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Lake of Lotus

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How to Deal with All Sorts of Difficulties
"Before and After One's Death"?

The Best "Method to Save the Dead" and
"Services for After Death"

The Relationships between the "Effects of
the Magnetic Field" and the "Cycle of
Karmic Existence"

The Rationale and Mystery
of "Mantras" and the
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How to Find the Best
"Vibration Frequency"
in Reciting
Mantras?

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A Prayer at a Time of Ecological Crisis

by H.H. Chadrak Gyendun Rinpoche

**Sugatas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
Turn your enlightened intention towards us!
May all sentient beings tormented by this present age
Of the five virulent degenerations,
Know that they possess a treasure that can alleviate
The various portents of decay in the physical world and its
inhabitants.**

**Due to the ripening of their wrong intentions and actions,
A treasure grounded in the renunciation of harmful actions
And the cultivation of altruistic actions,
Granting all the spiritual and temporal well-being one could desire.
This is the supreme Wish-fulfilling Gem of good heart,
Associated with all supreme spiritual practices.**

**Endowed with this (good heart),
May all beings cultivate love and compassion for one another,
Without hatred, and without fighting or quarrelling.
May they enjoy the glorious resources of happiness -
All they could possibly desire,
And swiftly attain the level of Conclusive Omniscience!**

(This aspirational prayer was written by Sangye Dorje on the tenth day of the second lunar month of the Fire Pig year at the insistence of Dungse Kunzang Jigme Namgyal, who presented a 'good day' offering scarf. May it be auspicious!)

Source: http://www.ecobuddhism.org/wisdom/aspiration_prayers_and_poems/chatral_rinpoche/

The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death:

The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (24)

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

Excerpt of Last Chapter: Various Reasons on the Formation of Different Scenes at the “Moment of Death”

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

1. The “Separation of the Four Elements” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”, including all kinds of memories) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the ‘Separation of the Four Elements’ in the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issues 8 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
2. The “Endorphins Inside the Brain” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “endorphins inside the brain” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
3. The “Karmic Forces” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “karmic forces” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death”. This can be further classified into the following two kinds:
 - i. Wholesome Ones – arising from: (a) virtuous retributions (please refer to the

article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and (b) the efforts of one’s Dharma practice (the main theme of this article in this issue).

- ii. **Unwholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) vicious retributions; and (b) the forces of karmic creditors in seeking compensations on one’s karmic debts.

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

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

How would the Buddhist point of view comment



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

How to Help a Panicky Dying Keith and Kin?

On the stage of terminal illness, a person who has been suffering from the discomforts of both illness and the environment would be extremely afraid to face “death”. Under excruciating pains, the patient would be so disoriented and uncomfortable that one might think that it would be “better just to pass away as quickly as possible”. However, after a moment of release from the various syndromes, one would then have **an inexplicable fear about “death”**. These terminally-ill patients, while on the brink of death, are under unspeakable tortures both somatically and psychologically, and their emotions are filled with **bitterness, anger, helplessness and unwillingness**. While their kith and kin, who are by their side and wish to render counsel or assistance, would feel extremely difficult to start with. The closer the patient approaches death, one’s **consciousness would become more confused**; and upon seeing the patient in such a panicky situation, the family would be more anxious and chaotic. For example, A boy having high fever suddenly hollered to his mother, “Mom, why the house is shaking? Oh, I am torn into pieces! Please help me! Mom!” A dying husband grabbed the hand of his wife and said, “It really hurts! I am

really scared as it seems that I am lost in the wilderness, please save me!”

Under such kind of circumstances, even a family member, who used to be calm, would **become panicky and lose the poise**, except by holding onto the dying person’s hand tightly and said, “Don’t be afraid, it’s just fine.” Besides, **what else can they do?** People are afraid of “death”. Certainly, during the normal lifetime, people **never discuss** pragmatic ways to deal with the issue of “death”. Even at the time when “death is impending”, people might still try to evade the issue by saying, “There is no need to be afraid, it should be OK.” Is this sort of “ostrich policy” really effectual in the resolution of the whole issue? Even for those people with religious beliefs, they could still be **extremely anxious** at the very moment of facing “death”. For example, a female Catholic was in a stranded condition with excruciatingly panic at the moment of death. Her kith and kin asked, “You have the Lord to rely upon. How come you are still so afraid?” She replied by saying, “I am afraid of the **dying process**.”

An experienced nurse, having been working in various hospitals in Hong Kong since 1977 for 32 years, has served in the tumor ward in the Shatin Hospital for 16 years. In this place filled with sorrows, the nurse has seen **all sorts of human episodes** for those who were “**at the closing of one’s life**”. There was a story that left him with a deep impression. For years, there was a volunteer who frequently came to serve the patients in the tumor ward, especially for those patients at the terminal stage. As she was a Buddhist belonging to the “Exoteric Buddhism” (or “**Sutrayana**”), she used some Buddhist terms that were to be easily understood by them in order to counsel them. For instance, she would tell stories of how to “let go of everything, and not being attached to the secular items, but rather peacefully wait for Buddha Amitabha’s coming to fetch for them”, and so on, such that the nervous and panic patients could be solaced and relieved.

Unfortunately, this volunteer, who was so full of compassion to others, was later found to be also diagnosed with cancer herself. At the



terminal stage of her illness, she was admitted to the same tumor ward where she had been serving others for so many years, waiting for her death to come. Most surprisingly, the nurse has found that this volunteer who was now **facing death** seemed to have forgotten all of the Buddhist teachings that she had so often used before for the solace of others. Instead, she appeared to be extremely scared, uptight and attached to all things. Moreover, she had been so demanding and picky on those nurses, with whom she had been working together for so many years by now, to the point of unreasonableness. Her manner persisted and got even worse until she passed away. **One who had rendered assistance to many others but could not help herself. All the wholesome and encouraging words were applicable for all the others, but not for herself.**

Also being a Buddhist, the nurse frankly admitted that such a situation had “shaken his faith in religious belief”, and he has suffered great impacts inside. He has found that most of the people who were at their final moments had the “fear of the unknown” about “death”, but only 40% of them were willing to express their fears. Those who were willing to express their fears, at their final moments, had, by mere coincidence, usually asked the same question:

“Where would I go to after death?”

This “fear of the unknown” is rooted in the fact that the deceased persons had never dared to confront with “death” during their lifetimes, and so **had no idea** about “death”. The more a person knows about “death”, the more one would be able to have a better command on the details of the dying process and the ways to deal with them, and so one would no longer have any more “fear of the unknown” about “death”.

All fears are rooted in “ignorance” ;
All frustrations came from “not-being-prepared”;
All masteries originated from “preparations”;
All successes lie in “having faced the reality” .

A patient who was about to hear the test result of a phyma on his neck, while sitting in front of a physician, described his feeling at that very moment as one of “extremely close to death”. He is a Buddhist and has studied the Buddhist teachings for more than twenty years. So, he thought that he could be composed in dealing with the situation; but at that very moment, some sort of “fear of the unknown” had immediately arisen in him. Such a sentiment had never occurred to him ever before - that **terrified feeling of impending death**. As a matter of fact, the feelings and situation of actually “facing death” were completely and diametrically different from what he could have “imagined of” in the normal circumstances. Fortunately, the test result turned out to be quite normal, and so he immediately had the **joy of being released** from pressure. Just within one second, the changes of his feelings could be so different. He started asking himself: “Am I really so scared of death? Why did I think I could face death squarely in the past, but then at that very moment when I actually had to face death, I was so scared? What, in fact, was I scared of?”

All fears are rooted in “ignorance”. The less you know about “death”, the more you are bound to be afraid. When people think that: with the chanting of “**Namo Buddha Amitabha**”, or the

practicing on the visualization of “Emptiness” (or “**Sunyata**” in Sanskrit), or the reciting of the sutras in the normal days, this would be good enough and so one will be ready to face “death”. Also some people think that they have rich knowledge of “Buddhism”, and so they would **challenge or criticize** others on their levels of Buddhist learning. Being conceited and self-contented, they swagger around to show off their knowledge and “look down upon everything”.

However, as a matter of fact, there is “nothing existed” to deal with the “impending emergencies”. When one is actually facing “death”, then one would soon find that there is still a long way to go, and there is still quite a substantial time interval before the Buddha Amitabha would come to fetch for oneself, while all kinds of “**attachments and defilements could not be emptied**”. Tedious talks and discussions about “Emptiness” still could not really make one’s predicament to be “emptied”. The so-called “**loss of selfhood or egolessness**” could not disengage the “I” that is still in the process of suffering, with the sufferings and pains to be so excruciating. It is also uncertain as to whether one could really be able to see the Buddha Amitabha. The theoretical aspects on the “Buddhist studies” are not being applicable in the real situations. Yet, one has to **immediately face** the series of problems of impending “death”, which needs to be dealt with, but there is no clue of resolution to it. A slow remedy cannot meet the great urgency, so what can be done?

Comparing to the power of Mother Nature, the ability of mankind is so **small**, and **cannot stand a single blow**, and so how could they be not scared of “death”? Just as the lady who was a Catholic, even though she had a “faith to rely upon”, yet she was scared because she did not understand the “dying process”. In this respect, “**Tantrayana**” (or “**Vajrayana**”) has certainly exhibited the great practicality of its teachings. Moreover, the teachings conform to the natural process of physical evolution, and the Dharma practitioners can actualize themselves “**directly into the ‘Dharmata’**” (the nature of “**Buddhahood**”, please refer to the DVD “The

Knacks at the End-of-Life and the Essence of Rescue”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association), through the “Bardo Teachings” in “Tantrayana” which has detailed explanations on the “process of death”.

If a dying person accurately knows the impacts that the decomposition of the basic four elements (namely: “Earth, Water, Fire and Wind”) will have upon a physical somatic body, a lot of unnecessary “psychological panics” could be avoided. The person would feel there is something concrete to rely upon, and so one would not become disconcerting in the settings of “Emptiness without dependence, and ignorance”, while having suffered excruciating pains and terrifying for having lost control of everything (please refer to the articles on “The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 8 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”). However, instillation of this kind of knowledge should begin when a person is both psychologically and somatically sound. If impartation is done in a hurry at the final stage when a dying person is in great pains, the person’s ability to get the message across or the degree to accept it would be very limited, and so the effectiveness of the instructions would be greatly reduced. It will definitely need to have a clear mind for the understanding and absorption for the “operations of proceedings in the posthumous

world”, the “knowledge necessary for dealing with dangers”, as well as in the “ways of handling them”. Hence, it is better to start instillation and drilling of the relevant teachings when a person is still physically and mentally sound. However, the averting on the discussion of “death” is a common mentality of human beings, and especially so for the Chinese people, as they like to take the “ostrich policy”. Therefore, the impartation of this kind of knowledge will be learnt a little bit by the family members of the dying person when an emergency arises, upon which they will then pass on a bit of this knowledge to the dying person, according to the particular circumstances, until the dying person feels a “peace in mind”.

Having learnt a bit of this sort of knowledge before death is better than being “ignorant about everything”. As for the genuine kind of “life education”, if it only takes on the values and meanings of life ‘before death’, while disregards the values and meanings of life ‘after death’, it resembles the case of a one-winged bird – which is difficult to balance and fly. With this, it would be difficult to uplift the human spirit and progress, but instead would only totter along on the same site without breakthrough. Upon having revived from deaths, many “Near-death Experience” (NDE) survivors embodied the ability derived from the recovery of one’s “primordial nature” endowed by the “Light”. They were no longer afraid of “death” any more. Even though they did not really die, and neither did they know how it would evolve thereafter, they all had a little bit of “knowledge about the posthumous world” and so they were no longer scared of “death” any more. They would even become very fond of the utmost bliss endowed by the “Light”. This has shown that it would be far better for a person to be in possession of this sort of knowledge than being “totally ignorant” about it. Hence, a genuine and holistic kind of “life education” is definitely most important !



How to Deal with All Sorts of Difficulties “Before and After One’s Death”?

Among the many pivotal points in one’s

lifetime, “death” is the **most crucial one**. In each stage of it, there **exist both “dangers” as well as “opportunities”**. At the end of a person’s life span, it is the most vulnerable moment both psychologically and somatically. A **great deal** of “bad karmas” that were amassed through countless cycles of deaths and rebirths **would surface**. At the most vulnerable moment, a person has to face multitude of challenges and tortures, and the outcome is difficult to tell if once failed. Thus, it will be very intelligent and wise if people can identify “death” as the **most important pivotal point** that one **should prepare and be ready for it well in advance**, and it is also a must. There are “karmic creditors” in the “spiritual domains” where **memories could be retained**, and also those “karmic creditors” with extremely strong hatred who could still retain the “protocols of revenge” in their “sub-conscious”, even if they had been reborn into “spiritual domains” where **memories could not be retained**. Being intertwined and linked to all the others with their “mental strengths”, they would render obstructions and assails of various multitudes to those dying persons who were at the weakest moments both somatically and psychologically. **To those dying persons at the brink of death, this is the very moment that they would need the greatest help yearningly.**

If most of the human beings agree on this important point, and do not waste time on meaningless issues, such as “struggles for power, fortune, progression in worldliness, and sentiments attached to gratitude, resentment, affection or avengement”, but instead try to include this **holistic** kind of “life education” at the very beginning of one’s schooling and education by taking the first priority on the uplifting and advancement of the spiritual aspect, while placing the progression in worldliness only as secondary, then the



spiritual evolution of mankind would quickly accelerate and become more perfect with great tranquility, cozy, happiness and harmony within our human community.

A dying person would have severe sufferings of the following:

1. **Somatic pains**
2. Psychological sufferings –
 - 1.) The **hard departed** feelings from loved ones, kith and kin, and worldly items.
 - 2.) Unfinished obligations or aspirations that **could not let go.**
 - 3.) The **lonely** feeling of traveling alone to an alien place.
 - 4.) **Cannot stand** the burst of emotions of kith and kin due to sorrows and attachments.
 - 5.) Where is the posthumous destination? A feeling of terror and in **losing control** of unknown consequence.
 - 6.) How is the process of death? A feeling of **rejection** due to inadaptability.
 - 7.) Lack of a sense of security, dignity and capability. Feeling of **helplessness.**
 - 8.) **Confused**, disoriented, impossible to communicate with others and to express the inner feelings.
 - 9) Feeling of **being** abandoned or **forgotten.**

SORROWFUL,
HELPLESS

SCARED,
CONFUSED

In comparing the structures for the arising of “somatic pains” and “psychological sufferings”, it seems that the “psychological sufferings” are much more complicated and more difficult to be resolved. Moreover, the “psychological sufferings” would further induce the “somatic pains”. In the history of medicine, when a patient was diagnosed to be “incurable”, aggressive treatments would no longer be given. Due to limited medical resources, active treatments would only be given to those patients with “higher possibility of recovery”. For those patients who are approaching death, they would be set aside in a corner without further active medical treatments, while their lives were being sustained by life-supporting facilities.

Intellectual people with ethical consciousness in modern time have advocated for a series of services on the “palliation of somatic pains and liberation of psychological sufferings”. A holistic service comprising of comforting love and care to those patients who are close to death in four major dimensions, namely: “physical, psychological, social and spiritual”. “Physical” care refers to the love and concern for the “somatic” bodily care, which is the “therapy for the release of pains” at the “physiological” level. “Psychological” care refers to ‘psychological’ counseling for those patients of terminal stage in order to have ‘healthy mentality and positive thinking’. “Social” care refers to the services available in “society” to assist the patients for their resolutions of “difficulties in daily lives and social relations”. It also includes the resolutions of “problems in communications between patients and their families, and problems of emotions and depressions”. It also includes issues such as in assisting the patients for the preparation of wills and funeral arrangements, such that the patients might have lesser things to worry about, and can thus have less solicitude in preparing for peaceful departure later on. “Spiritual” care refers to “spiritual” dependence and faith, usually to be handled by volunteers from religious organizations, or the chaplains in hospitals.

There exist significant shortcomings in the tenets of contemporary religions. Besides the



“Tantrayana” (or “Vajrayana”) of “Buddhism”, the rest of the Buddhist sects and other religions seem not to have any knowledge about the “process of death”, the “operations of proceedings in the posthumous world”, the “necessary knowledge on the crisis of death”, as well as the “ways to deal with the dying situation”. Some people “avoid talking” on the subject of “death”, while some try to “avert the answer” altogether, or by giving advices such as to “let it be, and don’t grasp on the worldliness”. Some would walk you around in circles by irrelevant answers to the simple question on “death”, as if “asking a blind to show the way”. Some might give answers of commonly-known legends, which are without any scientific grounds and reasonable arguments. Because of this reason, the volunteers from religious bodies who offer counseling to dying patients could merely console them by asking them to put all their hopes in posthumously meeting the main character (or “God”) of their respective religions as a kind of “solace of the soul”. The contents of counseling would be rather general and vague, simple and not pragmatic, but without much assurance. To such an extent, it might be effective in “diverting the focus” of attention, such that some dying patients might find some hopes, and thus help to reduce their inner anxieties. Though the religious volunteers who offer counseling would know better the

unsubstantial portion of this approach, and as such, when the volunteer (who offered counseling to others) himself or herself actually faces death, he or she would embody the “exposed truth”, and that it is “not possible to let go” and is “difficult to control” one’s own emotions.

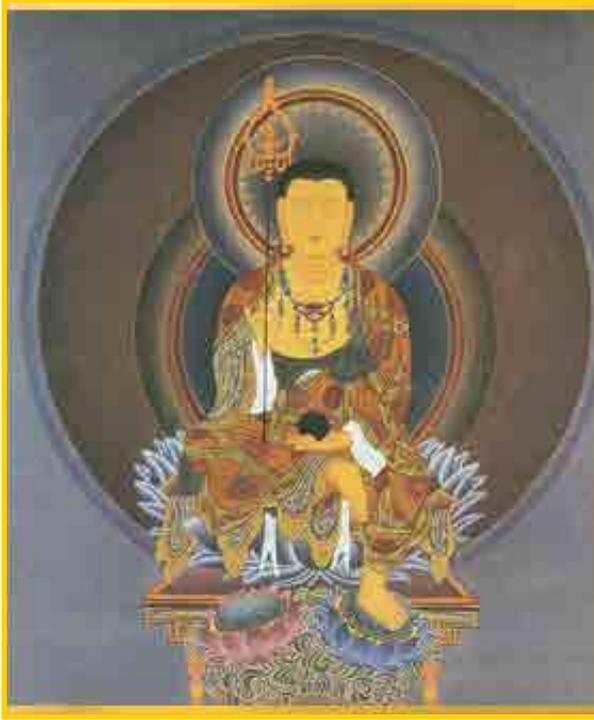
In order to remedy the shortcomings of contemporary religions, it will only be the teachings of “Tantrayana” that could do the job. The teachings of “Tantrayana” could precisely and meticulously describe the “posthumous settings and the methods of salvation”, because of the fact that these “Supreme Esoteric Teachings” of “Tantrayana” came from the highest and most ancient primordial “Dharmakaya” Buddha Samanatabhadra, who only has the highest capability to adequately analyze and expose the abstruseness of life and death to such a deep-rooted and subtle stage. These essences of the “truth”, which would take centuries for modern day scientists to discover them via step-by-step explorations, had been collected and recorded by Guru Padmasambhava, the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism, and were embedded in caverns. Centuries later, these teachings were discovered by the Great Tertön Karma Lingpa, and one of these teachings is now known as the “Tibetan Book of the Dead” with Dharma Practice on the “One Hundred Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Bardo State”. [The nature of the mind is also called the “Buddhata”, the nature of “Buddhahood”, intrinsic nature or primordial nature. It refers to the nature of awareness, which is originally possessed by every sentient being and is clearest and impeccable. “Buddhata” possesses enormous power and can be manifested in three different ways. They are: “Dharmakaya” (Truth Body): without any form or shape, and non-materialistic in nature. It is pervasive and exists everywhere throughout the universe. It cannot be detected by any instruments, nor can the human power of observation and discernment detect its existence. It is a form of the highest level. “Sambhogakaya” (Complete Enjoyment Body): it exists in the form of “Light”. If a Buddha manifests in this Complete Enjoyment Body, its intensity of light would be that of one thousand

sun, and this manifestation is known as “the Buddha of Sambhogakaya”. Since the light intensity is so strong that only those “Eighth-stage Bodhisattvas” or above can visualize it (The “Eighth-stage is an indicator on the attainment of the different “levels of realization”, such that its “mental strength” can penetrate beyond the “visible light” spectrum of lights and visualize a fraction of the light radiated from the Sambhogakaya Buddha which is as bright as the intensity of one thousand suns). “Nirmanakaya” (Emanation Body): it exists in materialistic forms, and can be manifested and reborn as various kinds of sentient beings of different realms.]

In order to render pragmatic help to all mortal mankind who are bound to die one day, and establish a better mutual assistance to confront the impacts of “death”, so that “dangers could be transformed into opportunities”, starting from this issue (Issue 24), we would publish articles to introduce the palliative services for love and care on the “ease of somatic pains and liberation of psychological sufferings”. The aforementioned services are to be rendered “before death”, which have been gradually spawned across the world. Hong Kong is among one of those places, but it is still not yet prevailing. It is pending for great effort of advocacy until it can become “widely known” in the community. Nonetheless, the “posthumous services” still remain to be one of the weakest parts in modern societies and their religions.

The Best “Method to Save the Dead” and “Services for After Death”

According to the internationally-renowned “Tibetan Book of the Dead”, the interval of time in-between the period of “death” to “rebirth” is known as the “Bardo state”, which means the “transitional period”. During this period, deceased persons would need correct guidance at the right time provided by certain living experienced people, resembling tourist guides, in leading them to “avoid dangers and leave the stranded predicaments”. When the deceased persons face ever-changing phenomena which



are unfamiliar and strange, proper guidance will be needed and helpful for “developing untapped potential, grasping opportunities hard to come by, and improving the quality of the places for rebirths”. In conjunction with the unique method of salvation for the dead on the “One Hundred Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Bardo State” with the most effective way of utilizing “auxiliary conditions” in assisting the deceased persons to “increase the merits and fortunes, and in expelling hindrances”, this way of salvation in assisting a deceased person on the elaboration of one’s capability as the “cardinal cause”, together with other external factors as the “auxiliary conditions”, is actually the most pragmatic, effectual and holistic “service after death”. It is a pity that this kind of service is yet to make available to the general public at this present time and place.

Owing to the restriction of current medical and legal systems, it is already extremely difficult not to touch the body of a deceased person for eight hours after death, and so not to mention other ways of salvation. Anyhow, human effort is the decisive factor, as long as majority of the people are aware of this need and voice out their demand, it is then hopeful to have the existing laws to be amended, and to overcome the barriers for further improvements. For

instance, the possible addition of selection of this flexible kind of “pre-death and post-death” services, is also the “auxiliary condition” to be effective in uplifting the “spiritual evolution”, and in averting the possible descent to the inferior “spiritual domains”. Of course, it is certainly that the most pragmatic and confident way is to learn, while one is still alive, about the issues in relations to the “dying process, the operations of proceedings in the posthumous world”, the “necessary knowledge during crisis”, as well as the training on the Dharma practices and “ways to deal with difficult situations”. In the future, we would introduce as much as possible the relevant knowledge on this particular aspect, which will be revealed openly in the “Lake of Lotus”. Those who have the further aspirations to learn more on the pragmatic teachings, which cannot be exposed overtly to the public, will need to first “take refuge” by joining the “Dudjom Buddhist Association”. After which, more systematic and graduated progression in Dharma practices will be taught, so that they could then go further for the learning process and actual practice in a “group-drilling” manner on the “key points at the moment of death and the essences of salvation”.

“Dharma practice” is to have training on one’s mind in awareness to supervise and oversee one’s behaviors, that is, to correct the “protocols of one’s behaviours” which have been embedded in one’s “mind” for countless cycles of deaths and rebirths, in order that one’s “mental state” can evolve and return to the “primordial nature” in order to achieve “Buddhahood”, and to be totally disengaged from the rein of all tractions. According to the revelation by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, it would be very slow and would have to take a very long period of time -- the entire “Three Grand Asamkhyeya-kalpas” -- for the evolution and elevation of our “spiritual states” in order to become successful. (A “kalpa” is a scale of time period. A “small kalpa” is equal to the span of time required for one cycle of the process of the “formation, existence, deterioration and annihilation” of a universe. Twenty “small kalpas” would make one “medium kalpa”, and four such “medium kalpas” would make one “grand kalpa”. One “Asamkhyeya-kalpa”

is equivalent to the time period required for 10 to the power 51 cycles of the “formation, existence, deterioration and annihilation” of a universe. “Three Grand Asamkhyeya-kalpas” is an unknown long period of time, since the time required for one cycle of the process of the “formation, existence, deterioration and annihilation” will differ from one universe to another.)

The teachings of “Tantrayana” in Buddhism came from the highest and most ancient primordial “Dharmakaya” Buddha Samantabhadra, and so it is **most immediately and direct, thorough, swift, subtle and accurate**. Most importantly, it matches with the principle of Mother Nature without any deviations and can be supported by scientific evidence. In this regard, it is not required to **correct** the “protocols of one’s **behaviours**” which have been embedded in one’s “mind” for countless cycles of deaths and rebirths. The recovery of one’s “primordial nature” can be achieved by taking shortcuts. According to the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”, when the “spiritual body” disengages itself from the “physical body” posthumously, and comes out from the entrance and exit door of life and death, the “Light” could then be seen. The appearance of this “Light” at that very moment will make a complete cessation of **all the eighty kinds of negative emotions and energies**, which are more generally known as the three poisons of “greed, hatred and ignorance”. As such, a kind of “natural ability” possessed by all sentient beings ever since time immemorial could be recovered completely. In Buddhism, this is known as the “**intrinsic nature**”, “**Buddhata**” (Buddha’s nature), or “**primordial nature**”. This “primordial nature” can be recovered if a person **knows how to take command** of it, and so it is possible to have **one hundred percent** on the “recovery” of this “primordial nature” -- the “attainment of ‘Buddhahood’”. **Knowing how to take command** of it refers to the good training and practices on “**mind-training**” and the “**actualization of Emptiness**” while one is still alive, and **in conjunction** with this supreme outstanding **teachings**, the higher is the chance for **one hundred percent** complete “recovery” of one’s “primordial nature” in order to “attain ‘Buddhahood’”.

A person who had been under a deep-trance of hypnotized state was able to **recall the settings during the “Bardo State”**. He disclosed that it had taken him 1,600 years in this “cycle of karmic existence” (or “**Samsara**”) in order to correct just one wrong “behavioural protocol” on the mentality of “jealousy”. He mentioned that he had come across some sentient beings who could not correct even one kind of wrong “behavioural protocol” for a period of few thousand years in this “cycle of karmic existence” (or “**Samsara**”). Therefore, he felt happy to have been able to correct himself in such a short period of time. Thus, it is obvious **how supreme, outstanding and hard to get** with the teachings of “Tantrayana” are. These can promptly upgrade the **quality of one’s own “mind”, correct lots of wrong “behavioural protocols” and to recover the “Buddhata**”. It is a pity, however, that the current Dharma practitioners of “Tantrayana” merely put their **energies and foci** on the “**techniques and methods** of the teachings”, and not on the **quality of one’s “mind**”. If the teachings could not correct the wrong “**behavioural protocols**” embedded in one’s “mind”, nor would it be able to upgrade the quality of one’s “mind”, and as such, those teachings **can not be the genuine “Buddhist teachings”**. It is only with a good “quality of the mind”, in conjoining with the practice on the teachings of “Tantrayana”, that a person could have the possibility of success. Without a good “quality of the mind”, a person would not be successful in practicing the teachings of “Tantrayana”, but one will even **get opposite results**. A person **must** have to **totally rely** upon the **observations of “precepts, disciplines and rules”** in order to effectively uplift oneself and maintain a good “quality of the mind”.

While propagating the “Tantrayana” teachings, many of the Masters (or “**Gurus**”) do not take the “precepts, disciplines and rules” seriously, and neither do they keep an eye on their disciples to ensure their observations of these “precepts, disciplines and rules”. Even the Masters (or “**Gurus**”) themselves might also have transgressions of their “precepts, disciplines and rules” through their disseminations of the

teachings, in order that they can broadly and widely take the “disciples and their offerings”. In this way, they did not even have met their disciples before giving out teachings and initiations, let alone have known their disciples well, nor knowing their characters, nor knowing whether the disciples are qualified to receive the teachings and initiations, nor knowing whether they will commit themselves to observe the “precepts, disciplines and rules”, and as such these Masters (or “Gurus”) might have already given them different kinds of teachings, initiations and sadhanas. Moreover, these Masters (or “Gurus”) have vigorously boasted of “supernatural powers” of their teachings, but not the principles of Dharma practice, and how the teachings could improve the quality of one’s “mind”.

It can be said that these so-called Masters (or “Gurus”), or Rinpoches, do not observe the “precepts, disciplines and rules” themselves, neither do they really understand the principles and essences of the Dharma practice. Some even deem that the observation of “precepts, disciplines and rules” is a kind of “unnecessary attachment”, and not in tune with “Emptiness”. Or they deem that it does not fit in with their own interests and may hinder their plots on the propagation of teachings. This sort of ignorant people is without wisdom, and through their “indiscriminatingly conferring empowerments, taking up disciples and accepting their offerings, while carelessly disseminating the teachings”, all of them are unqualified Masters (or “Gurus”), or Rinpoches, of inferior qualities. They only know how to chant the original texts, by putting on their “Dharma robes”, decorating with “shining titles”, calling themselves as the “incarnations of such and such Buddhas”. In fact, they are a bunch of deceiving mortals (who are deceiving both oneself and others), living on the “teachings of Buddhism” and taking it as a trade and profession. Those who have learned from this sort of Masters (or “Gurus”), or Rinpoches, the more esoteric teachings they received from them, the more absurd their so-called supernatural ideas would be derived from them. One could become so superstitious even up to the point of “irrationality”. For example, they would believe the story that

they would not have to fall into inferior realms for many cycles of rebirths after taking certain sacred pills (as if they have bought a “spiritual insurance” which can counteract against the natural Law of Cause and Effect), and do not have to be worried even after having transgressed their “precepts, disciplines and rules”. Their characters and demeanours are so “arrogant and supercilious”. They observe no precepts, look down upon everything, and run wild”, so that they just become literally “lawless and normless”. The “various religious rituals, blessing ceremonies, empowerments and medicinal objects, and so on” are to be taken as the “main elements” of practice, while one’s “mind-training” becomes most “unnecessary”.

A mother complained about her son, who was already a bad-tempered kid, of his temper to have become even worse than before after practicing “Tantrayana”. He kicked on the door and threatened his mother that he would beat her up. He hanged up all sorts of weapon-like items in his room and on the door. The son claimed that he had received numerous empowerments, and so he had sufficient protections and feared of nothing. His mother described her son who, after learning “Tantrayana” teachings, had become so fearless of anything that he dares to do anything in a “lawless and normless manner”. As for those Masters (or “Gurus”), or Rinpoches, in their disseminations of the teachings, if they do not awake to these problems, “Tantrayana” would soon easily turn out to become some sort of “pure sorcery”, which would be a real pity ! No wonder it was foretold in the past prophetic





words of the Buddhas that in the time and space of the “Bhadrakalpa” (the time period of the present age), there will be only two Buddhas who will propagate the teachings of “Tantrayana”, while the rest of the 998 Buddhas would only propagate the exoteric teachings. The main reason to account for this is simply because the qualities of both the Masters (or “Gurus”) and their disciples are very poor, and so it is just too difficult to find suitable vessels for these teachings. If the contemporary Masters (or “Gurus”) and their disciples do not cherish these valuable teachings now, they would soon be quickly distorted and what would remain would be the “outer forms, but not the real contents behind them”, which will be a real great pity !

In order to avail an opportunity to the general public to understand the genuine “Tantrayana”, not to follow superstitions blindly, and to activate and cope with the current real situations in providing an avenue and service for the total elevation on the “spiritual domain” of mankind, the “Dudjom Buddhist Association” was established in Hong Kong back in January 1998, ten years ago. Three years ago, this bimonthly magazine -- the “Lake of Lotus” -- was first published in January 2006. One year ago in June 2008, four disciples with qualifications of either bachelor’s degrees and/or master’s degrees, or even with a physician’s qualification, to study for the program on Postgraduate Diploma in End-of-Life Care, offered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Owing to the “Bodhicitta” of these four disciples, together with their characters of “being respectful to both the Teachers and the Teachings”, they have now graduated as

scheduled. In the very near future, they will be sharing the valuable knowledge with those people who are interested in this topic. We would like to express our sincere thankfulness to them.

Will and action basing upon genuine motivation and intention arisen from mercy and compassion;

Would become Bodhi (Awakening) of imperishable perseverance;

To rescue all the sentient beings Buddhas constantly remain dwelling on earth;

Wishing the wholesomeness being enhanced endlessly and remain glorious forever.

For this series of efforts, there is only one single objective: that is, in seeking to “effectually and pragmatically assist all mankind to elevate and uplift their levels of evolution, in terms of their mental and spiritual states, until their total disengagements from the controlling forces of the ‘cycle of karmic existence’ (or “Samsara”)”. During this process, if we had offended certain religions or certain sects of Buddhism due to our “comparisons of the various ways in spiritual practices” (please refer to the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issues 22 to 27 of the “Lake of Lotus”), we herein express our most sincere apologies! For the benefits of all sentient beings, we feel it most necessary to “speak out the truth” without any reservations. It is not our intention at all of denigrating others on purpose. We do sincerely solicit for the kind understanding and forgiveness of all those concerned !

In the next issue of the Lake of Lotus, we would further analyze in details the “posthumous world and how to help the deceased in a more effective manner”, as well as other issues that are not yet covered. ❖❖❖

..... (To be Continued)

(Remark: The newly-released book on “The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1) has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences from Issues 1 to 10.)

Summary on the Key Points of Each Issue

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

Issue 2

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

Issue 3

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

Issue 4

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

Issue 5

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

Issue 6

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

Issue 7

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

Issue 8

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

Issue 9

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

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

Issue 12

- The Damaging Power of Horrible Scenes
- The “Wrestling Ring of Energies” of the “Posthumous World”
- The Importance of “Up-to-the-Point” Trainings
- The Dangers on Those Practices of “Shooting in the Dark”
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- The “Karmic” Threads that Control Everything
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- “The Few Against the Many”: “The Strong Suppress the Weak” – The Dharma Practice of “Vajrayana”

- The Dangers of Enhancing the Incorrect Trainings of “Mental Strength”
- The Serious Consequences of Having Blindly and Carelessly Receiving “Empowerments”

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- Where the Future Well-Being of Mankind Lies
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- Stray Methods of Dharma Practice and their Impacts
- The Right Methods on “Praying to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in Fetching for Oneself” at the Moment of Death
- The Using of Dharma Practice to Enter into “Near-Death Experiences”
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Issue 23

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

The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (24)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(iv) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (1): In drawing up any “plan”, one must take into account the “planning of time”. The “principles for the usages and wastages of time” must be clear, and have to be linked up with the effectiveness of the “plan”. Hence, **time should be spent on those “plans” which are most effective and can bring the highest rate of return**. One should prioritize one’s different “plans” according to the long or short durations of time used and their relative effectiveness. “Plans” that require one to put in a lot of time and effort, but with low rates of return and low effectiveness, should be scrapped. One should refine and improve one’s “plans” by making reference to the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”. This is a **major direction** in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one’s “plans” (please refer to Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(v) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2): Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one’s lifetime, and if one’s own objective is either to be “liberated from the cycle of transmigration” (known as “Samsara” in

Sanskrit), or to attain “full enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”) within this very life, then your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time” for this life will become one of the critical points in determining whether you would succeed or fail. Hence one must be **very cautious and rational** about this. If your objective is “to be reborn into the Buddha’s Pure Land” within this lifetime, then you would have had **greater flexibility in the handling of your “planning of time” and the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”**, but they still should **not be neglected**. Hence, what will be the most wise and effective way in the “planning of time” for one’s life while one is on the path for Dharma practice?.....(please refer to Issue 9 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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

(vii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (4): Wrong “Planning of Time”: It is no easy matter at all for one to be able to master the keys to success of “Dharma Practices” in one’s “daily living” in order to have achievements, as well as to be able to achieve the “objective” of becoming “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”. Even if one does possess the three best conditions (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”), it will still be unavoidable that one can fall prey and become lost again in this “tidal sea of sorrow in Samsara”, as one goes through this **undulated waves of ever-changing life cycle**. If one tries not to fall again, and instead wants to further consolidate upon one’s own foundation, one of the best methods is to **merge one’s**

own “Dharma practices” into one’s “daily living” so as to ensure one’s mastering of the “Planning of Time”.

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

(viii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (5): The “Planning of Time” in One’s “Daily Living” (1) -- Linking up by the Main Theme, and Getting Through the Sequences of Events: How can the “planning of time” in one’s “daily living” be **designed** so as to avoid the various wrong doings? How should we practice the “Holy Dharma” so as to make the “effectiveness of Dharma practices during meditation” be linked up and **steadily sustained** with that in “post-meditation daily living” so as to further it and let it become **fully “developed”**? If one wants the “success” to be speed up, how should it be planned so as to **remove those obstacles** that will hinder the “effectiveness”? How can the **sequence** of incidents to be traced out of those confusions, and the **key** positions to be found in solving the problems? How can a consensus be reached between one’s “cognitions” and “reality” so that the **“contradictions” can be resolved?** How can the **“devotion, pure state of mind and dedication”** of Dharma practices “during meditation” be linked up and be sustained with that in the “post-meditation daily living” with a **correct “state of mind”**?(please refer to the Issue 12 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(ix) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (6): The Skilful Usages of the “Main Theme” and

the “Sequences of Events”: The “cardinal mentality” is the major key in deciding on all things, and so the “planning of one’s Dharma practices” in one’s “daily living” has to use the “cardinal mentality” as the “main theme” to link up the “static states of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic states of Dharma practices”, by connecting their “common points” so as to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time,” and thus opening and tidying up the disordered “sequences of events” in order to synergize the contradictions of these two and to make them to become complementary to each other, while using the “cardinal mentality” as the basis all through. This is, indeed, the **“main points of planning”** for one’s Dharma practices in “daily living”. Yet, how one focuses on the **“cardinal mentality” and the “planning of time”** would become the **main key points for one’s “successes and/or failures”....** .(please refer to the Issue 13 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(x) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (7): Flexibility in the Using of One’s “Mentality” for One’s Dharma Practice: While practicing the Dharma during the undulated waves of “daily living”, one can hardly sustain one’s “meditational power” and the **degree of the steadiness** of one’s “Dharma practice’ by **relying solely on “Emptiness”**. In order to be able to continuously enhance and elevate one’s Dharma practice in “daily living”, one must have **to adopt “Emptiness” as the unchanging and everlasting “cardinal mentality”**. One further needs to flexibly make use of the “three main essential points” of one’s Dharma practice in “daily living” so as to **train one’s own “mind”** in addressing the problems of one’s “daily living”, as well as to transform one’s “emotions and feelings” in becoming the “driving force for one’s Dharma practice” (please refer to the Issue 14 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (8): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (1): In the undulated journey in the course of one’s lifetime, it is **unavoidable**

that one would meet with many adversities. If you encounter these adversities and could not handle them properly, they would become the **obstacles** to all of your plans and objectives. Regardless of what “time and effectiveness” that you may have, they would be **completely** disturbed and delayed, and would hardly function properly. Thus, when one can skillfully adopt the strategy of getting through the obstacles by linking up the “Main Theme and the Sequences of Events”, and when one has set up the principles for **choosing** one’s “Cardinal Mentality” and also for the “Three Essential Factors” within one’s “mind”, one should at the same time follow the criteria for one’s “Dharma practices in times of adversities” as the **procedures for handling the situations** (please refer to the Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (9): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (2):** Among the criteria for “Dharma Practices in times of Adversities”, one should pay attention and **adhere** to the following **procedures**: 1) to alienate from one’s role; 2) to remain calm; 3) to analyze accurately; 4) to act within one’s own capacities – this can be regarded as the “time planning for one’s Dharma practice during adversities”; 5) to take advantage of the different circumstances; 6) to learn from one’s own experiences; and 7) to elevate one’s own awareness, with particular reference to 3) to analyze accurately (please refer to the Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (10): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (3):** In times of favorable circumstances, it would be easy for one to achieve success regardless of what one does. One would **naturally** be successful without having to wait for the right opportunities, neither does one have to make any planning. This is because this will be the time for **the arrival of the “achieved rewards”**. The good deeds that you have accumulated in the past are the best planning for the “achieved rewards.”

However, in times of adversities, no matter what one does, one would have encountered many obstacles and have one’s head badly battered. If one simply goes along naturally, it would lead one to a dead end. This is because, in times of adversities, it is the time **for the coming of one’s retributions due to one’s past bad deeds**. If one does not remain calm, wait for the right opportunity, and plan appropriately, it would be difficult for one to get out from the plight. The question, then, is **when will be the best time** to get out from the plight? And what would be considered as the **appropriate planning** (please refer to the Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”)?

(xiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (11): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (4) – Making use of the Circumstances:** The characteristics for being in adversities are that one would be **beset with difficulties and will be unable to cope with the situations**. If one has to make use of the circumstances of that particular situation and time so as to break through the obstacles is basically an **extremely difficult matter to achieve**. Since it is **all that difficult**, the conditions that one would have to consider in order to complement the whole situation would be particularly even more so. There is an old Chinese saying that “Hero makes the trend of his time, and the trend of the time makes its own Hero”. After all, ‘the trend of the time and the environment’ together is one of the major elements for one’s success and failure. Hence, it is also **a necessary element** for one to get out from the plight by making use of the circumstances to break away from adversities. If one is to make use of the circumstances, one would adopt one of the following situations: (1) to **quietly wait** for the favourable circumstances to arise; (2) to **make use of** the existing circumstances; and (3) to **build up** favourable circumstances (please refer to the Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (12): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities”(5) -- Learn One’s**

Lessons from Past Experiences: Failure is not necessarily a miserable thing. It can only be said as a blueprint which reflects on a series of **merits and weaknesses**. If one can learn one's lessons well from past experiences in finding out the "reasons for one's failures, as well as the **personal behavioral formulae** that led to such failures", one's "**wisdom of self-enhancement**" will be elevated by applying proper remedies to revise these **extremely concealed** and improper formulae, this would help to bring about one's success in the next occasion. During this process of "self-enhancement", it would enable one to live more happily and to have a direction, to have more meanings and values, and to be more proactive. In this way, what one would regard as failures have, in fact, now been changed into successes, and have brought about the essential elements for one's future successes. The "state of invincibility" is the most lonely and painful experience. Too many successes and for too long will only make one to lose one's sense of direction, and to easily lose oneself in one's own "ego". As such, one **would not be able to find out and revise the poor formulae**, and oneself would thus be easily bogged down in the mire of having too much "self-pride" and strong "arrogance" within one's own "ego", never being able **to see the real world in its totality**. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be **an extremely big failure** (please refer to the Issue 19 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (13): Criteria for "Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities" (6) – Enhancing One's Awareness:** Many a times the formation of one's mistakes and failures are due to the inadequacy of one's own "awareness". The biggest drawback was one's own failure lied in not "being aware" of what and where had gone wrong in one's own "behavioral formulae". This would result in one's repeating, or even expanding, of one's mistakes and failures endlessly. Being faulty or carelessness for a short while is not the main cause for

one's mistakes and failures. The main and real cause is the existence of deviations and defects in both the consciousness and the subconscious of one's own "**behavioral formulae**". This would lead to a chain of wrong behaviors, which would form **an orbit which would lead to further failures, and that one would find it hard to depart from it**. Along with this orbit of failures, it would further extend to many more faults and carelessness, and the end result would be more and greater failures. Hence, to "enhance one's awareness" is not only to elevate one's attentiveness, such that the frequency of one's making mistakes due to carelessness would be reduced, but the more important aspect is whether to have the ability for one's "self-reflection", for observing the minute details, and to carefully find out the deviations and defects in one's own "behavioral formulae" (please refer to the Issue 20 of the "Lake of Lotus").

(xvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (14): Simplifying the Complexities, Finding the Keys -** Due to the fact that one's life span is **temporary and impermanent**, and so when one design and draw up a plan for one's own Dharma practice, one should need to include the "factor of time and effectiveness", all the more, as **the primary important point for one's consideration**. Apart from having the "right mindset and criteria" in handling periods of "adversities or prosperities" so that one would be able to "master the factor of time" more accurately and to have **an edge, what other principles that one should need to pay attention to?** No matter what kinds of the "planning of time" that one has, they are bound to have both strengths and weaknesses. It is unavoidable that there will be some faults. However, the appropriate "planning of time" should be able to reduce or lighten all kinds of faults and be able to speed up the process in the showing of "success". **An appropriate "planning of time" must make use of the following principles in its design:** 1. **Linking up by the Main theme, and getting through the sequences of events** – target: daily living before one's

death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”); 2. **Simplifying the complexities, finding the keys** – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death; 3. **Differentiation on the order of importance, Proper handling of the interferences** – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”).

(xviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (15): Mastering of Time and Choice of Methods** – Irrespective of the objectives of one’s Dharma practice, one must choose the appropriate “methods of Dharma practice” that **correspond with one’s objectives**. The amount of **time spent** on these “methods of Dharma practice”, and the **effects that one can achieve** through them, are the **key and critical points** as to whether or not one can achieve the objectives, and so one should analyze them in more details. In order to have a quick and accurate way to analyze and measure the various “methods of Dharma practice”, one must first “bring out the chief points” on the “objectives” of the various practices, as well as the **effective elements** of the “methods of Dharma practice”, before one can correspondingly discuss and analyze the issues (please refer to Issue 22 of “Lake of Lotus”).

(xix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (16): The Highest Objective that “Prayers” can Achieve** – On the side of effectiveness, even though they consist the element of one’s “mental strength”, but since “prayers” do not involve any practice on “Emptiness”, and so they are neither direct enough, nor have they included any programming for the practicing of “Emptiness” that could counter-act the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic exercise”. Hence, though prayers can produce some effects, the highest level that they can achieve would only be limited to the “materialization of requests for worldly desires”, or for the “rebirths in some virtuous realms”. One would **not be able to achieve the two objectives of: (1) liberation from the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence”; and (2) the**

attainment of “Complete Enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”). Hence, “prayers” will not be able to become the major item of Dharma practice in Buddhism, and that **it can only be a supplementary method of Dharma practice**. (Please refer to Issue 23 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Excerpt of Last Issue

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

1. **Praying for worldly desires** – For example: to seek for oneself and one’s own relatives to have “longevity, recovery from illness, success in one’s career, good marriage, wealth increase, averting disasters and relief from sufferings, as well as reunion with those deceased loved ones”. Also, there are those who hope to get the “ease of heart and security at the present life”, etc.; or for “fame, wealth, respect” in order to study Buddhism; as well as for those who put in efforts to practice the Dharma.
2. **Rebirth in the good realms** – For example: to hope and pray for rebirth in the heavenly realm, or in the human realm, and not to fall into the evil realms (of animals, hungry ghosts and hells).
3. **Liberation from the tractions of the “cycle of karmic existence”** – to hope and pray for **the freedom** in deciding for oneself as to whether one would be reborn into the six realms (of heavens, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hells), or whether to remain in the highest level of the “Realm of Form”, such as the “Akanistha” (the “Heaven at the End-of-Form-Realm”), which is beyond the control of the tractions. (Please refer to the explanations on the “Three Realms” in the article on the “Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death: The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
4. **Attainment of Buddhahood** – The recovery of one’s “Primordial Nature” and the originally

possessed and boundless capabilities, which are free from any bondages and to remain in the “Dharma Realm”. (The “Nature of the Mind”, also known as the “Buddha Nature”, or the “Primordial Nature”, refers to the original possession of that most crystal clarity of awareness. Please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 4 & 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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

1. **Prayers** – Including confessions, repentance of one’s conducts, and in the making of aspirations and wishes;
2. **Recitations** – mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, or sutras
3. **Visualizations** – themes include the formulae for different types of “meditation”, or even the making use of the internal functions of one’s body for coordination.
Irrespective of which types of practice methods, it must include the training of one’s “mental strength”. Otherwise, it would not be able to produce any effects. One of the important points for judging which of the practice methods are the most effective ones is the degree of influence that these can have on one’s “mental strength”? What percentage will they constitute?

The Relationships between the “Effects of the Magnetic Field” and the “Cycle of Karmic Existence”

The last two chapters have discussed in details both the merits and demerits of the practice method of “prayers”. What is the other type of practice method which mainly makes use of sound? The practice method of using sound to recite “mantras, names of Holy Deities, and scriptures” is one of the practice methods

that have been adopted by most religions and ceremonies in this secular world. Does it consist of any deeper meanings? What are the effects that will be produced from this kind of practice method? What is the degree of influence that this has on one’s “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that it can achieve? What is the length of time that it will take in order to achieve the objective?

It is commonly known that if one is to look for a method, in using sound, which could mould a person’s temperament or possess therapeutic functions, “music” is the first choice. When one is intoxicated by the music which touches upon the depths of one’s heart, one is like being situated in another world, by throwing away all the attachments and worries of this secular world, and thus helping one to elevate one’s spirit, and to forge ahead towards the greater “purpose in life”. It thus has the effect of purifying one’s heart and soul. Why is it possible that one’s heart and soul would operate in accordance to “sound”? What is the degree of influence that this has on one’s “mental strength” when one’s “heart and soul dance with the undulation of the sound”? What is the mystery within this?

“Sound” is the kind of “sound waves” produced through the vibrations of materials, and that they cannot be transmitted in a state of vacuum. Hence, it must have to go through a medium (such as: air, solid, or liquid), which could receive and feel the vibrations of the material, for example: the sensory organs of a person or animals. After which, the “heart” (or “mind”, depending on how one interprets this) of the person or animal would then interpret the frequencies of vibrations into some meaningful expressions. In other words, all sentient beings would rely upon the frequencies of vibrations in order to comprehend the different meanings brought about by “sounds”.

The frequency of vibration is represented in terms of the unit known as “hertz”. The ears of a person can hear the sound which is within the frequency range of 20 to 20,000 units of “hertz”. Those vibrations that exceed this frequency range are known as “ultrasonic”, while those vibrations that are lower than this range are known as “infrasonic”. “Decibel” is the single unit for the intensity of the sound, and is represented by the

sign dB. Animals like dogs and bats could hear sounds that are as high as 160,000 “hertz”, and is therefore said to be able to hear the sounds of the “spiritual realm”.

The components of all things in this world, including the spatial dimension, would consist of numerous “atoms”, each of which would revolve/move in accordance with the **interdependent tractions** among the other atoms. Furthermore, within each of the atoms, there are “particles” consisting of energies that are **in motion**. Within the “atom”, there is a “nucleus” which is further composed of the “proton” and the “neutron”. The outer layer of the “atom” is composed of “electrons” that are surrounding the “nucleus” and are **revolving in high speeds**. The “electrons” of the “atom” are revolving around the “nucleus”, just as the planets are revolving around the sun. Due to the condensation on the tractions of the “**electromagnetic forces**”, they will thus revolve along “**atomic orbits**”. The “electrons” will not only move along certain orbits, but will also jump around the spaces in between different orbits. However, they would not be able to move freely either towards the centre, or towards the outer layer. When the “electrons” jump within these specified orbits, they must either **absorb or release** some specific energies at the same time.

The “electrons” at the outer layer of the “atom” can move over to the other “atom” next to it, or else the two “atoms” can share the same “electrons”. It is because of such kind of mechanism that “atoms” can be **bonded** together to form “molecules”, or other types of “compounds”. Through this process, **different types of materials can then be condensed and formed**. Due to some particular natures, the “electrons” within the “atoms” would be “linked together”, or it can be said that they would be “gathered together interdependently”. Thus, a revolving object with matters of electricity can produce a “magnetic field”. Due to the “intrinsic spins” of the “electrons”, together with the tractions of the “**electric magnetic force**”, these “electrons” would be condensed and revolved along the “**atomic orbit**”. Furthermore, with the influences by the outer parts of other magnetic fields, all the “atoms” will all move in one direction, thus producing the magnetic field. Hence, these “atoms” would produce the “magnetic field effects”.

All sentient beings are **subject to the influences of different “magnetic fields”, and coupled with the “inclinations of one’s mind”, they would be subject to the “cycle of karmic existence” continuously**. In all of their lives, they would be connected with different materials and would manifest in different materialistic life-forms. Sometimes, they would be manifested as “heavenly beings” (or “**devas**” in Sanskrit) with “very strong energies but thin material density”; sometimes, they would be manifested as those “sentient beings who suffer in the hell realm” with “weak energies and thin material density”, but are “greatly subjected” to the strong magnetic field of the “hell realm”; and sometimes they would be manifested as either “human beings or animals” with “average energies and coarse material structure”.

Regardless of which kinds of sentient beings and which types of materials, if one looks at it from the perspective of “Physics”, **all processes of living beings are the motions of “atoms”**. Whether it is from the macroscopic perspective, the mutual influences of all things within this universe, like the formations of the orbits of the galaxies; or from the microscopic perspective, all minute things as the interdependent revolving of “atoms” and “particles”, all these phenomena have shown that all things in this world, from the “sub-atomic particles” to all things within the universe, **are in constant motions. To be “in motion” represents that there are “changes”, which is the “truth” as mentioned in the Buddhist teachings – all things are “impermanent”, and “all actions are impermanent”, and that they are “ever-changing”**. It is only Buddhism that has



such profound knowledge and “penetrative-insight” which goes beyond that of “science”.

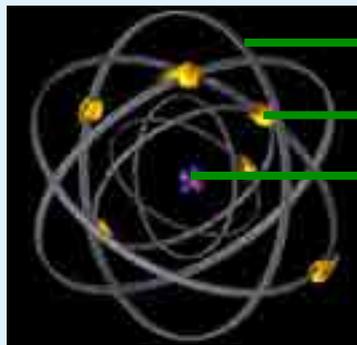
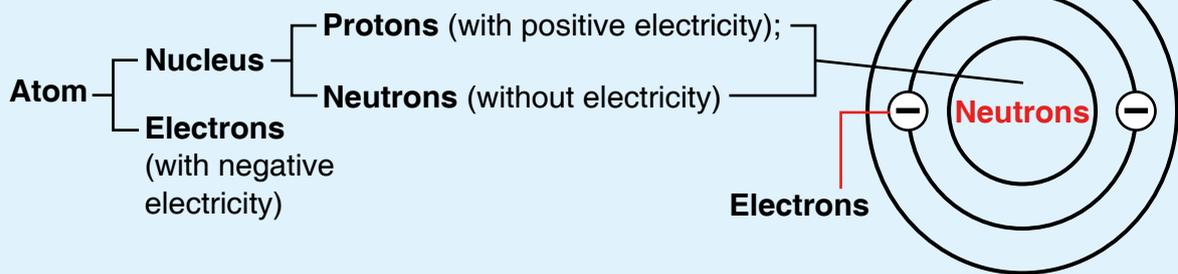
Hence, in Buddhism, particularly in “Vajrayana”, it emphasizes that the “human body” is such a “small universe” in itself, that it resembles the celestial bodies of the “large universe”, in such a way that the two have a lot in common, as they are inter-linked and have mutual influences upon each other, and that they do have “a close bearing on each other”. For example, the celestial bodies and galaxies do have impact effects upon the ebbs and flows of the earth’s tidal waves, and should not be neglected. Such kinds of major and minor mutual influences

over each other would, on varying degrees, have effects on one’s “mind”. Hence, in the process of one’s Dharma practice, one can make use of the changes of both these “large and small universes” as an “enabling condition” to rapidly “elevate” the levels of one’s Dharma practice “without obstacles”. This is a practical and pragmatic “enabling condition for Dharma practice”. So long as one would “not lose one’s direction amidst superstitions, and would not be infatuated with attachments to, or grasping of, the superficial aspects on the various paraphernalia of the Dharma”, such kinds of short-cuts in the Dharma practices of “Vajrayana” can be said to be the real “gospel” for all sentient beings.

The Structural Levels of Composition on the Biological Basis of Life

Biological organism ➡ system ➡ organs ➡ tissues ➡ cells ➡ organelle ➡ molecules ➡ atoms ➡ sub-atomic particles

The Internal Structure of An “Atom”



The Rationale and Mystery of “Mantras” and the “Blessings of the Sound”

Such motions would give rise to different “frequencies of vibration”, which in turn would form “vibration waves” of different “hertz”, and sounds of different “decibels”. Such major or minor vibrations will be “in motions in their own ways”, all of which will produce some kind of

a vibration energy which are full of tractional forces. When “resonance” is being produced, “connections” would then be formed, just like the tractional forces of a “magnet”. Such tractional forces would enable the “atoms”, on varying degrees, to lean upon each other and would be connected to form a “big web”. The “internet”, that everybody knows nowadays, is exactly this kind of structure upon which information get connected through the different “inclinations of the minds” of

its users. Even for the “spaciousness” (or empty space) of the whole universe, it is also a huge “energy field”.

The noun “form” in Buddhism represents “matters”. The meaning of “form is emptiness; emptiness is form”, as depicted in the “**Heart Sutra**”, is that within “Emptiness”, there exists a large quantities of “atoms and particles” which can condense to form “matters”. As the “sub-atomic particles” are so small, they could not be seen by the human eyes, and so one would not be able to see anything except the “spaciousness” (or empty space) of the whole universe. Hence, in the Buddhist literatures, this is known as the “particles adjacent to emptiness”, meaning that “these particles are just next to empty space, with their sizes look like dust particles nearing emptiness”. So, what is exactly the size of an “atom”? The width of a single “human hair” is equivalent to the size of one million “atoms”, while the “sub-atomic particles” within the “atom” is even much smaller in size.

Hence, the “spaciousness” (or empty space) of the whole universe, in fact, consists of the fundamental elements of matters. If the “main cause” and the “ancillary conditions” match each other (that is, when the “causes and conditions are in congruence”), they can be transformed into different things in the universe. Hence, the “**Heart Sutra**” said that “emptiness is form”, and so there is no difference between the two – “emptiness” and “form”. All kinds of “matters”, when the “causes and conditions are in congruence”, can be transformed into the smallest “atoms and particles”, and thus return to the state of “emptiness”. Again, the “**Heart Sutra**” mentioned that “form is emptiness”, and there is no difference between the two.

The formation of all matters is due to the “resonance” of particles which lead to their “connections”, and thus gradually they formed the matters. The meaning of “resonance” is one of “repeated vibrations”. According to the study of sound in physics, there are two types of “resonance”:

1. **Natural Resonance**: Things with similar “vibration frequencies” which eventually will lead to the same “vibration frequency”. Take

the example of one’s own wish to be reborn into the “Pure Land”. One’s “visualization, karma and inclination of one’s mind” will form a unique “vibration of the mind”. Such type of “vibration of the mind” must have to be similar to the “vibration frequency” of the “Pure Land”, so that after one’s death, one could then further strengthen one’s “mental strength” to give rise to the same “vibration frequency” of the “Pure Land” before one can get directly connected to the “Pure Land” in order to be reborn there.

2. **Forced Resonance**: Due to the fact that the “vibration frequency” of one side is strong enough to change a different “vibration frequency” of another matter to become the same “vibration frequency” as that of the former one to bring about “resonance”. For example, if one wishes to be reborn into the “Pure Land”, and yet if one does not have any training on the related “visualization” with the specific “inclinations of one’s mind” during one’s life time, and if one’s “karmas” do not have similar “vibration frequency” with that of the “Pure Land”, one must have to rely on one’s “mental strength” in order to be connected with the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Upon its connection, the dead person would then request the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with their strong “mental strengths” to enable one’s mind to give rise to the “vibration frequency” which is similar to that of the “Pure Land” before one can get directly connected to the “Pure Land” in order to be reborn there.

In this universe, every sentient being has a unique “vibration frequency”, just like the unique “finger prints” of each individual. As such, every sentient being will not be able to escape from the chasing after of one’s “karmic debtors and enemies” of previous lives, and cannot escape from the “**Law of Causes and Effects**” and its retributions of the “karmic web”. Only those Buddhas who were able to attain the state of “Emptiness” can enter into the “Dharma realm” without leaving any traces on the existence of matters, and only then could these Buddhas escape from the control of the “magnetic tractions” without producing any “vibration frequency”. If scientists can accurately measure the “vibration frequency of the mind”

of every sentient being in the future, they would then be able to chase after the location of each and every sentient being, including the positions of all sentient being in the different realms after their deaths.

The human bodies, and even the different organs, will have different “vibration frequencies”, and so they have different characteristics. When the “vibration frequencies” of the inner body are in congruence and in harmony holistically, one would be able to stay healthy. When the “vibration frequency” of one of the organs is counter-acting with the “vibration frequency” of the whole body, one would then feel sick. Hence, the “vibration frequency of one’s mind” of a person has an important directing effect on the “vibration frequency” of the whole body, like the conductor of an orchestra. What, exactly, will be the method that one should adopt in order to make the holistic “vibration frequency” of one’s inner body to be in congruence and in harmony? If something happens to a particular organ of the body such that its “vibration frequency” is not in step with that of the whole body, what will be the method to make it to return to normal? **What will be the method in order that one would be able to make the “vibration frequency of one’s mind” to be closer to the “vibration frequency” of the “Pure Land”?**

How to Find the Best “Vibration Frequency” in Reciting Mantras?

Recently, some kind of music known as the “microcosmic music”, which is said to be able to adjust its “vibration frequency” in between 0.034 and 0.059 “Hertz” and is classified as “super low frequency” sound, has become rather popular nowadays. Some people have said that such kind of “vibration frequency” is exactly the kind of “vibration frequency for resonance” for the DNAs of human beings. Sound itself is a type of “wave”, and the general sound waves are within a certain specific range of “frequency”. The range of “frequency” that human ears could hear is in between 20 to twenty-thousand “hertz”. When the wave vibration is higher than this range, it is known as “ultrasonic”, while which is lower than this range is known as “infrasonic”, which will disturb the normal operation of the “nervous

system”, and will cause harm to the health of the human body. A particular intensity of “infrasonic” will make one feel dizzy, nauseating, vomiting and losing one’s balance, or even feeling dispirited. **High dosages of “infrasonic” will have damaging effects on the internal organs of living organisms.**

In France, there was an engineer who had conducted research on the effects of sound upon the human body. He had used a large steam whistle to produce “infrasonic”, which led to the instant death of one of the technicians present, due to his internal organs being burst by the infrasonic frequency, while helping out with the test. **Hence, one should be very careful on the merits and demerits on the low frequency of the “infrasonic”.**

One of the safest methods is to make use of **one’s own sound and the sharpness of one’s sensitivity and feeling** to find out the “vibration frequency” which is **most suitable to oneself**. By using the technique of sound, that is, **to rhythmically and repeatedly** recite either “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names, or Sutras” to find the “vibration frequency” that is most suited to



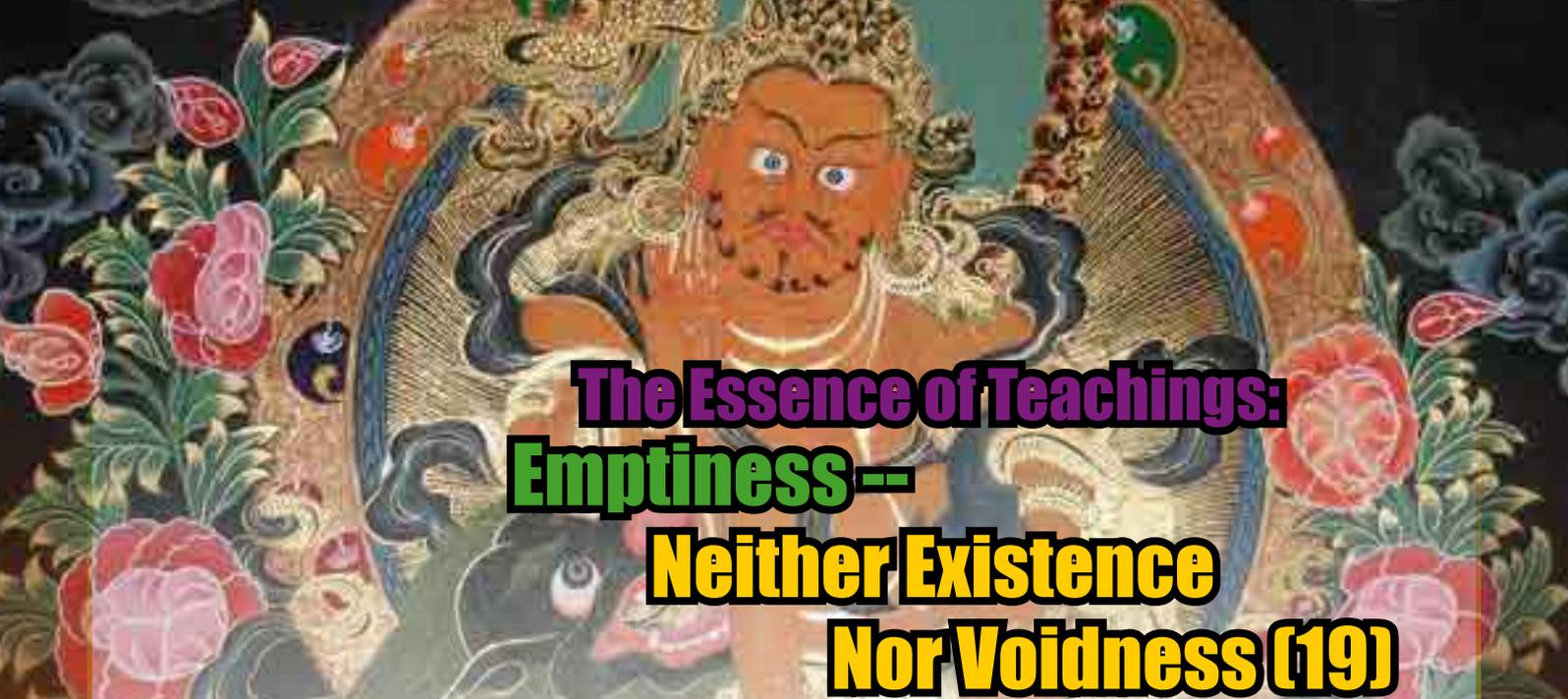
oneself. In so doing, one continuously recite the different “Mantras” of **different lengths** in the using of “different speed, using different volumes of sound, with different rhythmic intervals (or with different tones of voice)”. One has to try in using each of these styles for a certain period of time, and with similar durations, before one can accurately find out the “frequency of resonance” that is most suitable to oneself.

Your own “sensations and feelings” will tell you to what degree would the sound make you feel most comfortable. When you feel the sound vibrates all the way from your head to your toes, **that the power so felt is much larger than the sound that you have made**, and that you felt the blood in the veins (or the “winds” in the “channels”) ran so smoothly and comfortable, all of which will mean that such type of “vibration frequency” matches very well with that of your whole body, and thus producing the effect of “resonance”. “Resonance” refers to the phenomenon when a physical system, when put under a particular “vibration frequency”, will give out the largest “frequency range” when it vibrates. This particular “vibration frequency” is called the “**frequency of resonance**”.

Hence, when **such “resonance” effect occurs, the vibration would suddenly be strengthened**, and thus the power it has produced will be larger than the sound that you have made. If such type of “vibration frequency” can be used in the recitation of the “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names, or Sutras”, it would be most beneficial to one’s own health, as each person has a unique “vibration frequency of one’s mind” which is also the “frequency of resonance” of one’s whole body. Hence, it would be **most scientific and effective** if one can use one’s own voice in an individual way to find out the “frequency of resonance” that is most suitable to oneself. In fact, **the generation of “resonance” represents an affirmation of the “connection”**. In other words, it means that, in having one wave following after another, the “**energies of sound**” can reach the “nucleus” of each of the cells. Through the same “vibration frequency”, they would help and coordinate with each other so as to ignite one’s own “kinetic energies”, and thus **enable one’s natural Life Force** to become active again, and this is the “ **blessings of the sound**”.

Apart from the mystery of “resonance”, are there any other deeper meanings in the recitation of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names, or Sutras”? Are there any differences in the reciting of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names, or Sutras”? Which of these will be more powerful? What kinds of benefits will they have? Are there any differences in the techniques of their recitations? **The making of the human sound can be classified into two levels -- the consciousness and the sub-conscious -- how would these aspects help in one’s Dharma practices?** What are some of the effects in the practice method of reciting “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names, or Sutras”? What are the degree of influence upon one’s own “mental strength”? What can be the highest level of objective that one can achieve? What will be the length of time that one has to spend on it? Should “Mantras” be translated? **What are some of the practice methods that can help to make the “vibration frequency of one’s mind” to be closer to that of the “Pure Land”?** We will continue to share the mysteries of all these aspects in the next issue of the “Lake of Lotus”.(To be Continued) 🌀





The Essence of Teachings: Emptiness -- Neither Existence Nor Voidness (19)

By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye

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

(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

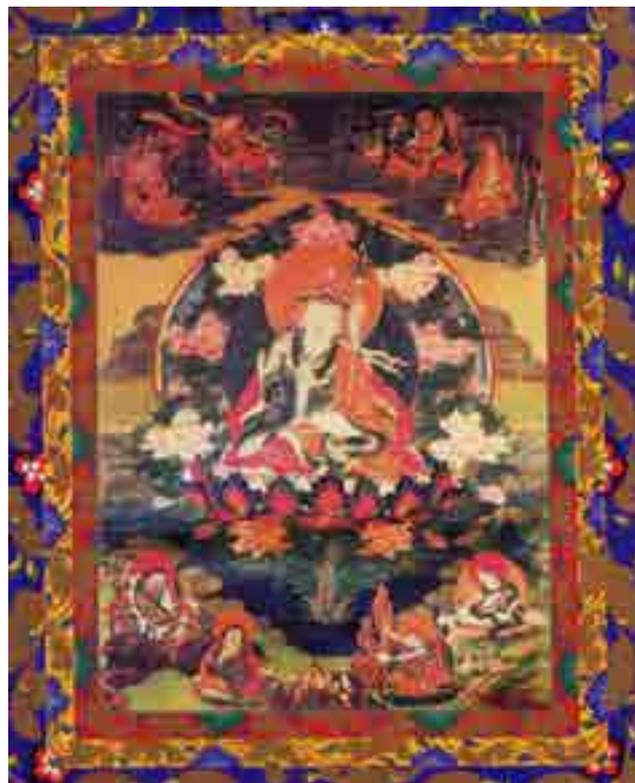
Excerpt of Last Chapter

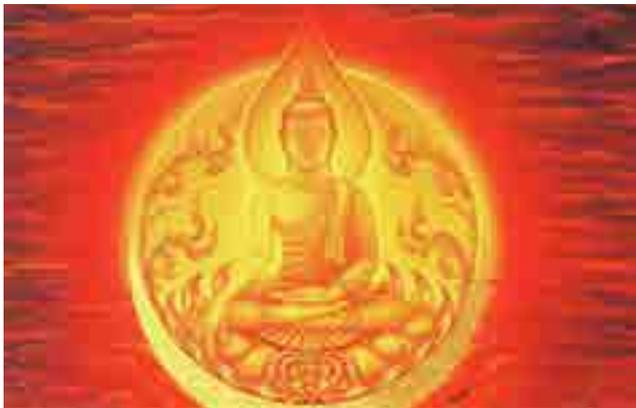
All those who genuinely put the Holy Dharma into concrete and solid practice will find themselves to be able to become liberated from this “cycle of karmic existence”, and will eventually attain the “complete and perfect enlightenment” of Buddhahood, as have been accomplished by countless Buddhas before. While one may encounter certain major obstacles and obstructions in-between the different stages of “awareness” and “realization”, it is important that one should bear in mind as to **“what need to be adopted and abandoned”**. From the very onset, two distinctions need to be made: the differences between “Learning about the Buddhist Teachings” and the “Buddhist Studies”; as well as the distinction between the “Inner Ordinary Person” and the “Outer Ordinary Person”.

The Relations Between “View” and “Action”

In between the stage of “awareness” and that of “realization”, there are other obstructions that hinder us from realizing certain “views”, and eventually certain “fruits”. The Founding Father of Tibetan Tantrism, Guru Padmasambhava,

has warned us that: **“Don’t lose one’s ‘view’ in one’s ‘action’, and don’t lose one’s ‘action’ in one’s ‘view’”**. While the **“view”** refers to a compass which shows the course of one’s direction in order to reach a destination; the **“action”** refers to the actual practice of the Holy Dharma, and the true nature of one’s actions and behaviors.





What is meant by **losing one's "view" in one's "action"**? For instance, if one practices "Vajrayana", but only emphasizes on blessings, miraculous powers, its outer appearances, and the very superficial aspects on various paraphernalia of formalities, ceremonials, ritual objects, mudras, making of tormas, etc., then one will eventually find that only one's "grasping" of and "attachment" to the so-called "Dharma" itself, together with the three poisons of "greed, hatred, ignorance", will be increased! In this way, the **true "view" of "Emptiness"** will slowly **be lost in one's "actions"** and behaviors, and thus one will eventually become so much confused as to what are the most important and fundamental aspects in achieving the "ultimate aims and objectives of Buddhism: liberation and enlightenment", and what are of much less significance or relevance to the ultimate aims and objectives of the Dharma practice.

Then, what is meant by losing **one's "action" in one's "view"**? For another instance, due to one's misunderstanding on the "view" of "Emptiness", one will fall prey into the wrong conception that everything is being void and nothing, thus **wrongly believe and perceive that "all phenomena are of voidness and nothingness", and so there is no such a thing as the "Law of Cause and Effect"**. As a result, one behaves in such a way and believes that it is not necessary to keep the "vows and disciplines" that all serious Buddhist practitioners are supposed to keep in their Dharma practices. This is particularly true for those who, having claimed themselves to be Dharma practitioners of the highest level and caliber (**especially those who practise the "Great Perfection" – Tib. "Dzogchen"**), believe that they **do not have any "vows, disciplines and samayas" to keep** and so act in a lawless and normless manner as if, for them, there is nothing under heaven to

be governed by the natural "Law of Cause and Effect".

Either of these two wrong ways, whether it is because of one's wrong "view", or because of one's wrong "action", will eventually lead one to fall into the Three Lower Realms of the "cycle of karmic existence". Hence, Guru Padmasambhava has warned all Dharma practitioners, more than 1,300 years ago, of the dangers that these two wrong ways can bring. Indeed, Guru Padmasambhava himself has given us an important piece of Spiritual Advice which came from his own personal experiences: **"Though my 'view' is higher than the sky, my 'action' regarding cause and effect is finer than barley flour"**.

Here, there is this analogy of the great Garuda: that it simply glides through the sky freely and effortlessly, without leaving any trace of anything behind; yet when it slowly descends towards the ground, its shadow covers everywhere it goes. Similarly, while one may have the highest "view" that the nature of everything is "Emptiness", when it comes to the minute aspects of one's "action", every bit of it **must have to be in total congruence with the natural "Law of Cause and Effect"**. This is exactly what Guru Padmasambhava has advised us on, and so please do take heed of this very important advice and message!

Hence, one has to learn slowly to be able to **"descend with one's 'view' while ascend with one's 'action'"**, which is the most important and fundamental aspect for one's Dharma practice, so that the two can eventually be united together as one single entity. On the one hand, one should not often use this "view" of "Emptiness" in order to boost on one's high level of understanding on Buddhism; yet, on the other hand, neither should one often use the "view" of "Emptiness" in order to cover up one's own lowly and faulty behaviours on the **"transgressions of silas and broken samayas"**, by simply saying that one needs not take these too seriously. In doing so, one really acts as naively as an ignorant child in cheating both oneself and others, as if like the dressing up of the "new clothes of the King". This can never be the "True Nature" of "Emptiness"! 

..... (To be Continued)

The Ultimate Love & Care of Life

End-of-Life Care (1)

Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye
Acharya Pema Lhadren

Foreword

How to face “death”, and all the way to the point of how to receive the best ultimate love and care at the last moment of one’s life journey, such that an individual would be able to proceed to another stage of life with confidence and dignity, as well as for one’s concerned kith and kin to let go of sorrows in the process is, indeed, a big matter for all of us to learn and study about. This is also the **utmost sincere wish for the two of us in trying to contribute towards the ultimate well-beings of all illimitable sentient beings.**

In order to transform this ideal into reality, the two of us started to establish the “Dudjom Buddhist Association (International)” in Hong Kong ten years ago (January 1998). Then, three years ago, the “Inaugural Issue” of the English-Chinese bimonthly magazine – the “Lake of Lotus” – was published in January 2006, and one year ago in June 2008, we have sent four of our disciples who possessed either bachelor’s degrees and/or master’s degrees, or even with a physician’s qualification, to study for the program on **Postgraduate Diploma in End-of-Life Care**, offered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Owing to the “Bodhicitta” of these few disciples, together with their characters of “being respectful to both the Teachers and the Teachings”, they have now graduated as scheduled. In the very near future, they **will be sharing the valuable knowledge with those people who are interested in this topic.** We would like to **express our sincere thankfulness** to them.



This “End-of-Life Care” program, which was the first of its kind in Hong Kong, was offered by the Faculty of Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and was also the first postgraduate program of this kind among all the universities in Hong Kong.

The targets for its student intake are mainly for medical personnel, but due to the fact that the Faculty of Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong wanted to offer this kind of service as **an integrated holistic service of love and care** to patients of terminal stage and of chronic diseases, and in order to promote this kind of service in a holistic manner, non-medical individuals such as social workers are also accepted to the course. However, the applicant must be a recognized degree holder.

The “**whole person**” means the concerns on the love and care of the four major dimensions of the patients, namely: the “**physical/physiological, psychological, social and spiritual**” aspects. Since the areas of coverage are so broad, the team that work together would have to comprise of various types of professionals, such as physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, dieticians, social workers, volunteers, and so on, in order to cater for the proper services to the patients concerned.

As the program covers a broad range of topics, it has been conducted **by experienced medical, para-medical and other professional personnel** of different specialties. The program consists of the following five major areas of concern:

1. Principles and perspectives of end-of-life care
2. Symptom control and medical care in end-of-life care
3. Psycho-spiritual care in end-of-life care
4. Principles and dilemmas in end-of-life care
5. Service models and future directions in end-of-life care

On top of lectures, students are required to attend **three rounds of attachments** in hospitals, and to submit three case reports after that. These four disciples who have recently graduated from this program will write

articles for the “Lake of Lotus” to introduce relevant information for the sake of benefiting all sentient beings. The following is the first article.

Wish for the Increase of Wholesome Merits !

How to Help Out with Patients at Terminal Stage

by Tsering Tenzin

(The author is a holder of a Diploma of Physics from Hong Kong Baptist College; M.Sc. in Geophysics from the New Mexico Institute of Technology, USA; Graduate Diploma from the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications at UK, and the Postgraduate Diploma in End-of-Life Care at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has been in the business of medical equipments for both Hong Kong and China for many years.)

“**Death**” is a **big thing** that each and every sentient being **has to face**. At the end of life, it is apparent that sentient beings would be intertwined by issues such as “pain and discomfort of illness, permanent departure from familiar people and worldly items, unknown future and the emotions of panic, anxiety and fear”.

At this point of time, a sentient being’s own value of life and spiritual notion would have significant impact on him or her psychologically. All the religions with systematic tenets as foundation would have discussions on the spiritual aspect about after-death matters. Thus, “death” is a topic that each religion has to deal with. Nevertheless, a communal point is that they would all pray for a peaceful department of the deceased at the moment of death.

Comparing with other religions, there are much more descriptions about “death” in Buddhism. In the viewpoint of Buddhism, “death” is only the end of one period of life. Before one’s liberation, sentient beings would exist cyclically between life and death ceaselessly. **At the end of a period of life, the psychological conditions**

of the deceased would affect the realm of existence that one is going to be reborn into. For instance, if a person is dying in the mood of discontent and indignation, or in pain, the odds of transmigration onto inferior realms would increase. Thus, there is the rationale that Buddhism gives more weight to “death” comparing with other religions, especially at the moment of “death”. It is not merely a simple good wish for peaceful death of the deceased person.

In the Buddhist point of view, a deceased person should not be in a negative mood at the moment of death and moreover, a Dharma practitioner should let free all the outer connections and no longer grasp on social and materialistic attachment. Kith and kin concerned should also need to know how to cope with the situation and not to trigger the deceased person’s hard feeling in parting and as a result, affecting one’s “mindfulness” and mental concentration for one’s rebirth into the Pure Land.

The uncommon “Teachings on the Bardo State” of “Tibetan Buddhism” have detailed and clear revelation on the pre- and post-death settings. If a Dharma practitioner is under the guidance from a Master (or “Guru”) with formal lineage system, and then practice the Dharma practice accordingly, one could hopefully make use of this pivotal moment in achieving liberation or to be reborn into a better realm of life existence.

Since the propagation of “Tibetan Buddhism” to the Western world, the “Tibetan Book of the Dead” had been translated into many languages, and has widely attracted the attentions from people of all walks of life. In the areas of psychology and medical sciences, it has aroused extensive interest of discussions. It is surprising to note that this ancient text of over one thousand years of history with such abundant materials which was in relation to “thanatology”.

After the Western industrial revolution, development in sciences and technologies has been in great strides, and the advancement in material civilization is tremendous. In the area of medical sciences, a great deal of therapeutic

treatment has been developed to address various diseases, which were incurable in the past. The training of the medical personnel and their mentality has been merely focused on the cure of diseases. After all, incurable diseases are common and “death” is still unavoidable. During the period from the moment that a patient was found to be incurable until death, besides symptoms control, emotional suffering at large had not been aptly taken care of.

However, emotional suffering is not less hurting than that of somatic pain. Not until the last three to four decades, the inadequacy in this aspect had not been given proper attention by the medical profession for incorporating palliative care into medical systems for the relief of both “somatic and psychological” sufferings.

In the middle of the twentieth century, an English lady Ceily Saunders was trained to be a nurse but she could not continue the work due to back pain. However, she was enthusiastic in serving patients, and so she took the training as a social worker instead, and continued the work she liked. Feeling bad about that the pains of cancer patients that could not be relieved, Ms. Saunders aspired to serve cancers patients and endeavored energetically in the work.

She understood that she had to become a physician in order that she would be more effectual in helping the cancer patients. Thus, she obtained her qualification as a physician shortly before forty. Ms Saunders widely advocated her notions and gradually substantiated the content of services. In 1967, she founded the St Christopher’s Hospice in London, which was the first unit of “palliative care” in the whole world. Besides serving the patients, the Hospice was also the place to train medical staff on “palliative care”, advocate and promotion her cause. Her spirit in medical humanity had finally been recognized and learnt by colleagues across the world, and so Ms. Saunders was being considered as the pioneer of palliative care.

The notion of “palliative care”, in short, is to provide proper care in various aspects to a patient for the uplift of one’s “quality of life” before the end of it. The principle adopted is

not to hasten death because of suffering, nor to prolong “death” by medical intervention. “Death” is taken plainly as a part of the natural human cycle.

In the early stage of “palliative care”, the service was mainly provided to cancer patients. Talking about cancer, people would immediately link it to pain. However, there are many other symptoms causing discomforts to the patients. Besides cancer, other diseases such as organ failures would also cause pain which is not less severe than that of cancer patients. Initially, cancer patients were the main target group of service for “palliative care”, but gradually this service has been further extended to the dying patients of other diseases.

The Four Dimensions of “Palliative Care”

“Palliative care” covers the full facets of services, and so we would try to debrief on the range of services, so that the readers might have more information, which would be beneficial to themselves and their kith and kin. The first task of palliative care is to “relieve the somatic pain”.

Since physical discomfort is prevailing among the patients so relief or reduction of the pain from symptoms becomes the priority to improve the “quality of life” of the patients. The rapid development in medical technologies renders many effective means for the reduction of patients’ somatic pain. **Many patients who were afraid of “death” were simply due to the pains that occurred in the process of dying**, and thus effectual controls of somatic discomforts would lessen the fear of “death”. When medical intervention is introduced, consideration should have been given that whether it would improve the total “quality of life” of the patient, and not just having to deal with only one problem. However, more severe discomforts will usually result due to the treatments, and so **this should be the issue that medical staff will have to take into account**. Pains and discomforts surely will have psychological impacts on the patient, but the life-threatening situation of “death”, the uncertainty on the arrival of the last day, the

misgiving and panic about gains or losses, as well as one’s own **mental burden** are all kinds of sufferings that a patient will have to bear.

Thus, **the relief of patients’ emotions is not less important than the relief of somatic pains**. Therefore, the second task of palliative care is the “relief on the psychological suffering”. Psychological care should be carried out in multiple aspects. For instance, by listening to the patient, it can help to air out one’s emotions; or the provision of psychological counseling in order to lessen the unease feelings. These works are carried out by medical staff with frequent contacts with the patients, as well as by clergies, social workers, volunteers and family members. If the situation of the patient is serious, counseling service from clinical psychologists may also be required. Furthermore, if medication is needed, it would involve psychiatrists for symptoms control.

Besides the fear of “death”, issues pertaining to daily life such: as finance matters, and daily household care would also bring internal pressures onto the patients. For instance, the patient might be worrying about having oneself in becoming a burden to the family. These problems have to be resolved for the patients in order to reduce their sufferings.

Hence, it is needed to mobilize the **social** resources available. The third task of palliative care is to “make use of the social strength”. For instance, in helping the patients to maintain one’s own capability of self-care, so that the patient can have the **autonomy** on certain matters, lives as much a normal life as possible, and does not have to rely upon others. In this regard, physical and occupational therapists can have significant contributions. The patient would be encouraged to participate in leisure activities if the situations allow. All of these will have positive psychological influences on the patient. Besides the patients, their families involved in the long-term caring of the patients are also under great pressures, and so their emotions **should not be overlooked**.

After the death of the patient, if the family members show excessive signs of grief or bereavements even after a certain period of

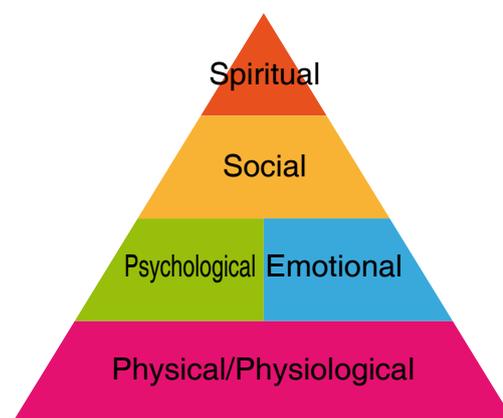
time, then the palliative team would follow up for the support. Even if the aforementioned services are provided for properly and with some secular affairs to have been resolved, the patient might still not being able to be free from the fear of “death” and pass away peacefully. On the metaphysical level of **spirituality**, the patient’s panic about the existential issues (such as: **is there any existence of life after death, etc.**) has to be taken care of. Therefore, the fourth task of palliative care is the **“need for spiritual love and care”**.

For people who have religious beliefs, the provision of spiritual care could be, for instance, for the enhancement of one’s own faith. If the patient had committed some deeds against the tenets of one’s religion, the individual should follow the way as suggested by its religion for the **elimination of guilty feelings within one’s heart**. For Buddhism, an individual can conduct procedure of contrition so as to reduce one’s mental burden, endeavor to **accumulate virtuous deeds and merits**, then **put aside all** secular concerns, and **firmly believe** that one would be able to be reborn in the destination of one’s own wish. The Dharma friends would try to keep company with the patient and carry out Dharma practice together, so as to substantiate and consolidate on one’s practice and faith. All of these are very pragmatic assistances.

Some people who do not have any religious belief, as they consider that “the death of a person is like the extinction of a lamp”, and so to them religious belief is worthless and a waste of time. Or they simply have no idea about religions, and so do not know how to make a choice. However, when an individual is about to leave this world, and seems like to be annihilated forever, and there is nothing for one to rely upon spiritually, and so this would cause **great anxiety** and one **does not know what to do**. Yet, **spiritual care is not merely related to religions**; for instance, in supporting the patient to accomplish one’s unfinished wishes, or in eliminating enmities between the patient and one’s family members, or in the letting go of hatred, and in recognizing the contributions and values that one has made during one’s life, and so on. All in all, spiritual love and care strives to help the patients to depart from the world

without any feelings of regret. Clergies, social workers, volunteers from religious bodies, and family members all can provide support to the patients in this respect.

It could be seen that provision of “palliative care” to the dying patients, as well as their families, cannot be done merely by physicians and nurses, but **needs a team effort for the holistic services**. This sort of holistic services, in benefiting the dying patients and their families in all facets, came to be known as the **“palliative care” for the “physical, psychological, social and spiritual” dimensions**. This is, indeed, a kind of **“ultimate love and care of life”**.



However, the notions and area of services may not be widely known. Some people may even have negative understanding on this kind of service due to a lack of information. If an individual has a better understanding about this service, and when oneself or one’s family members have to face the last journey of one’s life, one would then have more information in order to make a better informed judgment with a better choice suitable for oneself. If a Buddhist practitioner is cared for by these services, such that both the physical and psychological areas are well settled before the end of one’s life, and is well prepared on one’s own Dharma practice for rebirth, then it is undoubtedly an **“auxiliary condition”** for the enhancement of one’s **“mental concentration”**.

..... (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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