from these “Gurus” are opaque and unclear, then this shows that their foundations of the Buddhist Dharma have not yet reached a level of completeness. Therefore, they **cannot use the “Realizations” from the actual practices to confirm the theoretical knowledge of the “Buddhist Dharma”**. This is simply because **even when he himself does not know** what he is talking about, how can he clearly explain it to others? What he can only do, then, is to say it in an “opaque” way so as to lead you by **“beating about the bush”** and to go in circles.

If the interpretations of the teachings by these “Gurus” are superficial, lacking the in-depth explanations and analyses, do not have the experiences from actual practices with key guidance, then all these show that their “foundations of the Buddhist Dharma and practical experiences” are, indeed, **very superficial and are lacking of “realizations”**. It is because for those Dharma practitioners with genuine “realizations”, their guidance in terms of practices would be most **“direct, practical and not deviating from the true Holy Dharma”** with in-depth explanations and interpretations.

This is known as “something inside will reveal itself to the outside”, simply because a piece of paper can never

hold the fire inside it. The behaviours of a crooked “fake guru” will eventually show all the signs that can be tracked down through his negative acts. On the contrary, the behaviours of a “realized” Dharma practitioner will always be cherished because his merits are always “the same both in reality (inside) and in appearance (outside)”. Therefore, a long-term observation is a very effective “touchstone” to eventually unveil the truthfulness of all things, just as the saying goes like this: “a long road will test the capability of a horse, while a long period of time will test the mind of a person.”

While being developed with a long-term strong will and perseverance, the kind of trust and confidence will certainly become **as solid as “vajra”, which will definitely assist one’s practices of “attaining Buddhahood with this very body”**. Therefore, we sincerely request all Dharma seekers to keep your heads cool, and not to be impatient like the “moths which fly onto the fires” and “burn yourselves in this sea of fire”, and so unnecessarily sacrifice yourselves to suffer for thousands of kalpas in the “hell realm”. It will be much better if one can spend more time now in **“the training of the foundations, the learning of the knowledge on the Buddhist Dharma, and in observing the “Guru” so as to train the trust and confidence to be as solid as ‘vajra’”, all of which are much more practical** than the rest.

The translated terminology of “Living Buddha” in Chinese is actually a **misleading term**. The original meaning of the term “tulku” in Tibetan is a “reincarnated practitioner”, but is not a “Buddha who is still living”. Regardless of whether his/her previous life is “a Dharma practitioner, a Lineage Guru, or a Master”, or whether he/she is just an ordinary person, but once the person has gone through reincarnation, all his/her past memories will then become “hidden memories”, and so his/her present **ability is just like any other ordinary people**. They **will need to learn the Buddhist Dharma afresh**, and only through practicing the Holy Dharma will they be able to **arouse their “natural awareness”**.

Hence, whether these “Gurus” can come back as a reincarnated Dharma practitioner, whether or not in adopting back the “title” of his/her previous life (no matter how big and renowned it was) or with the “realization” of his/her previous life (no matter how high it was), he/she will still need to start afresh. In selecting a “Guru”, one should not be **psychologically superstitious** by **throwing yourself into impasse**. No matter what kinds of “Gurus”, one **must** use the following **criteria of examination and verification** in order to go for further observations.

In referring to the same earlier-mentioned article, the author, being a reincarnated “tulku” of “Do Khyentse Rinpoche”, has made the following **pertinent comments**:

“It’s strange that so many the so-called Dharma practitioners would like to know who they were in their

pervious lives. Also, they want to know what will they be in their next lives? **Because of all these, they have created many improper thoughts, and even become others’ jokes**. If one wants to become a real Dharma practitioner, there is no need for one to know one’s previous and future lives. If you can have a **real conscience** in this life, and can act as a **good person who wants to contribute and offer**, then you could solve all the problems in your future life. Therefore, it is **unnecessary to have all kinds of flows of improper thoughts about your future life!** If your present conditions are not good, then there is no use for you to know of that in your previous life, even though you might have been recognized by others as a very good and special person. All these thoughts could merely increase you own improper thoughts.

Take myself as an example. Because I have been recognized as the reincarnation of “Do Khyentse Rinpoche” and so I was being respected by many people. “Do Khyentse Rinpoche” is a great realizer with “high and incredible view”. Because of that, he had won the faith of people from all lineages of the “Nyingma” school. But then, if one only has his name and believes in oneself as his reincarnation, it was rather useless for my own “view and realization”. Also, **there is no certainty** for me for not falling into “hell” after my death.

If you want to have a very high “view” and not to be fallen into the “three lower realms” after death, it will all depend on the various factors, such as the **levels of diligence on one’s practice and of wisdom**, etc. Regrettably, many a Dharma practitioners have **often overlooked** their own practices as the most important thing, but instead **naively in chasing after the so-called wonderful achievements of “supernatural powers”**.

Some Buddhist believers, in meeting a person who declares himself/herself as the “Guru, Living Buddha, Khenpo or Dakini”, may simply come to **believe in him/her as the Buddha who has returned to this world, and thus follow him/her**. However, if one of those “Gurus” teaches some basic ingredients like “compassion, motivation, emptiness” etc., they could **hardly practice even a very minute part** of these teachings. Perhaps, these followers would also like to have their previous lives to be described in an extravagantly colourful manner !

Previously, the three gates of the “body, speech and mind” of many respectable Masters and “Gurus” in Tibet were very pure and confined, so that they would **never say even a very tiny bit of boastful words**. But now, the so-called “Gurus, Living Buddhas” that came from Tibet have been so much **affected deeply by the changes of time**, especially for those young “Gurus, Living Buddhas”. They are very clever, articulate, and can always **say something that the present believers of nowadays would like to listen....”**

The Criteria in Selecting the “Guru”

Item	Criterion	Yes / No	Authentic Guru / Fake Guru	Consequences of Following / Review & Comment
1	Whether one has the Authorization from the Authorized “Lineage Guru”	No	Fake Guru	Fall into “Hell” to Suffer for Thousands of Kalpas
		Yes	Authentic Guru (Only if the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no Problems)	Still Need a Comprehensive Observation
2	Whether one has the Confirmation from the “Lineage Masters”	No	So long as one has the Authorization from the Authorized “Lineage Guru”, and if the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no Problems , then one can be considered as the Authentic Guru	Not Perfect Enough, and still Need a Comprehensive Observation
		Yes	An Even Greater Insurance to be considered as the Authentic Guru	Still Need a Comprehensive Observation
3	The Authenticity versus Fakeness , as well as the Truthfulness of the “Lineage”	Fake	Fake Guru	Fall into “Hell” to Suffer for Thousands of Kalpas
		Authentic	So long as one Has the Authorization from the Authorized “Lineage Guru”, then one can be considered as the Authentic Guru	Still Need a Comprehensive Observation
4	Confirmations on the “Teachings and Realizations”	Have Problems , and Deviated from the “Teachings” of the “Lineage” and of the Buddhist Dharma	Even though one Has the Authorization and Confirmation, and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no Problems , yet one is still considered as a Fake Guru	Fall into “Hell” to Suffer for Thousands of Kalpas
		Opaque, Superficial, Impractical and Indirect	If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru”, and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no Problems , even though one’s Level is Insufficient, then one can still be considered as the Authentic Guru	Slow in Progress but is “ not dangerous ”. Still Need a a Comprehensive Observation
		Clear, In-depth, Practical, Direct and have Experiences in Actual Practices as well as with Guidance on Pitch-instructions	If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru” and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no Problems, then this is the kind of “ Diamond ” type of Guru, which is very difficult to meet. Authentic Guru Who can be viewed as a Buddha	High Speed, No Danger, Have Merits . Followers can also receive the protections and blessings from the “Masters, Gurus and Dharma Protectors” of the “Lineage”, and receive the correct Buddhist Dharma and guidance in actual practice.

5	Behavioural Inspections	With Problems	<p>If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru” and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no problems, and the Teachings are clear, in-depth, practical and direct, then one can be considered as an</p> <p>Authentic Guru with some flaws</p> <p>If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru” and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no problems, but both his teachings and behaviors are all full of problems, then one can be considered as a</p> <p>Degenerated Fake Guru</p>	<p>Should Spend a much longer period of time for Observation, but also depends on the Receptivity of the Followers</p>
		No Problems	<p>If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru” and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no problems, one can be considered as an</p> <p>Authentic Guru</p>	<p>Still Need a Comprehensive Observation</p>
		Have Merits	<p>If one has the Authorization of the “Lineage Guru” and the Teachings of the “Lineage” have no problems, then one can be viewed as a role model of “Guru with merits and integrity” and is thus seen as an</p> <p>Authentic Guru</p>	<p>Have Merits, Followers can also received the protections and blessings from the “Masters, Gurus and Dharma Protectors” of the “Lineage”, and receive the correct Buddhist Dharma and guidance in actual practice.</p>

This so-called “**comprehensive observation**” is to inspect the “Gurus” **by the above-mentioned five major criteria of inspection and assessment**. The more items to be qualified, the higher the safety and security for one, and so **the higher the level of, as well as the bigger, benefits** that the followers can receive. The higher the grades of the qualified items, the faster **the speed** the followers will have **in actual practices**.

The teachings of “Lineage” is a very difficult item to be distinguished. In the article of the “**Authentic Versus Fake “Lineages” and Their Related Meanings (2)**” of the next Issue of the “Lake of Lotus” , we will single out two key points to further elaborate in order to help those “Dharma seekers” to enrich **their knowledge and wisdom in making such kind of a distinction**.

B. The Impacts on the “Mind”

C. The Nature of the Magnetic Field Where One is Situated

... (To be Continued)

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The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophecies --- Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyendun Rinpoche (7)

by His Holiness' Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren



Namo Gurubhya!

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

Palden Tsa'wai Lama Channo!

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

Emaho!

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

His Holiness' Strong Sentiment and Tenacious Will-power



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

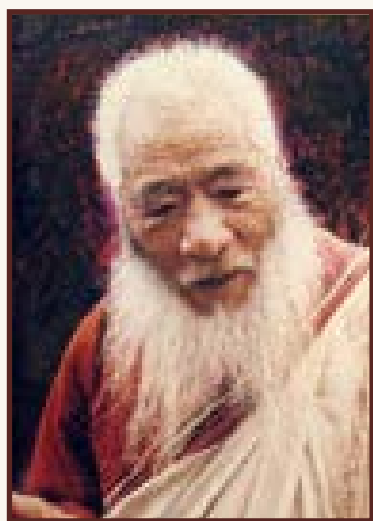
His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche always has the style and character of a gusty wind which blows strongly and fiercely at times. He never involves himself in politics, neither will he meet those rich and powerful people who have contaminated minds about Buddhism. There are many cases of this nature, but we would like to relate one instance, which we have heard and which does not involve "big" people. There was a very wealthy person from the West who would like to receive teachings from His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche. Maybe this person has the thought that "he has never seen a Dharma practitioner who does not bow down in front of wealth, so long as the amount is great enough to make them do so !"

Hence, this person brought a big bundle of American dollars in front of His Holiness, and asked for the teachings, saying that these were the offerings he would make to His Holiness if he gave him the teachings. The answer is so simple, and there is no necessity of bargaining! His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche took the whole bundle and threw it onto his face saying “get out!”, never to see him again. This throwing by His Holiness is already a blessing to the person, in **teaching him of what his arrogance can lead to**, as well as to **teach him something about the real meaning of the Holy Dharma**. His Holiness never wants to see him again so that he will not have another chance to do more bad deeds. Unless this person can, from the deepest of his heart, earnestly do his **utmost repentance and confession** of his sins, before his “heart of wisdom” can slowly opens up, upon which then he might have a chance to see His Holiness again.

**Just to eat a spoonful of pure and clean rice,
But not taking a grain of contaminated wealth,
He who dares to insult the Holy Saint,
Instantly sown the seed for the cause in hell!**

On the surface, His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche gives people the feeling that he is very **strong, stern and fierce**, and sometimes he is even incomprehensible. His instructions are **changing** from the morning till night; his travels, **sometimes here, sometimes there**, never to be certain until the very last moment. Once his instructions are out, it is final and nobody can change him, except himself. Indeed, **nobody can really understand the real meanings behind His Holiness’ words and deeds**, especially when it comes to those “secret meanings” which can only be transmitted by **the mind and cannot be spoken out**. Especially when His Holiness is angry with someone, no one dares to speak on his/her behalf and everyone becomes so speechless and helpless, as **they are so afraid** that His Holiness will never want to see them again.

This will mean that they will sow the seed of downfall, as well as to lose the opportunity for their own swift liberation. Even when those high lamas and Rinpoches are allowed to see His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche, if they are not behaving **t h e m s e l v e s** according to the Holy Dharma, they will also be scolded, not in a polite way !



His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche



His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche

When almost everybody was thinking how unreasonable and incomprehensible His Holiness Chadril Rinpoche is, we just think that he is, indeed, the most reasonable and most wise and compassionate person that we have ever known! Behind his sometimes stern face and voice, His Holiness is so full of compassion and kindness toward all sentient beings ! “At times of leisure, he will not do things just to amuse himself; when suitable conditions arise, he will teach and bless all beings.” **Every word and deed of His Holiness naturally reflects his genuine “view, meditation and action” of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen)**. As His Holiness has already attained the highest stage of natural spontaneity, there is **pure simplicity and originality** (with no pretense at all) in his outward appearance, and so, on the surface, His Holiness’ look is no different from any ordinary person.

The “View, Meditation and Action” of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen)

This has been so vividly described in the *Mountain Retreat* by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche: **“Although a Yogi like this (one who realizes Dzogchen), ‘united to the Nature’, has the appearance of an ordinary person, his mind dwells in effortless vision of the Dharmakaya, and without action he traverses all the levels and paths.”**

While “emptiness” is neither existent nor non-existent (void), the appearance and emptiness of “awareness” is no different from the natural way of the primal state. To be able to recognize this “intrinsic awareness” is what constitutes the **“View”** of Great Perfection (Dzogchen); then, to truly experience this “view” continuously with

one's mind is called "**Meditation**". Diligently observe this "awareness", not allowing "emptiness" to remain in the domain of theory, bring everything back to "awareness" itself without any attachments. With continuous practice over a long period of time, a time will come when experiences will metamorphose into realizations, and "awareness" will be seen naked and resplendent. This is called "**Action**".

Because of the great wisdom which naturally arises from his pure "intrinsic awareness", His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche can observe, come to realize and even predict the various circumstances and conditions in their entirety, their interdependent origination as well as changes, and many other things that others just cannot see, so that his instructions and style of doing things are always changing, yet without any attachments ! "**To extract the essences from all things, and to use all circumstances as a support on the Path**" is a pith-instruction for both practices of Vajrayana and of Dzogchen. This accounts for the reason why, for a lot of times, His Holiness' ways of doing things are incomprehensible, and sometimes even "shocking", to all others. It is simply because they lack the depth of wisdom, as well as having too many attachments in their own minds, to be able to truly understand such a great Master and his ways of doing things.

Furthermore, if one has resentment in one's mind, then it will be just the opposite of what you had originally intend to do for your Dharma practice, which shows that you are not yet ripe as a vessel ! Even if His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche has so compassionately bestowed upon you all the teachings and oral pith-instructions of Dzogchen, it will still be useless. The reason is so simple: if one does not put his/her "trust and faith" on the Guru, then what is the point of practicing all his teachings?

Again, in the *Mountain Retreat*, it is mentioned: "... **the most important thing is fervent devotion, to pray with ardor from the heart, without ceasing even for an instant to consider the Guru as the real Buddha; this is the universal panacea that is superior to all other ways of dispelling obstacles and of making progress; levels and paths will be traversed with great momentum.**" (Of course, here we are talking about those Authentic Gurus, and not those "false teachers" who cannot even save themselves from the cyclic existence of Samsara ! - added by the writers.) Thus, if one can truly understand the "secret meanings" of the Guru, and then wholeheartedly follow his instructions for practice, it is more likely that one will be able to reap the successful fruit of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen). We sincerely hope that all those people who have misunderstood His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche should be mindful about their own misdeeds and try to make confessions, in order that they will not commit more sins and thus waste their most precious human births and lifetimes !

His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche had personally told us that: there were two persons who had come from Kham and had done their three-year retreats at His Holiness' retreat centers, but His Holiness had not transmitted to them any teachings. Later, these two persons had gone to Taiwan, saying themselves as the reincarnations of such and such masters, and had received teachings from His Holiness, in order to **boost their own images and positions as "gurus"**.



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

Nowadays, because of this Degenerate Age, there are many tricksters who come to His Holiness and try to cheat him for teachings, and that is why His Holiness **has warned us to be very careful about these tricksters**, and that His Holiness has to be even more strict than before when transmitting higher teachings in future. A minimum requirement of six years will be required for the transmissions of higher teachings: three years for the Guru to observe his disciple, and another three years for the disciple to observe his Guru.

In order to understand such a Holy Saint as His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche, **first of all one has to know oneself, and then try to nurture and elevate one's own wisdom. Otherwise, it will be of no benefits even if one can see the Buddha himself, as he/she will probably think of the Buddha as just another ordinary person. So, this is exactly the same situation with His Holiness!** If one cannot see one's "true nature", then there is no way that one can see the Buddha, and then all the practices and efforts that one does will be just like "going to the precious mountain of treasures but returning home empty-handed"! So please do not find faults in others !

**Who can understand the heart and mind of the Holy Saint we called Buddha?
Without meeting anyone who really understands him,
He continues to uphold the Holy Dharma,
Those who are powerful and with merits are numerous on this planet,
Please, with all your hearts and minds, assist Vajra!**

(**Buddha Vajra** is the Holy Dharma name of His Holiness Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche.)

..... (To be Continued)

The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death :

The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (12)

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

The Damaging Powers of Horrible Scenes

The cardiologist Maurice Rawlins (M.D.), who deemed it that the occurrence of **negative Near-Death Experiences (NDEs)** and **positive ones are in the same proportions**, has personally witnessed a case back in 1977 about a patient who, having suffered a serious cardiac disease, was able to be “resurrected from death” after a successful resuscitation. When he just came back to his consciousness, this NDE survivor was so frightened that his eyes were wide opened and he firmly grabbed hold of the physician’s arms with all his might.

Due to extreme fears, his face was so twisted to the extent of being out of shape and looked very weird. His entire body was trembling with sweats as big as beans, which were rolling down his cheek from the forehead. His hairs looked as if all were straightened up. With the most intense and emotional voice, he begged the doctor, “Please don’t let me become unconscious again. It was just too horrible. Don’t stop! **Don’t let me go back to hell.**”

Have you ever thought of, while a person is still alive with the support of the physical body, how damaging the power of “horrors” would ever be? **If it is mild**, it will make the “eyes of the person to be wide-open, face so twisted to be out of shape, with sweats streaming down, hairs straightening up, and the whole body trembling”. **If it is severe**, the person will simply “collapse and die of heart attack”. It is apparent that such an enormous change could have occurred to the physical body, due to the “mental strength” that was induced by the strong “emotional stress of being scared”.

This kind of “damaging power” is sufficient to destroy and control the coarse materialistic structure of the physical body, while its traumatic impacts to the “mind” are even much harder to describe. It is already hard to endure in an environment while one is still alive with the support of a physical body, so how bad the situation would it be in a posthumous scenario?

The most worrisome scenario to a Dharma practitioner is not the environment while one is still alive with the support of a physical body, but is the posthumous environment which is reined by one’s “mental strength”. It is also a “**wrestling ring of energies**” with “**instantaneous** manifestation of consequences” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning

of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Why is it? It is because the “damaging power” of “panicking” will induce “instantaneous effects” which are **inconceivably most terrible**. Within the period from the moment of “death” to the moment before “rebirth”, the deceased is hard to **master** the situation due to the sparse structure of the physical body. Thus, the deceased has to be attached to **the energies of its “mental strength”** for its functioning, and is then compelled to **proceed at high speed**. As induced by one’s own emotions, the “mental strength” varies like “ebbs and flows” in accordance with the “rapidly ever-changing” environment and one is hard to accommodate.

Once the “mood” has fallen into the deep abyss of terror, **an extremely powerful “mental strength”** would be formed, and the “negative energies” so generated would **instantaneously lead** the deceased into an “abominable spiritual domain” and to a **swift** “fixation”. The deceased would then be fallen into the “lower realms”, to be reborn as either animals, or specters, hell, or hungry ghosts of all those extremely inferior realms. Once the consequence has been materialized, it would be almost **impossible to reverse it**. Therefore, those Dharma practitioners who deeply understand its seriousness would be highly alert of this, and will never take this lightly.

The “Wrestling Ring of Energies” of the “Posthumous World”

It is hard to describe the posthumous world. Even if relying upon the descriptions of those NDE survivors, their experiences are merely temporary “posthumous worlds”, simply because they had been swiftly revived from the death. There are **numerous kinds of “posthumous worlds”**, with different stages, and with different situations.

According to the descriptions in the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**, even for within the period from “death” to “rebirth”, it can be classified into several different phases (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in the Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”, concerning the various phases from the “moment of death” to the “moment of rebirth”).

However, one point that can be certain is that the “posthumous world” as described by the NDE survivors would definitely be the **“initial stage” of death**. **Comparisons** on the accounts given by the NDE survivors with the descriptions of some people who have psychic abilities have shown that there is the true existence of the “posthumous world”. No matter in terms of the **environments, functional modes and forms of existence for all sentient beings**, there

are a lot of common grounds, which are the universal phenomena that cannot be denied. Among which, one of the universal phenomena in the “posthumous world” is that all **the proceedings are fast moving in accord with the “mind”**, especially in the “initial phase” of death.

Jane Sherwood, a famous British person with psychic abilities, had authored many books, including such works as **“The Psychic Bridge”**, **“The Country Beyond”** and the **“Fourfold Vision”**. In 1964, she published another book called the **“Post-Modern”**. It was recorded in the book that she had had a “psychic communication” with Edward Lawrence, a famous explorer who had died in 1935, about the early stage of adventures in the “posthumous world”. One of the paragraphs rightly reflected the functional mode of **fast proceeding in accordance with the “mind”**. The footage is as following:

Case 11

Edward Lawrence said: “I began to find out that I had lost the weight of my physical body while living, and was **driven into motion by an enormous amount of emotions**. This kind of sentiment was almost **uncontrollable**, which was not the kind that exists in the human mind of this secular world. My sentimental strength is like a driver who used to go very slowly, but then **all of a sudden**, has changed to be driving a powerful **fast car**. I don’t like this kind of **insecure feeling**.”

That kind of “sentiment”, as was mentioned by Edward Lawrence, was, in fact, the manifestation of “the emotions in the ‘mind’”. It is a catchall concept which is known as “greed, hatred and ignorance” in Buddhism. It is the **source of all the confinements**, as well as **the ringleader who is in control of all sentient beings**.

In the “posthumous world”, the influence of such kind of “sentiment” is **“extremely swift, extremely serious and the consequences so induced are beyond one’s imagination”**. The intensity of its **“controlling power” increases explosively**. So if a person knows how to make use of it, its intensity could be **enhanced to infinity**. However, if it is out of control, you might be reined to a situation **“beyond redemption”**.

In making an analog about the descriptions of the NDE survivors, for instance, Dr. L. Kiruda (M.D.), a specialist in research of “social hygiene”, had been working in the local government’s medical center of the Lappeenranta District for thirteen years. Being a physician, she enjoyed high social status in society, and was well-known in both Europe and America due to her own personal experiences of the “Near-Death Experiences”.

Her book about NDEs, by the title **“Death Does Not**



Exist”, is the number one bestseller in Finland, Norway and Sweden (please refer to Case 5 in the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”). She had the following description on her own personal experiences on the NDEs:

Case 12

“At that time, whenever I thought of death, I couldn’t help feeling scared, and immediately I was in panic psychologically. During the chaos, I couldn’t help uttering, “Mom, mom”. Guess what happened after the yell?

At an instant, I just flew back to Helsinki, of a distance of thousand miles away, and had appeared in my parents’ living room.... I felt somewhat bored, and so I hoped to return back to my own home. With such a thought, the scene was altered immediately, and I was back to my home in Lappeenranta, again thousand miles away.... Merely just a thought, and I was transferred to several places where I would like to go.”

The two examples given above were the situations in which the individuals’ “mental strengths” were playing the leading roles, and thus made a lot of people who did not have any ideas about the reality to feel interesting about this. However, when the negative “external forces” had occurred, the situations would reverse so swiftly and instantaneously as to be so terrible (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in which there was detailed explanation about the “external forces” in Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”). The following is the adventure of a lady in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan who went through the NDE due to Caesarean section back in 1973.

Case 13

“I entered into a beautiful world of orange color and flew in a vast open space in between the sky and the earth. I looked upon my right-hand side, and I saw an array of substances like furnitures. But, all of a sudden at the next instant, it all turned into a world of green, as if switching onto a different TV channel. The scenes of these two worlds kept on inter-changing to each another. In one of the worlds, a lot of things that I could not figure out came into my vision. Those substances kept on revolving and rolling towards me.

It turned out as if I was going to be crushed.

In another scene, similar to that of the opening of a tunnel, a gigantic hollow cave was revolving and crushing towards me, as if intending to suck me into the hole. In order not to be sucked into the hole, I continuously struggled hard and yelled desperately with all my might. At that moment, I was filled with fear and regret about death. Up till now, I can still remember that feeling of deep regret at that time, and this kind of feeling has never been diminishing.”

The scenes that kept on inter-changing to one another had indicated that the “karma” of the lady was in a “wrestling situation between the various positive (virtuous) and negative (wicked) energies”. Whichever energy was stronger, she would enter into that relevant “spiritual domain”. According to the descriptions of the NDE survivors, and also from those who possessed “psychic abilities”, a hole with attractive forces is a commonly encountered phenomenon in the “posthumous world”. If a person cannot go beyond it, one would then be “fixated” towards it, and then the formal process of “rebirth” will take place. These “attractive forces” are the joint manifestations either from a single or numerous kinds of “tractions”. These are also the various entrances to the different “realms” of existence. These “attractive forces” are known as the “karmic forces” in Buddhism (The “karmic network”: due to those “virtuous and wicked” deeds amassed over countless past lives, a network of “tractions” is formed due to the mutual intertwining and inter-influencing among the “mental strengths” of oneself and the others, and is thus known as the “karmic network”. Please refer to the VCD on “The Inconceivable Law of Karma”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).

When it drags on closer to the later stage during the period in between “the moment of death” and “the moment before rebirth”, the “tractions” so arisen would become much stronger. Can this kind of “tractions” be avoided? And, in what ways? When the negative “external forces” arise, there are only two kinds of situations that can be resolvable. The first one is the occurrence of positive “external forces” for one’s resolution during the emergency. The other one is the emission of energies coming from one’s own inner “mental strength”, which is “up-to-the-point” for one’s resolution.

No matter which kind of energies does one use for the resolution of oneself, the intensity of the energies must be stronger than that of the negative “external forces”. The positive “external forces” are a kind of energy for one’s resolution belonging to the “passive” kind, and so its appearance is unpredictable. On the other hand, the energies emitted from one’s own inner “mental strength” belong to the “active” kind of energy

for one's resolution, which can be most conducive and to be used at any moment and particularly during emergencies. Therefore, whether one can be able to study and to increase the intensity of such energies, especially in looking for an **"up-to-the-point" training**, will become the most important subject matter for all Buddhist Dharma practitioners while still alive.

As things in the "posthumous world" will **"proceed at high speed in accordance with one's 'mind'"**, hence how to explore the strength of one's "mind", and to induce it into the **"right track"**, in order to assist oneself to go for "rebirth" in virtuous places, or to be detached from the bindings of all the "tractions", so that the "primordial nature" could be recovered (please refer to the article on **"The Meaning of Near-death Experiences"** about the detailed explanation of the "primordial nature" in the Issues 4 and 5 of the **"Lake of Lotus"**), will all become the most crucial points of training while one is still alive. If a person detours away from the **"right track"**, the consequences of such could be extremely serious. If a person has not gone through any training, then would it mean that there is no resolution at all? It would then depend on one's own characters, life experiences, quality and the virtues of one's spiritual cultivation. **"Steadiness" and "strong will-power" are the most important elements.**

Case 14

A fellow, by the name Chaverze, traveled alone by car across the barren areas in the southwestern part of the state of South Dakota, as well as the northwestern part of the state of Nebraska in the United States of America. While driving through those vast and boundless areas, he suddenly suffered from a heart attack, and so he urgently stopped the car.

When he opened the door and was about to get out of the car, he looked back casually and saw that **his own body was inside the car**. He did not care about it, and so continued to proceed onward. There was a small winding path, as if it was specially paved for him. From time to time, he passed by some big holes on the roadsides. There were both monsters and **"semi-humans-semi-beasts"** crawling inside the holes, and they were posing as if they want to grab hold of him.

Though he was rather frightened, yet due to his past **experiences** of having escaped from death in Germany from the "Nazi's concentration camp" during the Second World War, he was made to believe that the monsters were the demons of Nazi, and **once he could go over them he would be safe**. As a result, he had succeeded in overcoming this kind of scenario, and entered into the garden of happiness **instantly**. Thereafter, he had "revived from death".

In the above-mentioned case, the **attractive force** from the hole was **not significant**, with the monsters merely **gesturing** to grab hold of people, but without

any actual fierce attacks. This was an indication that, though Chaverze's "bad karma" had arisen but it was not very intensive. So long as his "mind" could rest on **"calmness with firm beliefs"**, then he **could transcend the situation**. However, if such a scenario has occurred to somebody whose strength of the "mind and will-power" was relatively weak, then they would be **so frightened as to become confused and perplexed, and would thus fall into the holes**.

The Importance of "Up-to-the-Point" Trainings

Even though Chaverze could get away from the dangerous situation, it did not mean that he could **stay** in a good environment for **long term**. In the "posthumous world", the **functional mode "proceeds at high speed in accord with the mind"**. These kinds of "mental strengths", including the "mental strengths" of all other sentient beings in the spiritual world, as well as the various "tractions", have thus become a **"wrestling ring of energies where the strong always dominates the weak"**.

In most cases, one's own inner "mental strength" becomes the most important factor which is "so crucial that it could dominate the whole situation". Since the solution lies in the "same person who has tied the knot to untie it", this is the reason why "Dharma practice" is needed, and the **core** of such "Dharma practice" must be on the "training of one's mind", as well as on the "nurturing of one's **'mental strength'**" (please refer to the VCD on **"Everything Comes From the Mind"**, as well as the whole set of 10 CDs on **"Mind-Training and Dharma Practice"**, all published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).

"Mind-training" can either remove or diminish the damaging power of "greed, hatred and ignorance", so that the deceased could more easily enter into a "good spiritual domain", and thus avoid the entering of an "abominable spiritual domain". While the nurturing of one's **"mental strength"** could assist the deceased to **deal with all the sudden changes, depart from dangers and detach from the confinements of "tractions"**. As to the various levels of detachment from "tractions", it all depends upon what sorts of training one has been taken, and whether it is the appropriate kind of **"up-to-the-point" training** when one is still alive. If the training is irrelevant, and not "up-to-the-point", then the effects would become diminished, useless, or even end up in **having "counter-effects"** (please refer to the articles on the **"Authentic versus Fake Lineages and Their Related Meanings"** in Issues 12 and 13 of the **"Lake of Lotus"**).

As to the training on "mental strength", the Dharma practice of Tibetan Buddhism can be considered to be the **most outstanding** one. Their trainings are

extremely “elaborate and holistic” in nature and in scope. As to whether it is “**up-to-the-point**” or not, it all depends on whether it is an “**issue pinpointing to the problems**” encountered in the “contexts of Dharma practice and their related teachings of the lineage”. However, in terms of the removal or the diminishing of “greed, hatred, ignorance”, the ways of propagation and representations in Tibetan Buddhism are extremely easy in causing people to become greedy and superstitious. This point **must be improved and corrected**. If there is no appropriate and “up-to-the-point” training while one is still alive, even though a person might have a strong character, it is **difficult** for him **to escape** from the **destiny** of “rebirth”, or entrance into an abominable “spiritual domain”. It is merely a **question of “timing”**. There are clear descriptions on these in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”.

An Italian fellow, who was steady and amiable with such good personality and morality that you would long to befriend with, had experienced **five times of “clinical deaths”**. He had no religious belief and did not believe in “God, heaven and hell”. His NDE was a good illustration of the “**repeatability**” of the “abominable spiritual domain”. The following was given in his own account:

Case 15

“I saw the flames, as well as some small monsters of the heights of about 4.5 feet to 5 feet, all surrounding me. They looked ferocious and their visages were frightening. **I saw them every time when I died**. I knew it clearly that I was dead in each one of my deaths, and luckily I could ‘revive from death’ each time.”

Time after times, the recurrence of entering into the same scenario is a very **frequent phenomenon**. In Mother Nature, there is an ability of “**automatic replication**”. Just like our bodily cells, they will replicate themselves everyday. The “mind” would also follow the same principle that, when it is up to a **certain level of intensity for one’s suggestion**, the functions



of “automatic replication and projection” would be triggered.

This Italian fellow was trapped under a rather abominable influence of “external forces”, and situated in a very inferior “**energy field**” (also known as the “**magnetic field**” or the “**field of chi**”), and thus the function of the “tractions” coming from the “demonic domain” would induce ceaseless replications, so that the intensity will be maintained. As the fears and doubts within one’s “mind” has been maintained, and due to this **suggestion of fear**, so the mind would trigger the functions of “automatic replication and projection”. When these **two kinds of forces** merge together, as “like attracts like”, and so the power increases in the **order of magnitude in geometric progression**, thus making the Italian fellow to have no way to escape from the predicament repeatedly, one after the other, but instead ended up in an abominable “spiritual domain”. If he could no longer “revive from death” again, then the odds of his rebirth in a “demonic domain” can be **approaching 100 percent**.

The confluence of these two kinds of forces is an important step of “**mutual linkage**” for the “**generation of results**”. In order to resolve the predicament, the method of “disguising a hoax” must be applied. That is to **thoroughly change the state of “one’s own mind”** so as to make the confluence of these two kinds of forces to be **unable to create “abominable linkages”**, or the “**cessation** of connections”, or even the **changing** of the “nature and direction of those connections”. The consequences so induced would also be changed. This is the reason why one has to do “Dharma practice”, and the **core** of which must be on “**mind-training**” and the nurturing of one’s “**mental strength**”. The former case is the “**defensive**” force, while the latter one is the “**offensive**” force.

Is there any resolution for the predicament of “neither defensive nor offensive”? Yes, it is possible. The major difference between a Buddha and a sentient being is that the “mind” of a “Buddha” is of “Emptiness” (or “Sunyata” in Sanskrit, [please refer to the DVD on “Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association](#)) and does not comprise of any negative energies of “greed, hatred and ignorance”. Since “Emptiness” does not have any presence of “tractions”, and so it would not be connected to all other “tractions”. Hence, the Buddha would not be governed by the “karmic network”, and could be able to be converted into the “Dharmakaya” in accordance with his “mind”. This is known as the entering into “Nirvana” ([please refer to the DVD on “The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death II”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association](#)). Hence, if the “mind” of a person can be **led into the condition of “Emptiness”**, then there would not be any further problems of the “posthumous world”. In which case,

a person could be directly free from the bindings of all the “tractions”. This is where Buddhism is different from all other religions.

However, it is not easy to master “Emptiness”. When a person is still alive, he is covered and supported by a physical body, and so it will be rather difficult to realize specifically the effects and achievements of practicing “Emptiness”. Only in the “posthumous state”, when the functional mode is “in accordance with the fast proceedings of the ‘mind’”, can the effects and achievements of practicing “Emptiness” to be verified. In order to ensure one’s security and ability of self-defense in the “posthumous world”, the various trainings of one’s “mental strength”, especially those methods for the resolution of predicament, must have to be learnt and practiced.

Some “overly-confident” persons would deem it that they will be able to deal with all sorts of predicaments by only practicing “Emptiness”. These people, who have over-estimated their own abilities and yet have under-estimated the complexities of the “posthumous world”, must need to have sufficient psychological preparation in regards to their likelihood of “accidental failures, when they would suffer from all sorts of tortures, and not being unable to deal with the situations”. In the past, there were numerous diligent Dharma practitioners who had “failed”, and so they still had to continue on with their sufferings in the “cycle of karmic existence” (or “Samsara” in Sanskrit), then why would you be so “overly-confident”?

What can you rely upon? Merely on “Emptiness”? Can you really master “Emptiness”? How profound and deep have you achieved it? Can you really deal with everything? “When you suffer from serious illnesses and become half dead”, or “having pains that were beyond descriptions during the process of the ‘decomposition of the four elements’ of the physical body while you are dying”, or “when the environment is undergoing ‘rapid changes within seconds’ and it appears ‘offensive’ to you”, can you still be able to maintain the state of “Emptiness” without any unsteadiness? Is it that all the other “methods of resolution” and assistance are unnecessary? Whether you are “innocent, naïve, unwilling to face the reality, or having deceptions to oneself and to the others”? (About the detailed explanations on the ‘decomposition of the four elements’ of the physical body, please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

From the “moment of dying” to the “posthumous stage”, and further on to the “moment before rebirth”, various situations, dangers, sufferings and opportunities would occur in each of the phases. So the “up-to-the-point” trainings of Dharma practice must need to pinpoint to the different situations accordingly. Furthermore, one should thoroughly know the functional mode and

characteristics of the “posthumous world”, in order to “avoid the most dangerous situations, smoothen the unbearable pains and sufferings, get hold of the key that cannot be missed, and elaborate one’s inner self to the highest efficiency, so as to elevate the odds of success”. This is the importance of the “up-to-the-point” training.

The Dangers on Those Practices of “Shooting in the Dark”

Due to the fact that many people were unable to find suitable “Gurus” (instructors on the Buddhist Dharma practices), maybe due to their own “self-esteem, or arrogance”, and in conjunction with their under-estimation of the complexities and difficulties in the “posthumous world”, and so they are fond of seeking resolutions in Dharma practices through books, some fragmental teachings through self-searching means. In this way, many more traps are being set up for themselves.

In the Case 12 of Dr. Kiruda, who having gone through the NDE, was aroused with great interest in such an adventure. In order to regain that kind of experience, she had made use of hypnogenesis to achieve the effect of “out-of-body” (OFB) experience. The following is her own personal account:

“After this “out-of-body”, I wished to go back to my physical body, but I could not get back smoothly. Only the lower half of my body could enter smoothly, but the upper half could not get in. The ‘spiritual body’ and the ‘physical body’ could only be linked together in the lower half like a ‘Siamese twins’.

I wished to repeat my “out-of-body” experience once more, but I could not get out again and become stuck in between. I was very anxious, and did not know what to do next. At last, I had to struggle and battle for three hours, and eventually I could get back to my physical body. From then on, I realized that this sort of experience was rather dangerous, and so I dare not try again thereafter.

In Case 10 of the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”, Stephanie was very fond of the search of “psychic matters”. She participated in the meetings that were organized by “The Campaign of Peace in Mind”, and used “hypnotherapy”, and the “treatment of revisiting previous lives”. On the one hand, she had gained some fragmented knowledge about the “spiritual world” from those treatments; yet, on the other hand, due to the too many non-comprehensions on her part, so much contradictions, doubts and anxieties had been generated within her.

Before her NDEs, she had already been trained to

be able to see others' "energy field" and to "forecast the future". She had only studied English, but then through hypnosis, she could speak six different languages. Though she had acquired the ability of "foreknowledge" through her spiritual practice, but without the wisdom of the Buddhist teachings for further **balance and elaboration**, and without any "up-to-the-point" methods of resolution, the "adversities" so induced were much more than the "advantages". In the scene of a **frightening** negative NDE, she was completely at a loss as to how to deal with the situation, and thus **suffered the tortures due to panics**.

As a matter of fact, doing spiritual practices with an attitude like "shooting in the dark" would be very risky, inefficient and twisted, even to the state of "one step beyond might end up in everlasting grieves". It will be much better off for one to seek for an experienced and well-qualified "Authentic Guru" who can provide the guidance. It would be **relatively safer and faster**. However, if by mistake, a person has gone to a "fake guru", it would be even more risky than "doing spiritual practices of shooting in the dark". The consequences would be **more dangerous, miserable, and would absolutely "not be able to recover forever"** (please refer to the articles on the "Authentic versus Fake Lineages and their Related Meanings" in Issues 12 and 13, as well as the articles on the "Authentic versus Fake Gurus" in Issues 3 and 4 respectively, of the "Lake of Lotus").

If the "guru" that one is following lacks experiences and sufficient knowledge, especially those about the issues of "death" and their **functional proceedings, the means of resolution and corresponding methods of Dharma practice** in the "posthumous world", then it would be difficult to help you in facing such critical tests and junctures. The "guru" might merely serve as a Dharma friend to help one for the "consolation

of the mind", and so **one's selection of the "guru" must be extremely cautious. Do not rely upon, and be superstitious about, the "effects of the blessings",** because all of these are only "auxiliary forces" at the **sideways**.

In the "posthumous world", **one's own "mental strength"** is the **most important factor** that is "crucial and can affect the consequence". If a "guru" is insufficient in his cognition and knowledge of the "posthumous world", then it would be **even more difficult to be effective**. One of the "Lineage Gurus" in Tibetan Buddhism, by the name of Venerable Nyida Wodsal, had tried to save his relatives by entering into the domain of the specters, through supernatural powers. However, he **could not overcome** the functions of the "karmic forces" and the "cardinal mental strength" of the deceased people.

The Meaning of Life

Death is inevitable and everybody **must have to go through this stage**, and it is also the **most dangerous juncture**. It is **extremely unwise** if a person gives up the opportunity of learning and training "while still alive".

If one just randomly chooses to learn the Dharma practices, this would be **even more foolish**. To consolidate all sorts of information, including the **NDE survivors whose track records are trustworthy, people who have psychic abilities, people who can recall past lives under hypnogenesis, people who have spiritual practices at high levels, as well as the various descriptions in the Buddhist Sutras**, all these works can definitely show that "life is continuous, and so if a person does not learn how to handle the situations then it is risky, life has its particular meaning, while one's spiritual conditions must have to be elevated".



If one can utilize all the available resources of this life, including wealth, knowledge, capability, time, life-span and health, in order to comprehend how "life after death" can be extended in a profound way, how one can be at risk, and how to escape from it, so as to reformulate all of one's "attitudes and behaviors", to abandon all kinds of wickedness and to promote all kinds of virtues. By using appropriate and wise ways to **actively train the clarity and concentration of one's "mental strength"** in order to elevate one's spiritual conditions, as well as to learn how to handle the completely "new way of life", and its "life form after death", such that the **spiritual domains of life could be continuously elevated**, until being liberated from the "cycle of karmic existence" (known as "Samsara" in Sanskrit), so as **to put an end to all the constraints and bondages of life**.

To be good at applying and in handling this life's available resources so as to enrich this life, to advance the evolutionary process of life, and finally to put an end to all of life's constraints and bondages, to bravely confront with death itself, and even to utilize "death" for the acceleration of the evolutionary process of one's "spiritual life", so that one would not fail to live up to this life's "possession and existence", as well as not being unworthy of future life expectations. This is, indeed, the true "meaning of life".

The ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zi had mentioned that "if one can manage one's life well, then it would be possible for one to manage one's death well". Thus, if a person can actively face the reality of life, realize it, learn how to manage it, and eventually to master life skillfully and light-heartedly, without further entanglements and endless cycles of reincarnations, then this kind of "managing one's life well" is the exact meaning on "the truth of life": that is, "knowing life" as well as "knowing death".

One should not be disrespectful for the possession of one's life, but instead one should vigorously develop the dynamics of life, and to ignite the "flame of life" to its fullest, in order that one can be liberated from the bondage of reincarnations, which acts as a turning wheel, and thus will no longer be trapped in the endless and helpless cycles of "life and death". This kind of wisdom, which is as bright as "light" itself, is exactly "the truth of life".

To seek for all facets of comprehension and answers is the best means for the elimination of doubts and panics.

To learn to master the "truth of life" is a thorough way for extinguishing fear and scare.

All the changes in the "posthumous world" can take place "within an instant", and so one's learning and practicing while still alive is most essential. Wishing you all can

Hold onto the hub of destiny, and Master one's directions at the critical moment!

Areas and Questions Pending for Further Explorations

In fact, are they having the same reasons as to the arisen of the negative "Near-Death Experiences", as well as the abominable scenes that were encountered at the "moment of death"? In the article on "The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences" in the Issue 8 of Lake of Lotus, it was mentioned by some NDE survivors that some "scenes of dying" also occurred in other religions. Some also reported that they were "being embraced by 'Light'", and see either Jesus or Maria coming over to fetch them". Why is that? In fact, what do these "scenes of dying" represent? When a person encounters a bad scenario, does it represent a worrisome result and a miserable ending?

In the description about the twenty-five Dharma practitioners in Issue 8, they were using the same kind of method for their Dharma practice, and they were united together and endeavored with the same efforts in their practices. Yet, various bad scenarios had occurred to different persons, including "inauspicious ones" on the "verge of dying". Why is it like that? In fact, what had gone wrong? In the other religions, there were reports about the coming of God to fetch for the deceased persons, and so does it mean that all religions are having the same kind of effect? How to carry out one's Dharma practice in order to ensure that an "auspicious scene" can occur at the "moment of death"? If bad scenes had appeared at the "moment of death", is there any methods of rescue for such kind of emergency?

In fact, what are the required conditions in the way of Dharma practice that are "up-to-the-point" "training of spiritual elevation"? There are so many "trainings of spiritual elevation", then how should we make the selection in order to match up with each of the different phases? We may conduct another "brain storming" session of wisdom and give these some more thoughts. In the future articles, we will try to verify the answers which can adhere to both science and the Buddhist teachings. How about that? (To be Continued)



The Application

of Wisdom

The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (12)

By Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren
Translated by Anne W.M. Chow

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

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

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

1. **Complementarity and the Enhancement of Effectiveness:** The links between "plans" should have compatible, complementary and interdependent effects...(please refer to Issue 4 of the "Lake of Lotus").
2. A thorough elimination process to decide what to

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

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

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

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

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

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



major direction in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one’s “plans” (please refer to Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(v) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2):** Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one’s lifetime, and if one’s own objective is either to be “liberated from the cycle of transmigration” (known as “Samsara” in Sanskrit), or to attain “full enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”) within this very life, then your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time” for this life will become one of the critical points in determining whether you would succeed or fail. Hence one must be **very cautious and rational** about this. If your objective is “to be reborn into the Buddha’s Pure Land” within this lifetime, then you would have had **greater flexibility in the handling of** your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”, but they still should **not be neglected**. Hence, what will be the most wise and effective way in the “planning of time” for one’s life while one is on the path for Dharma practice?.....(please refer to Issue 9 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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

(vii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (4): Wrong “Planning of Time”**

It is no easy matter at all for one to be able to master the keys to success of “Dharma Practices” in one’s “daily living” in order to have achievements, as well as to be able to achieve the “objective” of becoming “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”. Even if one does possess the three best conditions (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”), it will still be unavoidable that one can fall prey and become lost again in this “tidal sea of sorrow in Samsara”, as one goes through this **undulated waves of ever-changing**

life cycle. If one tries not to fall again, and instead wants to further consolidate upon one's own foundation, one of the best methods is to merge one's own "Dharma practices" into one's "daily living" so as to ensure one's mastering of the "Planning of Time".

No matter in the setting of what kinds of "plans", one has to try and predict what would be the outcomes that would be brought upon you by this "plan"? What will be the side-effects and how many? One always hopes for the best but be prepared for the worst. Many a Dharma practitioners, when planning the times for their "Dharma practices", will tend to take care of one but then lose hold of the others, making it more contradictory, and also more confusing, for one's own "daily living", and thus ending in the loss of what to "adopt and abandon". (please refer to the Issue 11 of the "Lake of Lotus"),

(viii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (5): The "Planning of Time" in One's "Daily Living"

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"?

For any kind of "planning of time", it is unavoidable that there are merits as well as shortcomings. It is difficult to avoid wrong doings, yet an appropriate "planning of time" can lessen and reduce the severity of these kinds of wrong doings, thus enabling the "successfulness" to be speed up. An appropriate "planning of time" has to be designed using the following principles:

1. Link up the main theme, get through the sequences – target: daily living during one's lifetime.
2. Simplify the complicated, find out the keys – target: the wrestling ring of "energies" after death.
3. Distinguish between the important ones with the less important ones, handle interferences well – target: the wrestling ring of "energies" after death

(1) Linking up by the Main Theme, and Getting Through the Sequences of Events

By completely dividing up the practices of the Holy Dharma with those "during meditation" from those of "post-meditation daily living" in one's own state of mind is an extreme wrong mentality for one's Dharma practices, simply because the wrong doings thus caused are many, indeed. Since all disturbances will be sealed off when one performs those Dharma practices "during meditation", so it belongs to the "static state of Dharma practices". Whereas for those Dharma practices in the "post-meditation daily living", these have to be conducted when there are numerous and complicated interferences, and so these belong to the "dynamic state of Dharma practices".

So, in fact, which type of the Dharma practices, be it the "static state" or the "dynamic state", can produce the greater effectiveness? The answer to this question depends on what kinds of environment that one will face in the future. If one divides the stages of one's life into "before death" and "after death", one will then find out that the environment that one will face during one's life is all in the "dynamic state". Then, how about the environment after death? According to what has been revealed in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", the environment that one will face "after death" is all in a "high speed dynamic state", and it is so fast that it is just like the "myriads of changes within a flash" (please refer to the descriptions of the "wrestling ring of energies" in the articles on the "Meaning of the Near-death Experiences" in the Issues 10 and 11 of the "Lake of Lotus").

Since "during one's lifetime", the environment in which one is subjected to trials and deeply distressed is in a "dynamic state"; while "after death", the environment that will make one to become endangered and to be connected with the extremely bad elements at any time such that one can be reborn and trapped, is also in the "dynamic state". All these mean that, no matter whether one will adopt a "static state" or

a “dynamic state” of Dharma practices, the effects that the practices will produce have to **be applied and appropriate** to the “place for one’s final decisive battle”: a “dynamic environment”.

The “dynamic environment” “during one’s lifetime” is our “daily living”, while the “active environment” “after death” is the “wrestling ring of energies”. In order to receive training **omni-bearingly** so as to cope with the “dynamic environment” of varying speeds and with different degrees of dangers, both “static state of Dharma practices” and “dynamic state of Dharma practices” have to be employed

The problem is there are variations for both the “static state” and the “dynamic state” of Dharma practices, whether it will be for the “environment for Dharma practices, the targets for Dharma practices, the methods for coping with the changes, the immediate effects that are being sought after, or the **planning of time** for Dharma practices”. How can this be modified in such a way so as to **merge** the “static state of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”, so that they can complement each other’s inadequacies and thus **avoid** the occurrence of **wrong doings** due to their incompatibilities?

In searching for the answer, one have to, first of all, **master** the “similarities” and the “differences” between the “static state of Dharma practices” and the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”. By **linking up their “similarities” into a “main theme”**, thus helping to get through or weaken the conflicting nature of their “differences”, the “merits and effectiveness” of these two types of Dharma practices can be developed to their full extent. The meaning of “main theme” is “to regard this part as the **main cardinal** part which is the **most important point**”. By its linking up, the



“similarities” of these two types of Dharma practices will be strengthened and lengthened, and so their “merits and effectiveness” can thus be further developed to their fullest extent.

Since the “differences” of these two types of Dharma practices are not the “main theme”, which means that “they are **branch sidelines**, and so are **less important**”, and thus this can help to reduce the conflicting nature of their “differences”. When obstacles are reduced while effectiveness is strengthened, it is much easier to achieve success. This is the **most important meaning** of “**linking up the main theme, and getting through the sequences**”, and these **should be applied in the “planning of time”**.

“Similarities” and “Differences” Between the “Static State of Dharma Practices” and the “Dynamic State of Dharma Practices”

There are several characteristics when doing the Dharma practices “during meditation”:

1. **For one’s state of mind** – maintain devotion, calmness, has the feeling that one is doing Dharma practices, and considers that practicing in this way is effective and will have merits. All the different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will commend on one’s practices.
2. **For the environment** – there is no external interference. The environment can be maintained unchanged temporarily. Sudden assaults seldom appear, and there is no need to take care of other matters.
3. **For one’s Dharma practices** –there are fixed sessions for one’s Dharma practice, and fixed targets for doing such practices. One only requires to practice these accordingly; there is no need to adjust one’s Dharma practices in response to the changes in various situations. One does not have to be subjected to trials immediately.
4. **For the effectiveness** – it is easy to cultivate “mental concentration and meditational power”, and easy to become familiarized with the lessons of the Dharma practices. It is much easier to have some signs of revelations for one’s practices.
5. **For the shortcomings** – unable to master the skills for adjustments, unable to know the



dangers of the “dynamic environment”, unable to know whether one’s level of Dharma practice can cope with the “dynamic environment” or not, unable to know whether the present lessons of Dharma practices are sufficient to deal with the “dynamic environment” or not, unable to know what will be one’s own responses when under impacts, unable to “cure the disease with the right medicine”, unable to “know oneself as well as others”.

6. **For the “planning of time”** – has to set aside a certain period of time during one’s “daily living” purely for doing the Dharma practices “during meditation”.

Since the characteristics of doing the Dharma practices “during meditation” are mostly **according to instructions**, and so it is called the “static state of Dharma practices”. How can these characteristics **be adjusted** so as to link up the “static state of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”? What is the “main theme” between these two?

There are several characteristics when doing the Dharma practices for the “post-meditation daily living”:

1. **For one’s state of mind** – unable to maintain devotion and calmness, one has the feeling that one is not doing Dharma practices, and feels that often one is not observing the disciplines. The feeling of wild fantasies will not stop for just a while. One has the feeling that all the different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will not commend on what one is doing. One feels very tired and

bored, and has the feeling of disordered events coming altogether.

2. **For the environment** – it is full of external interferences. The environment is always changing. Sudden impacts will appear at any time, and one has to take care of all other matters as well.
3. **For one’s Dharma practices** – there is no fixed lessons for one’s Dharma practices, also with no fixed targets for doing the Dharma practices. It is difficult to practice, and one has to adjust one’s own Dharma practices in response to the various changes according to different situations. One has to be subjected to trials immediately.
4. **For the effectiveness** – if one is being instructed by a qualified “Authentic Guru”, it is much easier for one to learn how to handle and master the adjustment skills needed. Also, one can know the dangers of “dynamic environment”. It is much easier to know whether one’s level of Dharma practices could cope with the “dynamic environment” or not, and much easier to know whether the lessons of Dharma practices at the present moment are sufficient enough to deal with the “dynamic environment” or not. One is also able to know what will be one’s own responses when having impacts, and has the chance to try out in “curing the disease with the right medicine”. It is much easier to “know oneself as well as others”.
5. **For the shortcomings** – it is very difficult to cultivate “mental concentration and meditational power”, and is also difficult to have signs of revelation for one’s practices.
6. **For the “planning of time”** – at any time of one’s “daily living” is the time for one’s Dharma practices.

Since the “post-meditation daily living” is “**always changing**”, and so this is called the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”. So, **what** should be the way for their **unification** so as to link up the “static state of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”? What is the “main theme” between these two?

The “Cardinal Mentality” Influences Everything

Have you ever found out that a person’s life **is** always

controlled by a particular “cardinal mentality”? In the different stages as well as in the different periods of one’s lifetime, there are different types of “cardinal mentalities” that are in control of each section of a person’s lifetime. That is to say, there is a “cardinal mentality” which **totally and completely ties up one’s whole life**, while there is another “cardinal mentality” which **catches one’s mind** transiently at a certain moment.

For example, the “cardinal mentality” when “one falls in love” is tender, loving, happy, easily get lost, emotional rather than rational, and is relatively easy to give in. Whereas, the “cardinal mentality” when “one takes revenge” is malevolent, full of hatred, miserable, easily be trapped in the wrong way, easy to lose one’s reason, and is unwilling to make concessions.

Why will it happen like that? This is because the “cardinal mentality” is a kind of “**main filter lens**”. Once it is set up in one’s “mind”, all kinds of ideas, judgments coming from the mind, as well as all other external matters, will have to go through this “filter lens” of the “cardinal mentality” for **filtering, processing and dyeing** before they can enter into the boundary of one’s “thinking process”. All those information that have been filtered, processed and dyed by the “cardinal mentality” will automatically become some kind of a “distorted or twisted information”. Hence, in using these “distorted or twisted information” as the raw materials **for** one’s own “thinking”, then the products of one’s “thinking” **will also be within the limited boundary of this “cardinal mentality”**.

For example, if you expect the “stock market” is on the rising trend, and so the idea of having a “golden opportunity” will become your “cardinal mentality” at that point. Even if there are other unfavorable news about the stock market, one will still **use various reasons to convince oneself** to invest the capital into the “stock market”. Thus, the “cardinal mentality” becomes the machine for the making-up of many reasons and, therefore, it plays the “**most crucial and important**” leading role in affecting all the decisions and the whole picture.

Since the “cardinal mentality” is **the major key in deciding on everything**, one has to directly deal with it if one wants to link up the “static state” and the “dynamic state” of the Dharma practices. However, since the “mentality” of the “static state of Dharma practices” is basically contradictory to that of the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”, then how can one deal with this? When one wants to merge things that are contradictory to each other, one has to **find out** the “agreed rationales” for a “common consensus”, **upon**

which “adjustments and unification” can be made later on.

To merge the contradictions that have nothing in common, one has to find out the “agreed rationales” for a “common consensus”.

To link up the crisscross sequences, one has to “adjust and unify” the variations basing upon those rationales.

For any kind of Dharma practices, one has to “maintain devotion and calmness”, which can be considered as the “agreed rationales” for a “common consensus”. The reason that one cannot “maintain calmness” in the “post-meditation daily living” is simply because there are too many temptations and attacks coming from the outside world which are all pointing directly towards the most weakest points of a Dharma practitioner: “greed, hatred and ignorance”. **To cover** these weak points with a “**protective screen**”, one has to maintain “**devotion and confidence**” for the practice of **Buddhist teachings in any period of time** during the “post-meditation daily living”.

Pious mentality, if matched with the **teachings** of a qualified “**Authentic Guru**” on the “**Dharma practices in daily living**”, will not only enable one to obtain the “**protective screen**” but will also make one feel that one “is doing the Dharma practices which will be effective and with merits, with all the different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to commend one’s doing, while the actions of breaking disciplines could be rectified”. This kind of mentality is sufficient to counteract against the numerous temptations and attacks from the outside world.

In other words, the following methods for Dharma practices in the “post-meditation daily living” can be used to **avoid wrong doings**, develop the expected **effectiveness** and **link up** with the “static state of Dharma practices” in a **unified manner**.

1. **For one’s state of mind** – with “maintenance of devotion and confidence” as the “cardinal mentality” to **link up** with the “static state of Dharma practices” in a **unified manner**.
2. **For the environment** – with the “external

interferences, the ever-changing environment and the sudden impacts” as the testing ground to check on one’s own responses, the progress of one’s Dharma practices, and its practicability, then **modify these in accordance with the instructions** sought from the qualified “Authentic Guru”, and to train oneself to cultivate a certain degree of “meditational power and concentration power” in an environment whereupon “one can also give due consideration to other things as well”.

3. **For one’s Dharma practices** – request the qualified “Authentic Guru” to transmit “Dharma practices in daily living” by employing flexible, adaptive Dharma practice lessons to deal with different targets, and to give instructions on how to solve difficulties that are encountered during one’s Dharma practices, one learns how to adjust the Dharma practices in response to changes of various situations, and is **willingly to accept** the trials immediately.
4. **For the effectiveness – to make up for the inadequacies of the “static state of Dharma practices”.**
5. **For the shortcomings** – to cultivate the “power of concentration and meditational power” as an objective, use the “cardinal mentality” to **match and lengthen** the “power of concentration and meditational power” that were obtained from the “static state of Dharma practices”, and then apply them **into** the “dynamic state of Dharma practices” so as to strengthen the **width, sustainability and degree of practicability** of the “power of concentration and meditational power”. Use “one’s responses and progress of one’s Dharma practices” as the “signs of revelation” for one’s Dharma practices.
6. **For the “planning of time”** – regardless of whether it be the time for doing the Dharma practices “during meditation”, or in the “post-meditation daily living”, any period of time in one’s “daily living” is considered as the time for one’s own Dharma practices.



for getting the “**spiritual elevation and support**” in one’s “daily living”, or for **cop**ing with the “**high speed wrestling ring of energies**” “after death” so as to avoid falling into the “three lower realms” through different kinds of rebirths and reincarnations in the “cycle of karmic existence” (Samsara), all will have to face the “dynamic state of the environment”. Thus, it is unavoidable that any kind of “Dharma practices” has to use the “post-meditation daily living” as one of the training grounds.

Since the effects of the “static state of Dharma practices” **cannot be obliterated nor can it be completely replaced**, one **has to retain a certain amount of time** for one’s Dharma practices “**during meditation**” as the “static state of Dharma practices”, within the “planning of time” in one’s “daily living”, particularly for those Dharma practitioners whose level of Dharma practices has **not yet reached the degree of “no-return”**. For the time settings, **it is necessary** to have a period of time in each day, each year, during one’s lifetime, to be allocated for one’s Dharma practices “during meditation” as the “static state of Dharma practices”. Yet, in one’s own “state of mind”, and even for the “planning of time”, one **has to link up** the Dharma practices of the “static state” with that of the “dynamic state”; otherwise, it is unavoidable to have wrong doings caused by “**just talking about theories**” without putting them into practices, and may end up with a “disastrous” result.

Basing upon the “agreed rationales” on the “common consensus”, one can adjust and unify the “differences” between the “static state of Dharma practices” and the “dynamic state of Dharma practices” into some “**common points**”. Then, with the “cardinal mentality”, one tries to link up the “common points” between the “static state of Dharma practices” and the “dynamic state of Dharma practices”, in order to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time”, and thus opening and tidying up the disordered sequences of events. This is the “**planning of one’s Dharma practices**” in “daily living”, among which the “cardinal mentality” and the “**planning of time**” are the **main keys** for one’s “**success or failure**”.

In the next issue of “Lake of Lotus”, we will continue to share with you on the “planning of time” in the “application of the Dharma teachings in daily living”....
....(To be Continued)

The “Planning of One’s Dharma Practices” in “Daily Living”

The purposes of “Dharma practices”, whether it is

The Essence of Teachings: Emptiness -- Neither Existence Nor Voidness (7)



By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye

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

(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

Another Look at the Concept of “Emptiness” From the Second Level

Let us now have a look at the concept of “Emptiness” from the second level, which is at the level of the **“interchange of state and shape”**. Here, again, I will use the example of water. As we all know that water is of the so-called “existence”. However, it only exists in the sense that it is the combination of two molecules of hydrogen with one molecule of oxygen in order for it to exist. Hence, this so-called “existence” is due to the matching of causal and other conditions together. In Buddhism, this is known as the **“interdependent origination”** of all things.

Yet, at the same time, the form of water can appear in another “gaseous state” (of vapor) which, when being diffused in the air, will appear to become “void”, as we cannot see it any longer. Yet, as we all know, the actuality of “vapor” is that it is not the real “emptiness”. When causal conditions are being matched together, it will be condensed again and take the form of water as a “liquid state”. Hence, the water has never been disappeared, and so the “interchange of state and shape” can also help us in this way to better understand the concept of Emptiness.

So, again, this idea of everything to become “existent” is only based upon the “interdependent origination” of

all causes and conditions, in order that this so-called “existence” will take place. Hence, the two extremes of “voidness”, on the one hand, and of “existence”, on the other hand, will come into being due to their “interdependent origination” of all things, basing upon the mutual matching of causal and other conditions together. There is “voidness” only when there is “existence”, and similarly there is “existence” only when there is “voidness”. One can see that these two things are, indeed, one and the same thing; in other words, they are the two sides of the same coin. That is the reason why we have mentioned that **real “Emptiness” is “neither existence nor voidness”**.

Solid 固體



Particles are packed closely together and have fixed positions in space.

Ice drops



A Further Look at the Concept of “Emptiness” From the Third Level

Let us now look at the concept of “Emptiness” from the third level by using the three aspects of “**nature, form and function**”. The “intrinsic nature” of all matters and non-matters is “Emptiness” (or **Sunyata**). Yet, the “forms” and shapes of things will be manifested in different ways, due to the proper matching of causal and other conditions. Furthermore, they do possess various “functions”. So the “nature” of “Emptiness” as we all know is the “nature” of all things. And yet, their “forms” and “functions” can be very different depending upon the “interdependent origination” of all the causes and conditions at that particular “space-time setting”. In the Sutras, it is called the “**real Emptiness with functional (or virtual) existence**”.

Then, some people may ask the question of what does it really mean by this “real Emptiness with functional existence”? What we can say is that it is not really “existing”, neither is it “not-existing”. Basically, the “nature” of all things (i.e. the “intrinsic nature” of all things) is “**Emptiness**”. Yet, this “Emptiness” can manifest itself into various “forms”, shapes and dimensions due to the “interdependent origination” of all the causes and conditions. As a result, they will have different effects, that is, they will have different “functions” to perform.

So, this is how we look at the concept of “Emptiness” from these three aspects -- this is the third level upon which we can approach the concept of “Emptiness”. While the “forms” and “functions” of these so-called existences are themselves “impermanent” in nature; i.e. they are ever-changing, and is thus known as the “**functional existence**”; the “intrinsic nature” of all these so-called existences is, indeed, the same, and will remain the same forever till eternity, which is the “**real Emptiness**”. It is permanent and it will never change forever. Hence, we can now see the fundamental difference between the “nature” of all things as compared to the “forms” and “functions” of their existences.

Understanding of “Emptiness” From the Knowledge Level to the Practice Level

Now after approaching the concept of “Emptiness” from these three different levels of analyses at the knowledge level, then one may further ask the questions of “why do we need to understand this concept of Emptiness? For what purposes? How do they relate to, and help with, our Dharma practices?”

The main reasons that we want to practice the Holy Dharma are: (i) to liberate ourselves from this “cycle of karmic existence” (or “Samsara”), and then (ii) continue on to attain the “perfect enlightenment” (or “Buddhahood”). Thus, this concept of “Emptiness” is of utmost importance in order that we can

Liquid 液體



Particles vibrate and are free to move within the container.



really understand and then find the true path to liberate ourselves. In order to attend the “perfect enlightenment” (or “Buddhahood”), one will then have to attain “Emptiness” (or Sunyata), that is, to recover the “intrinsic nature” of all things. Through the practice of the Holy Dharma, we will slowly try to grid ourselves of all our “**greed, hatred, and ignorance**”, as well as to counteract the great barriers and obstacles of the **gigantic web of “karmic forces”** of all our past lives, due to the “Law of Cause and Effect” (or “Karma”) (please refer to the articles on the “**Meaning of the Near-Death Experiences**” in Issues 4 and 5 of the “**Lake of Lotus**”).

Hence, from this so-call “virtual existence”, one then try to return back to the very “nature” of one’s own “original face”, that is, to resume one’s own “intrinsic nature”, or the “**Buddha Nature**”. One must first have to understand the real meaning of “Emptiness” (or **Sunyata**) conceptually and intellectually, to be then followed by solid practices of the Holy Dharma in order to further experience and realize the real “Emptiness” (or Sunyata), in order to attain liberation and enlightenment.

Gas 氣體



Particles move freely in random directions, at high speed.



So this is, indeed, the main crux of practicing “Emptiness” in our Dharma practice. And that is the main reason why we need, first of all, to understand what “Emptiness” really means conceptually and intellectually. It is only after that can we then really put it into practice, and that is what really holds for us in our everyday Dharma practice. So this “intrinsic nature” is what we have mentioned as the real “Emptiness” (or Sunyata). It can neither be created nor be destroyed. With that, we can start to really understand, and then later on to be become aware of, and finally to realize the “true nature” of our own “original face”, that is, the “**Buddha Nature**” of all sentient beings, as well as the “**Dharmata**” which is the “nature” of the whole universe..... (To be Continued)

EPILOGUE

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

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

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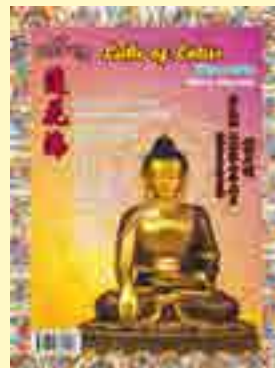
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If this publication can help to bring about the awareness, concern and resonance from the wider audience, in such a way that they can deeply feel that Buddhism is more than just a religion, that the symbol of “Buddhism” represents the wisdom and truth that transcends all kinds of limitations, and that they will understand **the urgency and necessity of learning this wisdom and truth**, then its vision and mission would have been fully accomplished.

“All kinds of boundaries and bindings are created for mankind’s own usage, which at first glance seem to be necessary and smart; yet in actuality, this is an ignorance that hinders the elevation of mankind’s own capabilities and wisdom.”

All kinds of religion, including the various sects within a religion itself, possess certain degree of Universalism, and yet they also possess their own strengths and shortcomings. In the face of truth and reality, all religions will have different roles and functions to play at various levels. **If we can have a deep and insightful understanding on the completeness and transcendence of truth, then we will develop the wisdom on the complementarity and acceptance of all religions.** This wisdom, which transcends all hindrances and limitations, will help to swiftly elevate the capabilities of all mankind.

We sincerely pray that this publication can share the elevation of this wisdom with you all and thus fulfill its mission.



(To be Continued)