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A Case of a Dying Person and Her Caretaker Being Confused and Disoriented

The Importance in Guiding the Emotions of a Dying Person and the Caregivers

"Scenes at the Moment of Death" and "Transformation of Consciousness"

How To Set Up An All-Rounded Protection Shield

Training One's "Mental Concentration & Meditation" Via the Recitation of "Buddhas' Names" To Make Contacts with All Buddhas

"Mental Strength" Generates "Energy Protective Net"



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English Version

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The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (29)

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Translated by Simon S.H. Tang

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- The Importance in Guiding the Emotions of a Dying Person and the Caregivers
- “Scenes at the Moment of Death” and “Transformation of Consciousness”

Excerpt of Last Chapter: Various Reasons on the Formation of Dif- ferent 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?



A Case of a Dying Person and Her Caretaker Being Confused and Disoriented

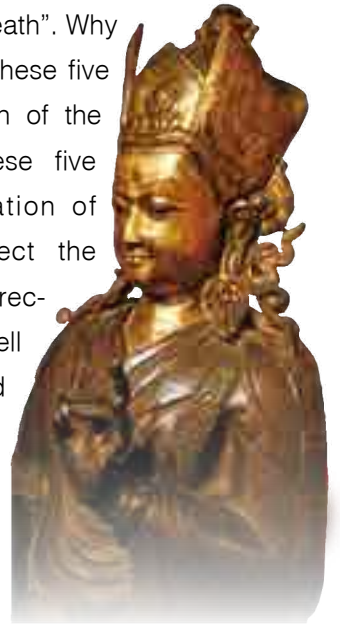
When any person faces death, problems concerning **several aspects** would arise. On the one hand, how would the dying person psychologically and physiologically prepare oneself for it? On the other hand, how would the kin and kith of the dying patient keep companion, and in taking care of the spiritual and physical needs of the dying patient? The pressures upon, and the emotions of, the kin and kith of a dying person should be properly relieved and not to be overlooked.

In order to tackle the above-mentioned issues, one **first has to realize the “five stages in facing death” and their corresponding characteristics** before one can properly help the dying person to go smoothly through this most significant pivotal moment in one’s lifetime, and to **relieve oneself from the grief of bereavement of one’s relatives**. The greatest difficulty of many caretakers is that they don’t know how to communicate with a dying person so as to best meet with the dying person’s physical and spiritual needs. What is the most correct and appropriate way to help a dying person? How should a caretaker help a dying person so that the incumbent would not feel regret to him or her? Whether you would blame yourself relentlessly after the death of a kin? Or finding that there had been unspeakable settings of inadequate caring or inability of elaborating on what were desired to be said? It is **a state of art** to attain the situation of “feeling no shame”, even having no “feelings of regret”.

The end of life situation represents a phenomenon on the transformation of one’s “mental consciousness”. From the moment that the “mental consciousness” is about to be released from the confinement of materials until the completion of its liberation from the physical body, by large it can be divided up into five stages.

Caretakers of dying patients must have to know these

“five stages in approaching death”. Why do caretakers need to know these five stages on the “transformation of the mental consciousness”? These five stages on the “transformation of consciousness” deeply affect the emotions and the spiritual directions of a dying patient, as well as that of the caretakers, and so they **must have to know and master them well**. The following case suitably explains this important point.



Case 33:

At around the year of 2004, a patient suffered from cervical cancer had just received a futile major operation. The sufferings of frailty and pains were far less severe than her spiritual sufferings. Boundless sense of loss, extreme feeling of frustrations, erupting emotions of anger and dejection of helplessness made her, who was used to be self-willed, to become more **unreasonable and ill-tempered**. She kept asking, “Why me? Why am I going to die?” Then, she angrily said: “I don’t want to die!”

Eventually, **such kind of attitudes led her to a state of extreme fears**. She was out of her mind, yelling and screaming in the hospital. No matter how well her family members were taking care of and accommodating to her, she still had a great deal of discontents. Sometimes, she might say that she saw light, or beautiful scenes. Sometimes, she was erupted in great wrath and dashed to jump out of a window. Sometimes, she was full of curses.

She used to be a Buddhist, but was only having some Dharma practices on and off, and she didn’t really take it seriously. Moreover, her “Guru” had passed away and so her Dharma practices became quite unfamiliar. After the operation which was found to be futile, she took her sister’s recommendation to take refuge from Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye and Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren



of the Nyingma School of Vajrayana. Nevertheless, she was so fatigued, both physically and psychologically, that she was not able to revitalize her previous passion in performing Dharma practices again, but was merely praying for “blessings”. As she had just taken the refuge and not yet received any teachings, she was again hospitalized due to the further deterioration of her illness. As she had **sufficient confidence towards the “Gurus”**, no matter how mad was she in the hospital, whenever she got the phone calls from me, she would calm down immediately and engrossed in my soft comforting words of encouragement.

Every time when she got my phone call, she was so happy and said, “Did you know this? I could not control myself. It seems that my mind has fallen into a fathomless black hole. I was madly grasping in the air and hoping that I could grip onto some support, but my effort was in vain. However, I don’t know why, whenever I got your phone call and heard your voice, I would immediately become steadfast and fear of nothing. I would then return to calmness. I will wait for your call everyday. Can you give me a call everyday?”

I replied to her by saying: “You see, I am very busy, really busy, and so I might stop to call you for one to two days in between, and hope that you can understand!” At one time, she was about to commit suicide, and coincidentally I rang her up in sending my regards to her. She was so excited and said, “Oh God! You are really in time. It is so precious! I am so anxious for your call!” Every time when I counseled her, she was just listening to me quietly, but was not expressive. She liked to listen, but would not respond much. It was a pity that I didn’t have too much time to give her counsel, and every time the conversations ended in a rush. After a period of time, and coincidentally I was so completely

tied up with things that I did not give her any calls for a few days. During this period of time, she was in a state of “out of control”.

Knowing nothing about the “five stages in approaching death”, the patient’s family members **did not know how to help her in releasing her emotions and to guide her “mental consciousness” for its transformation, and so her situation was getting worse and was finally out of control**. Her family members all thought that she was bewitched, and was prompted to look for someone to

perform exorcism. However, it made the situation to become worse. Since her behaviors had already caused much disturbance to other patients, and so she was transferred to the “psychiatric ward”. Her sister asked us to pray for her and to carry out Dharma practices, hoping that this would help to release her from the “psychiatric ward”, since the environment in there was too bad for her.

Due to the fact that the patients in the “psychiatric ward” were not allowed to take phone calls, and only

two persons were allowed to visit the patient each day, she was no longer able to listen to my words of encouragement. Furthermore, as the environment there was too bad for her, it made her to sober up, and she was willing to listen to the opinions of others, and hoped to be released from the “psychiatric ward”. Her brother-in-law was also a disciple of ours, had better skills in counseling, and also knew a bit about the “stages in approaching death”. He said to her, “If you don’t want to die in such an inferior environment and wish to leave here, you must have to control your own emotions.” Hence, she appeared to be as calm as a normal person, and as a result, she was sent back to the hospice care for terminal cancer patients within 2 days. Then, she never lost her temper again, and appeared **as if she were two different persons**.



Vajra Master Yesthe Thaye and myself promised to pay her a visit few days later. At first, she was not willing to take food, but then later on she had changed her mind. She had taken food and good rest for a few days, in the hope of meeting us in her best conditions. When we met her, she appeared to be extremely lenient, calm, relaxing and delightful, and even filled with splendor in her face. We gave her some predictions, blessings and some teachings, which she had remembered one by one seriously. After a few days, she passed away peacefully in the surrounding of her family members and friends, as well as with the comforting words, guidance and chanting by her sister and brother-in-law. Her sister and brother-in-law had noticed that her last three breathes and some of the characteristics in approaching death were the same as what has been described and elaborated in the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**. It was so shocking to them when they saw these phenomena in person and realized what were going on.

Due to the selfless dedications of her sister in assisting the Dudjom Buddhist Association in propagating the Buddhist teachings, such that numerous sentient beings were benefited, Vajra Master Yesthe Thaye had thus requested his most beloved Root Guru Kyabje Chadrak Rinpoche (who is most highly regarded as the most respected, renowned, and peerless elder of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, and having the highest attainment of Dharma practices in this contemporary world) to help by practicing the “Transference of Consciousness” (“Phowa” in Tibetan) to higher spiritual domains. From most unfortunate and chaotic, even the losing of control, then in transition to calmness, relaxed, self-deciding and even being protected and rescued, all of these changes depended upon her own “faith, clear identification of the direction, non-self-willfulness, non-panicking, steadfastness and willingness to receive teachings”. Of course, the great merits that were developed by her sister were also one of the strong essential elements in supporting herself, so that both her “main cause” (self-efforts) and “auxiliary conditions” (others’ efforts) were well matching in line so that she could pass away peacefully.

The Importance in Guiding the Emotions of a Dying Person and the Caregivers

This case made me realize more profoundly that the caregivers for patients, especially for terminal patients, must have to know clearly the “five stages in approaching death”, in which the “transformation of mental consciousness” would make a dying patient and the caregivers to become confused and do not knowing what to do. Inappropriate actions, dialogues or counseling would make the emotions of a patient, or a dying person, to become more fluctuating and more confusing. It might be even worse that the patient, as if lingering on a cliff, is being pushed off from the verge and falls into a fathomless abyss of no return for centuries. Hence, some patients, or dying persons, are mistaken to have mental problems and are then referred to the “psychiatric ward” where it is a place which is easy to be sent in but hard to get out. Furthermore, some of these patients, or dying persons, might be wrongly considered as being bewitched by their superstitious family members, who might just randomly ask some



person whom they believe can carry out exorcism. Consequentially, they are most likely to end up in being cheated by frauds. Yet, in this way and most unfortunately, they would **bring harms** to the patients, or dying persons, such that they would have **missed the important time and the great opportunity to cure them**.

This case also made me more profoundly realized that, if Dharma practitioners do not practice the **correct** Dharma teachings and practices while they are in good health, do not actually develop mutual trust and good relationship with “**authentic** Gurus”, or do not receive pragmatic and **comprehensive in all aspects** of “life and death education”, but merely **rely** whole-heartedly and all through **upon “blessings”** with the **slightest confidence** on the “Guru”, then they would easily fall into the state of nervous breakdown.

A “Guru” would not be able to closely monitor a person both physically and mentally. When one fails to do so, the faith of the patient, or the dying person, towards the “Guru” might start to waver. As the **transmission of “blessings”** from the “Guru” **greatly depends** on how sincere is the faith of the disciple towards one’s own “Guru”, otherwise it would be difficult to give rise to the **relevant** effects. Thus, when a disciple has great confidence towards one’s own “Guru”, just a sentence would be sufficient to rescue the disciple from the abyss of emotional disorders. On the other hand, when the disciple lost one’s confidence

towards the “Guru”, all the words of the “Guru” would become “empty words”. Resistance to these words might arise from the “unconscious” of the disciple and so one would not follow suit. Such kind of resistance from one’s “mental strength” would make the “Guru’s” rescue to become futile, or to the least ineffectual.



It can be said in this way: I attempt to let the disciples to have confidence in order that, whenever they have problems, I can come to their rescues in a prompt way. Nevertheless, my time and energies are **extremely limited**. In order to help them in the swiftest manner pivotally and effectively, it must need to have their developments of confidence towards the “Guru” in normal times. Otherwise, I would need to exert **great efforts** in order to rescue them effectively, and even so, there are still **odds of**

failure in the rescue. Perhaps, they don’t understand my intention and difficulties. Or else, I **might not have not done it properly and well**, and so there are faults that I must have to face. I have moments of failures, as well as lots of restrictions. Both of these failures and restrictions had made me **felt miserable with sorrows**, and I could not help crying. It had also made me grown up. I must have to stand up and **think more thoroughly** about the reasons of the failures and the ways for their resolutions.

In order to have a breakthrough in these limitations, I had given a series of lectures of more than ten sessions on the detailed elaborations and explanations of the dying process, and its relevant methods of rescue that were described in the “**Tibetan Book of the Dead**”. However, it would only be helpful to people who want to learn the Buddhist teachings, or even to those who want to learn the teachings of “Vajrayana”. In order to make the rescue available to all people, including those without religious beliefs, as well as believers of other religions,



Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye and myself, together with some of our disciples, have established the “Life Enlightenment Charity Foundation” for the promotion of “life and death education”, in order to prepare for the future establishment of the “Life Enlightenment Hospital” on end-of-life (or hospice) care services.

No matter it is the patients, or the dying persons, their caregivers, as well as all of mankind, they are much in lack of knowledge in this area. Yet, it is a taboo for most people to talk about, or even avoid to touch upon, the issues of “death”, “care-giving to people at the end-of-life” and “bereavement” which are “unavoidable, and would encounter once or more in a lifetime”. Evasions would only make more and greater traumas, regrettable compunction and guilt, and would even indirectly burdens the kin and kith. In this way, “to love” turns into “to hurt”, all of which are due to the fear of facing “death” and the lack of the relevant knowledge. When they come to the need of putting this area of knowledge into application, they are already in front of “death”, and thus it is just too late to learn about it, and doesn't know where it would provide such kind of learning. Therefore, the promotion of “life and death education” is very difficult, and yet it is a real necessity.



restrain grief, it is okay, etc.” are not as effective and pragmatic as in the mastering of the “transformation of mental consciousness” in these “five stages” while catering to their special needs.

Human beings possess four types of conscious conditions (please refer to the article “The Wisdom of Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”) as follows:

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

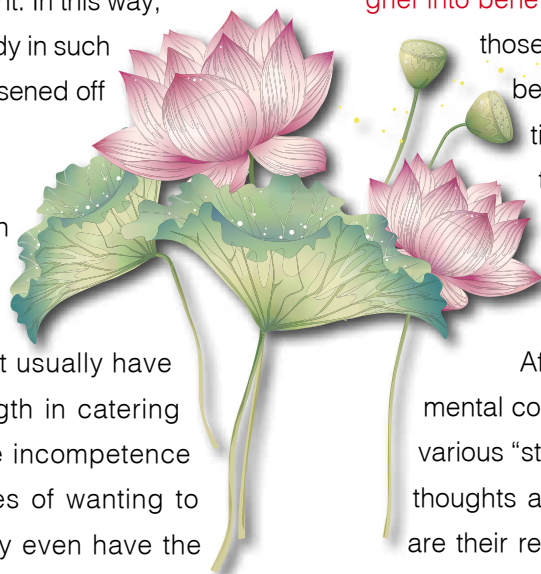
“Scenes at the Moment of Death” and “Transformation of Consciousness”

The first lesson on the “life and death education” is to learn the “five stages in approaching death”, and the settings on the “transformation of mental consciousness”, which are most pragmatic in nature. When a person faces “death” eye to eye, such comforting words as “not to be sorrowful, accept the change and

These transformations of “conscious conditions” might also occur in the various “stages in approaching death”, and can deeply affect the thoughts, the “scenes at the moment of death” being perceived by a dying patient, as well as one's daily behaviors. To a normal healthy person, the processes and demarcations of the aforesaid four kinds of transformations of “conscious conditions” are gradational, orderly, clear and obvious. However, to a terminally-ill patient who is approaching death, the processes and demarcations of these four kinds of transformations of

“conscious conditions” could be very chaotic and ambiguous. Therefore, all these will affect the daily behaviors of a dying patient. It will also make the kin and kith of the patient to become anxious and annoyed, suspecting that the patient might be possessed, bewitched, or having some kind of mental illness. Various sorts of misunderstandings would make the kin and kith to use wrong words and methods in trying to help the patient. They have no clues as what to do, due to their panicking, in order to take care of the patient. In this way, the dying patient who is already in such a predicament, would be worsened off than ever before.

As people are generally in lack of such kind of knowledge, and so the kin and kith of a terminally-ill patient usually have the feeling of lack of strength in catering to the needs, as well as the incompetence to help, despite their wishes of wanting to help. Furthermore, they may even have the feeling of providing wrong kinds of help that became more of a hindrance than that of a help. Their psychological sufferings and physical fatigues may even be more severe than that of the terminally-ill patient, and that the pressures experienced by them may even be more intense. After the whole event, if the kin and kith of a patient find that their behaviors have flaws, or their regrets can never be compensated, in conjunction with the unbearable sufferings of bereavement on the loss of their loved ones, and so from time to time, they may feel that they are unable to recover from the setback. Even after a long period of time, they still cannot be resilient from the whirl of sorrows, and cannot stand up on their feet. They might even end up with either self-abusing, self-hurting, self-abandoning, or even the committing of suicide to end the sufferings. The source and origin of this long-term suffering lies in the fact that a person cannot face squarely all those issues very early on, which are all rooted upon the problem of the lack of knowledge on “death”.



In accordance with the escalation on the aging problem of large proportions of the global population, the chances of receiving news of terminal illness or death of one’s own kin and kith would become more and more frequent. Thus, the need for “life and death education” will also be increased day by day. Hence, mankind is now in great need to know the methods and skills in dealing with death, and also need to learn how to tackle the issue of bereavement and grief, by turning grief into beneficial and constructive works in “helping those dying persons for their elevations to better spiritual domains in their continuation of better lives in the future”. In order to possess such an ability, one must first know the transformation of “mental consciousness”.

After all, how does the “transformation of mental consciousness” act in association with the various “stages in approaching death” to affect the thoughts and behaviors of a dying patient? What are their relationships with the “scenes at the moment of death”? How do the kin and kith of a dying patient cope with the situations on the “transformation of mental consciousness” and change of the “scenes at the moment of death” for the guidance of the emotions and spiritual direction of the dying patient? Are the “transformation of mental consciousness” and the changes of the “scenes at the moment of death” complementing each other? Since the “Disintegration of the Four Elements” of the physical body also affects the “transformation of mental consciousness” and the changes of the “scenes at the moment of death”, and so how can we help and guide the dying patients to resolve or alleviate these problems? In the next issue of the “Lake of Lotus”, we shall continue to explore on these important areas.

Due to my fault, the subject figure of the aforesaid case was bogged down in the agonizing “psychiatric ward”. The following poem is specially dedicated to her, for both my apology and condolence, praying that she would be able to attain Buddhahood soon:

When I felt helpless, the sense of loss resembled that of falling into a bottomless black hole. Madly I was grasping in the empty space! Do you know that? Do you realize that?

When I was frightened, the sort of chaotic and panicking feeling resembled the situation as being entangled by a crowd of specters, and I was madly trying to run away from them here and there. Would you save me? Why couldn't I see your trace?

When I lost control due to unbalanced emotions, I had gone mad as being hysterical, and I was screaming and yelling madly? Did you hear that? Why still I couldn't see your trace?

When I suffered, I felt like enduring the relentless pierces coming from thousands of arrows and needles, I couldn't help but roared and cursed relentlessly, as I had nowhere to relieve. You come and stop me quickly, please! Why couldn't I hear your voice? Neither could I see any of your traces?

When it was unbearable for me, I was besieged in the jail cellar as an innocent prisoner. I looked up to the sky and was speechless. I only thought of jumping out from the window! Where were you then? After dashing down, would I be able to see you?

Oh, child! When you were left alone in a helpless situation, please don't feel lost. Only if you have a moment of confidence, please trust me that I am seeking for a way to save you! You will no longer feel lost any more. I know the situation that you are in, as well as your helplessness. Please forgive me for my delayed rescue!

Oh, child! When you are frightened, please don't be panic. Only if you have confidence, please trust my non-superstitious teachings. You will be in a peaceful place without any demons! I will save you! My teachings are my traces in accompanying you! Please trust my concerns for you, and of not forsaking you!


Oh, Child! When your emotions are unbalanced, please put down your grasping in believing that "I am faultless". It is my expectation of you in reverting back to calmness. I've heard your calling! I'm also caring for you! This sort of earnest concern is also my trace. Please feel for it, would you? This sort of caring is like

a flowing stream, and is still non-stop up till this moment, and it will continue to last forever!

Oh, child! When you feel painful, please trust that your "mental" sufferings would vanish upon the relief of your own "grasping". The thousands of arrows and needles represent your "grasping" on the complexities of your own thoughts. Please "let go of everything" instead of relentless cursing. Undoubtedly, you can stop your own wraths, and return to my expectation of your possessed state of serenity! Did you hear my voice of ardent expectation on you? Did you see my trace in chasing after you to offer my words of encouragement?

Oh, child! When it is unbearable for you, please believe the fact that you are free originally. But due to the "grasping" on your own selfhood that you had built up a jail cellar, as if in steel bars, in trapping yourself in. Please relieve your own selfhood, you will recover your own freedom!

There are no prisons of innocence but only the hindrances of one's own "karmic forces". There is no need to ask the heaven, but only to ask yourself! Don't ever think of committing suicide, as suicide will only disable you from seeing my trace and expectations. Suicide will put you in the jail of self destruction.

Please believe that I will definitely lead you out of the cellar of "grasping". Yourself is the "main cause" of rescue, while I will be your companion of "auxiliary condition". Please stand up and we will walk together, shall we? 

Appreciate your trust upon me, which makes me feel no regret!

..... (To be Continued)

(Remarks: (1) The newly-released book on "The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)" has been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences" from Issues 1 to 10. (2) "The Meanings of Near-death Experiences (2) – The Key Points at the Moment of Death and the Essential Revelations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead" has been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences" from Issues 11 to 20.)



The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (29)

By Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren
Translated by Byron K.K. Yiu



**How To Set Up An All-Rounded Protection Shield
Training One's "Mental Concentration & Meditation" Via the Recitation of "Buddhas' Names"
To Make Contacts with All Buddhas
"Mental Strength" Generates "Energy Protective Net"**



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”).



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?

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”).

The last five chapters have clearly explained the effects and mysteries that the sound has produced upon people (Please refer to the articles on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practices” of Issues 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”). The part on the rationale for the “**resonance**” and “**operations of particles**” is one of the functions on the recitation of mantras. Since the sound of mantra does not necessarily have to be words that could be translated or understood, particularly those mantra which are meant for the following purposes:

1. **linkage or condensation;**
2. **cutting off the linkage or condensation;**
3. **taming and shattering.**

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;

The last few chapters (in particular please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”) have mentioned that the merits of having received the “**relevant teachings**” in the recitation of mantras are remarkable and vast. As to its abstruseness, apart

from relating to its rationale on “resonance” and the “motions among the particles”, it is also very much related to the different high or low levels of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit). According to Bodhisattva Maitreya’s classification, in Volume 45 of the “Yogacaryabhūmiśāstra”, “Dharanis” are divided into the following kinds:

- (1) **Dharma** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to remember the words and sentences of the various Sūtras in one’s numerous lifetimes (please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (2) **Meaning** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to remember the meanings of the Sūtras in one’s numerous lifetimes (please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (3) **Mantra** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper

recitation on this type of “mantras” is that, through one’s “meditational power”, one would be able to experience the special effects of the “mantras”, and would thus be able to help other sentient beings to remove all kinds of calamities and illnesses (please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 27 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

- (4) **Endurance** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to know the true existence of, and the real meanings behind, the various Dharmas, as well as the ability without losing them (please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

How To Set Up An All-Rounded Protection Shield

Besides the mysteries on the “resonance” and “the operations of particles”, are there any other deeper meanings in the recitations of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, Or the Sūtras”? In countless “Sūtras”, there are mentions of what kinds of merits there will be for the recitations of the Buddhas’ “Holy Names”.

For example, in Volume I of the “**Sūtra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni explains that [0114a06] : “For those virtuous men and women, who want to cleanse their various sins, should clean themselves and take on new clean clothes, kneel down for a long period of time with their hands together, by saying this: ‘Namo (meaning “take refuge to”) Aindri Aksobhya Buddha, Namo Agni-prabhā Buddha, Namo Prajñāaksa Buddha, Namo Abhaya Buddha, Namo Acintika Buddha, Namo Pradīpa-raja Buddha, Namo Raśmi-Pramocaka Buddha, Namo Vairocana-raśmi-pratimanditā Buddha..... I pledge my life in taking



refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Eastern direction**. Namō **Yamya**-paripūrṇa Buddha, Namō Prabhāva-raja Buddha, Namō Pratisthā-vega-viprakṛsta Buddha.....

I pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the

Southern direction. Namō **Varuṇi** Amitābha Buddha, Namō Simha Buddha, Namō Sugandha-Uccaya Buddha.....

I pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Western direction**. Namō **Kauveri** Sudurjayā Buddha, Namō Candra-Prabhā Buddha, Namō Candana Buddha, Namō Kāmatas Buddha..... I

pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Northern direction**. Namō **Agneyi** Parīśodhaka Buddha, Namō Kāmatas Buddha, Namō Dharma Kāmatas Buddha, Namō Dharma Prajñā Buddha..... I pledge my life

in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Southeastern direction**. Namō **Nairti** Nārāyaṇa Buddha, Namō Naga-rāja Puṇya Buddha, Namō Ratna-rava Buddha..... I pledge my life

in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Southwestern direction**. Namō **Vayavi** Candra-prabhā-mukha Buddha, Namō Candra-Prabhā Buddha..... I pledge my life in taking

refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Northwestern direction**. Namō **Aisani** Indriyārtha Buddha, Namō Samapagama Buddha, Namō Mahārājas Buddha, Namō Viraja Buddha.....

I pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **Northeastern direction**. Namō **Bhaumi** Paribhāvyamāna Buddha, Namō Tvaritam Paribhāvyamāna Buddha..... I pledge

my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **downward direction**. Namō **Brahmi** sambahula-śreyas Buddha, Namō Valāka-raja

Buddha, Namō Valāka-anuśamsa Buddha..... I pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **upward direction**. Namō

aparāṇta bhadra-cariya Buddha, Namō Maitreya Buddha, Namō Avalokiteśvara Buddha, Namō Mahāsthāmaprāpta Buddha, Namō Ākāśagarbha Buddha, Namō Mala-viśuddhi Bhāsanā Buddha.....

I pledge my life in taking refuge to all the countless and boundless Buddhas of the **future**.

Virtuous men and women, **through the recitation of these Buddhas' Holy Names**, then one could live in a stable and peaceful way in the present life, and one should also be away from adversities.

At the same time, one could cleanse one's sins. In the future, one should ultimately attain the "the unsurpassed true enlightenment of a Holy Buddha" ("Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi" in Sanskrit) For those virtuous men and women who could recite, chant and reflect upon the Buddhas' Holy Names for ten days, then all karmic obstacles and obscurations would leave them behind..... [0184a04] The Lord Buddha has told Sariputra that for those virtuous men and women, monks and nuns (**Sanskrit: Bhiksus and Bhiksunis**), and male and female lay disciples (**Sanskrit: Upasakaos and Upāsikās**) who can recite and chant the Holy Names of all these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, they would eventually not be falling into the lower realms, but would take rebirths in the human and god realms. They would have the fortunate chances to be able to meet with the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and virtuous teachers, so that they could stay away from all mental afflictions and obtain the Great Enlightenment."

The meanings behind this "Sutra" are: "For those people who would like to cleanse their various sins, they should clean themselves and take on new clean



clothes, and should, with a pure mind, wholeheartedly kneel down and hold hands together in reciting the Holy Names of the Buddhas of the **ten directions** (namely: the east, south, west, north, southeast, southwest, northwest, northeast, downward and upward directions) and even of those **future** Buddhas, with the wish to **take refuge** (“Namo” in Sanskrit) from them. And one should be willing to entrust one’s body and mind, and pledge one’s life (in taking refuge) to all those Buddhas. In this way, one could have a peaceful and happy life in this present lifetime, to be away from different calamities and disasters, and could cleanse one’s sins, and would ultimately attain Buddhahood in the future.... If one could recite, chant and reflect upon the Buddhas’ Holy Names for ten days, then **definitely** all kinds of karmic obstacles and obscurations will leave them behind.... Eventually, one will not fall into the lower realms (like the realms of the hungry ghost, animal, and hell), but could take rebirths in the god and human realms, and would often meet with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as well as those virtuous teachers and companions who could guide and direct them towards the right virtuous path of liberation, in order to stay away from all kinds of mental afflictions, and to eventually attain Buddhahood.”

When a person recites or chants a Buddha’s Holy name, one could thus make a connection with that Buddha, in order that this Buddha could bless and protect this person. Hence, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has taught that all sentient beings should recite and chant the Holy Names of the different Buddhas in the **ten directions and of the future** in order to sow the seeds of **causes and conditions in making connections** with those Buddhas in the **ten directions and of the future**. Because of these causes being generated, no matter where the sentient beings would **take rebirths** in the **ten directions** (namely: the east,

south, west, north, southeast, southwest, northwest, northeast, downward and upward directions) and **of the future**, they would be able to receive the teachings and protections from those Buddhas in the various locations. This is, indeed, the kind of wisdom and compassion that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has shown to us in teaching all sentient beings **how to set up in advance such an all-rounded protection shield**.

In the “**Sutra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has proclaimed the Holy Names of thousands of Buddhas. If counting the compressed abbreviations, such as “Namo to the eight hundred billions of those designated Buddhas of the Second Kalpa who are having the **same names with the same Dharma states**”, and so on, then the Holy Names of the Buddhas being mentioned are **actually infinite in numbers**. Hence, if all sentient beings



could follow exactly what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has told us to recite and chant, then the causes of connections being sown with all the Buddhas could also be infinite. **In the future**, sentient beings could be taught by such a vast amount of Buddhas, and could also receive sky-like protections from countless **Buddhas and related protectors**, such that it will **definitely** keep sentient beings away from all karmic obstacles, and **certainly** they will be able to practice peacefully, without disasters,

difficulties and hindrances, until they will finally attain Buddhahood. In other words, the recitation and chanting of the Buddhas’ Holy Names is a kind of Dharma practice with the nature of “praying, being blessed and protected”. Yet, it does take a **longer** period of time, and it is a bit **indirect**.

Why it will take a **longer** period of time, and is **indirect**? This is because this kind of practice is **passive**, and thus it requires the accumulation of “merits in reciting

and chanting the Buddhas' Holy Names" up to a certain degree, and should wait for the causes and conditions in connecting with the Buddhas to become ripened. Only until that time could sentient beings be able to formally kick start the practice path of "being taught, understand, and practice", and move along until they could succeed. This kind of practice belongs to the stage of "sowing the cause". When comparing with the direct ways of Dharma practice on "mind-training" in relation to "Emptiness", then the above-captioned practice is a very passive one. Hence, the path of this kind of practice is quite far away from the formal stage of "blossoming and bearing fruits", and hence, the time it takes for this kind of practice path will be much longer.

Nonetheless, one should not be look down upon this kind of practice. Indeed, this is the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni's bestowing gift for the general believers. As too many Dharma practitioners think too highly of themselves, believing that their practice on "Emptiness" is much higher than others, and so they could "take for granted" all those obstacles and disasters, and disdain the practice of reciting and chanting the Buddhas' Holy Names as part of their homework in accumulating merits. As a result, when facing hardships arising from their own karmic obstacles, these Dharma practitioners just could not wish them away as "Emptiness", but have to fall down. Worst still, they could not even bear the unbearable hardships, which would make their fierceful "greed, hatred and ignorance" to arise, such that they would fall into the lower realms of the hungry ghosts, animals and hell.

Due to the fact that many sentient beings and Dharma practitioners had been defeated by the hardships arising from their own karmic obstacles, which have pushed themselves to fall into the lower realms of the

hungry ghosts, animals and hell, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has most compassionately spoken this "Sutra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas", which is a Buddhist secret book that can help us to know "how to set up in advance such an all-rounded protection shield", in order to let these people to have some protections that are "easy to practice and achieve". In this way, this would allow those faithful believers, who believe that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni would not be just giving empty words without any evidence, could honestly and industriously follow the instructions in details to recite and chant the Holy Names of the Buddhas, so as to obtain a practice path that is smooth, without obstacles, and full of auspicious things as one wishes in the future. It may well be asked that what other ways could be better to have such causes to connect to the countless Buddhas and related protectors in the ten directions and of the future? Hence, in saying that this "Sutra" is a secret book is simply because no one has really understood its abstruseness and usage, but simply think that this is just an ordinary sutra, such that to let this openly-revealed "precious and rare classic" to become dustily sealed as a secret treasure. Sadly enough, no one seems to be interested in it at all.

With all these in mind, no matter what teachings from the various schools, and whether it belongs to the practice of either the "Causal Vehicle" or the "Resultant Vehicle", it should include this practice on the recitation and chanting of this "Sutra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas". In receiving this most blessed bestowed gift from the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, it allows the Dharma practitioners to create a whole sheet of "top, down, left, right" of 360 degrees of protective shield without any leakages. It fits into the needs for practices of the "three-times", whereby it helps to "remove the past karmic obstacles,



open up the **current** barriers, and setup the **future** protections” (“three-times” means “past, present and future”).

Training One’s “Mental Concentration & Meditation” Via the Recitation of “Buddhas’ Holy Names” To Make Contacts with All Buddhas

Holding onto the recitation of the “Buddhas’ Holy names” is a way to allow Dharma practitioners to have the training on “mental concentration and meditation” in order to make contacts with all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The most popular ones are those practice methods that have been described in the “**Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life**” (or the “**Aparimitayus Sutra**”, or the “**Larger Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutra**”), the “**Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life**” (or the “**Amitayur Dhyana Sutra**”) and the “**Sutra on the Buddha Amitabha**” (or the “**Smaller Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutra**”), namely: to continuously hold onto reciting the Holy Name of the Buddha Amitabha until one reaches the state of “mental concentration”, with the state of mind abiding in “not having a single confusion, nor with any inversion”. Then, the question is what merits this will offer?

Within the “**Sutra on the Buddha Amitabha**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has instructed us that: “ ... Sariputra, any virtuous man or woman, upon hearing the name of the Buddha Amitabha, keep His Name in mind **with undisturbed thoughts**, as if for one day, for two days, for three days, for four days, for five days, for six days, for seven days, that person, when about to die, will see Buddha Amitabha and His Holy Retinue to appear before him/her. When this person dies, **having one’s mind without inversion**, one can then be reborn into the Blissful (“**Sukhavati**” in **Sanskrit**) Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha...”

When the state of one’s “mental concentration” is up to the point where one’s “mind is with undisturbed thoughts, and without any inversion”, then this is the

state for one to **enter into the realm of “meditation”**. This “meditation” realm is the easiest, and also the most direct, contact with the **excellent quality and positive energy environment** of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. How long will it need to take in order to stay in this realm of “meditation” so as to enable oneself to become ascertained in having the merits of “taking rebirth directly in the Blissful Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha”? According to the various “Sutras”, it requires **seven days to be continuously abiding in the “meditation” realm by focusing on the Buddha Amitabha**, in order that it will ensure the arising of those merits. The way to have “mental concentration” is to **solely and continuously** hold onto reciting the Holy Name of “Buddha Amitabha”. While using this **simple** sound to maintain one’s “mental concentration”, it is also the **direct** call upon “Buddha Amitabha” and related protectors to come and help.



“Meditation” is a very important topic in Dharma practice. One must require “the power of meditation” to purify and concentrate the activities of the “mind”, so that one can have **the same purified level** upon which one can reach towards the higher levels of the “god realm”. Of course, the Blissful Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha is certainly one of those higher levels of the “god realm”. Indeed, it is **no surprise that it requires seven days of continuous “meditation” state** to reach the Blissful Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha, **and so no need to have any exclamations and disbeliefs**. Indeed, the “meditation” state represents **an ability, and a stable form of spiritual state**. For those sentient beings who have this kind of ability and state of mind, they could reach certain **higher levels** of spiritual state and realm, and could even be strong enough to become “liberated from the cycle of karmic existence”.

Within “**Sutra on the Buddha Amitabha**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has taught all sentient beings to hold onto the recitation of the “Holy Name of Buddha Amitabha” so as to help them in reaching towards the states of “mental concentration”, “meditation”, and “contacting”. In this way, the other level of merit for holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Names” of Buddhas is simply “mental concentration, meditation, and contacting”. By using “mental concentration” to reach the level of “meditation”, one could even arouse one’s hidden “mental strength” so as to strengthen one’s ability to help oneself. The following is a true case that could be used for one’s reference.



Case 1: (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 19 of the “Lake of Lotus”, or the case report on Chapter 9 of “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (2) – Guidance for Death and The Essential Revelations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead”).

Miss Chung Sue of Taiwan is a sports lady in mountaineering, and also an instructor of Yoga. She has been in good health ever since. However, in the period from 2000 to 2007, Miss Chung had experienced **four times** of “revivals from the near-death experiences” of an **unknown cause**.

One of the incidents occurred during a “religious ceremony for the pacification of deceased persons”. A car accident happened to the two younger brothers of Miss Chung’s friend, during which both of them got killed. As her friend was in a Christian family and was not feasible to hold a Buddhist ceremony of pacification for the two younger brothers, so Miss Chung was being requested by her friend to hold such a Buddhist ritual. During this ceremony, Miss Chung

sudden fell “**unconscious**” and she experienced the “near-death” situation.

Miss Chung, being a Buddhist practitioner for 16 years, has been practicing meditation and reciting mantras ever since, and was able to sense that the two brothers of her friend would be coming to the ceremony before her “unconscious”. However, she felt that the two deceased brothers were associated with very “chaotic energy fields”, which had indicated that they were **not situated in a good place**. Moreover, there were **ups and downs of their emotions**, and thus causing their associated energies to be rather chaotic in nature.

While Miss Chung was starting to fall into “unconscious”, she felt that something like a big bell was enclosing her from the top downwards, and then her audio sensation became very sharp, hearing the sound of “hum”, which was so loud as if she would be crushed into pieces, until she was so shaken as to start falling onto the ground. **All of her sensations had now become very sharp.**

When the “Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs) happened to her in the past few times, she was all alone with nobody by her side to touch her, and so she had no idea at all that the deceased person **would feel extremely painful and intolerable feelings** when being touched upon at the moment of death. As she was entering into the “process of death” during that moment, she had lost her ability to respond, and so she was in no way to stop the people in the ceremony to buffet her for resuscitation. Not until then did she come to realize that being touched upon at the moment of death would bring about such kind of extreme and intolerable pains. Anyhow, **it was already**

too late for everything. She had no alternatives but to endure such kind of sufferings. This is, indeed, one of the dangers that all those people who do not have any relevant trainings and knowledge about death must have to face.

At that very moment, she felt her body to start decomposing with the solids to become melted down and dissolved into liquids. All the orifices of the body were excreting bodily fluids. The anus and all kinds of bodily organs seemed to be peeling off and falling apart. The feeling of the taping of bodily fluid was like the collapsing of the mountains and the cracking of the whole earth. Thereafter, her bodily temperature dropped, and she began to feel colder and colder gradually in the chills of gusty winds.

These phenomena have been described in the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”**. In the book, solids were known as the “earth element”, fluids were known as the “water element”, temperatures were known as the “fire element”, and gases were known as the “wind element”. The whole phenomenon was known as the decomposition of the four elements of “earth, water, fire and wind” (please refer to the article on **“The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences”** in Issue 8 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).

Later on, she found herself entering into another world. She heard a lot of noises, which sounded like the conversations of people in a very strange language, not

the kind of human languages. When the first incident of NDE occurred to her, she was extremely **panic-stricken** as she had no idea what kind of happenings would occur to a deceased person. Basing upon these observations, it is most important and fundamental for people to come to understand that the “knowledge on the operations of posthumous life” is the most crucial **knowledge for one’s own “self-salvation”**.

After her “revival from the dead”, Miss Chung actively endeavored to study the **“Tibetan Book of the Dead”** and its relevant materials. She then came to know that the various phenomena that might have happened after death, and so she was **no longer so scared** when the other NDEs occurred to her again in the pacifying ceremony in the later days. As such, she was able to look around and pay great attention to the surrounding environment and its special features. **This sort of “calmness and composedness” in her mind allowed her to have a chance of “self-salvation” thereafter.**

Miss Chung saw a large crowd of people walking towards the same direction, and that she was also among them. It seemed that there was the existence of a **gigantic sucking disc** with strong tractional forces, such that the people were being pulled and dragged into it gradually and **helplessly**. This kind of phenomenon had been accounted for by many NDE survivors, some of whom had described the gigantic sucking disc as some kind of a **“whirlpool”**, while others had mentioned that these were **“holes in the ground with huge sucking forces”** or **“black holes”**, locating everywhere.

“Mental Strength” Generates “Energy Protective Net”

Miss Chung had continually heard a repeating sound of ‘Amita-Buddha-Ya’, which is the **pronouncement** of the Holy Name of “Buddha Amitabha” **in Sanskrit**. Since she understood the meaning of the sound, therefore she followed the



sound and **focused on** the chanting of it together. After she had concentrated on the sound, an **incredible** matter happened. She found herself being encompassed and protected by a “net of energy” like a super-bowl, and the speed of being pulled and dragged along by the gigantic sucking disc started to slow down. She no longer followed the crowd, which continued to be dragged forward by the “tractions” towards a certain direction. Eventually, she was able to avert the “tractions” and left the crowd altogether. After returning back to her physical body, and thus she was revived from the dead.

In fact, where did this kind of **incredible** protective force come from? Was it because of the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas? Or was it because of some other reason? If the principle behind this has not been realized, the method of spiritual practice could be **detoured onto the wrong path of “materialism”**, and consequentially entered into the **tomb of “superstition”**, with one’s spiritual practice failing just a step away from success.

The continuous repeating sound of ‘Amita-Buddha-Ya’ was a kind of broadcasting from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, from the realm of heavens, as well as from the volunteers of the “spiritual domains” as a kind of assistance. Therefore, the footage of the sound could be in the forms of either Buddhas’ Holy Names, or mantras, or sounds of sacred beings **whichever ways** that maybe helpful to sentient beings. It could be said to be an **“external blessing” to induce** the “internal mental strength” of the sentient beings for **“self-salvation”**.

This kind of sound could not generate the “protective energy net”, and so most of the sentient beings in the crowd that had continued on with their proceeding towards the “gigantic sucking disc” had not been benefited. Only those who had been attracted by the sound and then **concentrated** on it could generate

the **“protective energy net”** due to the ignitions of their **“internal potential energies”** through linkages with external assistances.

This is because “concentration” could induce one’s “mental strength”, which would activate the programming of “autonomy and independence”, coupling with the energy of “mental strength” for the **development of “self-defense ability”**, so that the “protective energy net” could be generated. Once the “protective energy net” has been generated, it could be able to insulate all the spiritual practitioners from external interferences, and so they could be free from the quagmire as wished. Since Miss Chung no longer followed the **passive** programming of operation as the crowd, she was then able to break away from those attractive forces of “tractions”.

Human nature, being what it is as of **scary about strange environments** and with the release from the attractive forces of “tractions”, triggered Miss Chung’s “sub-conscious” of the desire to return back to a more familiar place. This kind of “mental strength” caused Miss Chung to return to her own physical body, which was still full of vitality, and was thus able to maintain the linkage with her own “consciousness”. Hence, she was able to “revive from the dead”. In other words, Miss Chung still had the **right of initiative** in her mind. However, sentient beings had always been preoccupied with **superstitions and reliances** and thus regarded that all these were the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and had overlooked the subtle function of one’s own “mental strength”.

In the numerous NDE cases, people who had “revived from the dead” claimed that they had the **“freedom of choices”**, and so they were able to choose to return back to the human world. They all **thought that** this “freedom of choice” was given to them either by their gods or by the Buddhas. In fact, the phenomenon

of the “revival from death” happens due to the **subtle function of one’s own “mental strength”**, in coordinating with the physical body which is still in vitality, in order that this phenomenon of the “revival from the dead” can happen.

For some of the NDE survivors who were **unwilling** to return to the human world, yet they had lost their rights on the “freedom of choices”, and so they were unable to stay in the “spiritual domain” and thus had to resume their lives because of the fact that the vitalities of their physical bodies were being stronger than that of their “mental strengths”. This is the phenomenon upon which the **“karmic forces” were stronger than their “mental strengths”**.


Therefore, the **crucial point of all Dharma practices** centers on the training on the **strength of one’s “mental concentration”**, for the induction on the operation of one’s “mental strength” under one’s own directives. Furthermore, the “correct programming of resolution” for **“self-salvation”** is triggered by one’s “mental strength”. Those spiritual practitioners who have misplaced **superstitions and reliance on blessings** into their Dharma practices would **lose the ability of “self-salvation”**. Just like those people who had fallen into the sea. They could carry out “self-salvation” if they know how to swim; but if they don’t, then they will have to “wait for help” from someone else. Undoubtedly, the odds of success for those persons who **know how to carry out “self-salvation”** are far better off than that for those who have to “wait for help” from someone else.

Therefore, the other level of the merits for holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Names” of the Buddhas is to **arouse one’s hidden “mental strength” so as to reinforce and strengthen one’s “ability of self-salvation”**. As a conclusion, the merits of holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Names of the Buddhas” could be divided into three kinds:

1. Holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Name of a specific Buddha” so as to get connected with

that particular Buddha, in order to receive the blessings and protections from that Buddha and related protectors.

2. Holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Names of the Buddhas” is a way to train one’s “mental concentration, meditation”, and to make contacts with the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
3. Holding onto the recitation of the “Holy Names” of the Buddhas could arouse one’s hidden “mental strength” so as to strengthen one’s ability of self-salvation.

Are there any differences in the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? Which of them would have a greater strength? What kinds of benefits will they have? What are the differences in the techniques of reciting them? There are two levels when producing human sounds, namely the “conscious” and the “subconscious” levels. Will they be beneficial to one’s Dharma practice? What are the effects that are produced in the practice methods for the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? To what degrees and levels do these practice methods influence one’s “mental strength”? What is the highest objective that can be achieved through these methods? What is the length of time that one has to spend on these methods? (To be Continued) 

(Note: The newly released books on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (1)” and “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (2) – Seven Methods of Strengthening One’s Mind to Counteract Adversities” have already been published. The content for “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (1)” includes the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice from Issues 1 to 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”, while “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (2) – Seven Methods of Strengthening One’s Mind to Counteract Adversities” includes the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice from Issues 11 to 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Synopsis of Each Chapter

The Skills in the Setting-up of "Plans"

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

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

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”).

(xx) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (17): The Mystery of the Blessings of the Sound in the Recitations of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names or Sutras” – The practice method of using sound to recite “mantras, names of Holy Deities, and scriptures” is one of the practice methods that have been adopted by most religions and ceremonies in this secular world. Does it consist of other deeper meanings? What are some of the effects that will be produced from this kind of practice methods? What are the degrees of influence that this has upon one’s own “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that it can achieve? What is the length of time that it will take up in order to achieve the objective? (Please refer to Issue 24 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xxi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (18): How to Make Different Mantras to Produce Effects – the effects and energies that are produced from the “resonance” of sound can make the “electrons” at the outer layer of the “atom” to move over to the other “atom” next to it, or else the two “atoms” can share the same “electrons”. This kind of mechanism can help make “atoms” to become bondings in forming “molecules”, or other types of “compounds”. Through this process, different types of materials can then be connected, consolidated and formed. Yet, what types of pronunciation of “sounds” could match such particular effects?

.....(Please refer to Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xxii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (19): What is the meaning of having received the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras in order that merits would be arisen which are remarkable and vast, particularly in the enhancement of one’s own wisdom which would be very significant, and would not be lost in one’s numerous lifetimes? – There are numerous mentions of the “Dharani Samadhi”, the “Dharani Seal Samadhi” and the “one hundred and eight kinds of “Samadhis” in the different “Buddhist Sutras”, and so what are they? These are referring to the different “Mantras” within the hundred types of “Right Concentrations”, and so what is the mysterious rationale behind them? Should “mantras” be translated? What are the merits that can be arisen from the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of “mantras”? (Please refer to Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xxiii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (20): How to Give Rise to the Wonderful Merits in “Pacifying/Averting Adversities” by Reciting the “Mantra Dharani”? – There are many more conditions that need to be coordinated in order to give rise to the merits of “pacifying/averting adversities” by reciting the “Mantra Dharani”, as it would involve the “collective karma” of all those who are involved, that is, the “karmas” of each and every one that would be affected by

those adversities combined together. As such, it would be much more complicated than the “karma” involved in both the “Dharma Dharani” and the “Meaning Dharani”, as for the latter two only the “karma” of the Dharma practitioner himself/herself would be involved. Hence, it would be relatively much easier to give rise to the merits of both the “Dharma Dharani” and the “Meaning Dharani”, and the level of “meditational power” that is required to match these Dharani is relatively lower. On the other hand, the level of “meditational power” that is required to match the giving rise of the merits of “pacifying/averting adversities” of the “Mantra Dharani” would be correspondingly higher..... (please refer to the Issue 27 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xxiv) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (21): The wonderful merits of the recitation of “Endurance Dharani” – How to generate the merits of “Endurance Dharani”? “Endurance” has two meanings: one represents the “Endorsement Abler”, and the other represents a “Decision”. The “Endorsement Abler” means that “after the verification and endorsement, one has been confirmed to have such an attainment”. As for the “Decision”, it indicates that one has “surely and profoundly realized, and has thus affirmatively achieved a certain level of attainment, in a decisive and firm manner without any doubts” (please refer to the Issue 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

EVERYTHING COMES from THE MIND (I)

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



The Emergence of Lives – Quantity

The Emergence of Lives – Forms

**All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same
Source - The Buddhist Perspective**

**All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same
Source - The Scientific Perspective**

Introduction

The theme for this lesson today is “everything comes from the mind”. Many people do not understand the meaning of this idea. They would ask whether all things in this world are really coming from the “mind”? Whether all things are working just like having a dream? Does it mean that so long as my “mind” does not have the intention to do it, then nothing will exist? But, then, there are others who think that since all material things really exist, the saying that all

things come from the “mind” does not seem to be in line with the “scientific” explanations. Such kind of an explanation seems to be quite superstitious.

Before we try to explain on “everything comes from the mind”, let us first of all try to explore on the emergence of lives.

Chapter I – The Emergence of Lives

The Emergence of Lives - Quantity

How would the “Buddhist teachings” try to explain about the emergence of lives? The Lord Buddha had mentioned that all “sentient beings are infinite” in numbers. There are “four ways of births” for the various living beings to be born.

There have been cases in which people have criticized the “Buddhist teachings” because of the saying that “sentient beings are infinite”, resulting in their not believing in the “Buddhist teachings”. They said that “Buddhist teachings” are very superstitious. They would argue that the so-called “six realms” in the “cycle of karmic existence” actually denotes the “six levels”.



Take for example, that there are ten trillions of people in this “human world”. If one of these ten trillions of people had passed away, and that this person had become an animal in the next life, then naturally there would be



one person less among the ten trillions of people. So, comparatively speaking, there should be less and less human beings in this world, in terms of its quantity. However, the number of human beings in this world is ever increasing! But, then, the “Buddhist teachings” have said that it would be very difficult in order to become a human being, which seems to be rather contradictory to each other.

In fact, the “Buddhist teachings” have never told us about the total quantity of sentient beings in each of the different “realms”. There has never been a specific number, in terms of quantity. It has always referred to the concept of “impermanence”; that is, there is nothing which is everlasting and unchangeable. Hence, how can there be a quantity for us to count on? The Lord Buddha had never talked about the number of human beings that should have existed in this world. If one does not believe in the Lord Buddha due to this reason, this is simply because he has basically never really listened to any “Buddhist teachings”. In fact, the sentence of “sentient beings are infinite” in all “Buddhist Sutras” is used to describe that the number of sentient beings is so infinite that it

would be impossible to count them. It does not refer to a number or the **quantity**. If you consider that there is a **quantity** to count on, it would mean that your **thinking is rather limited**, and so it has to be changed.

The Emergence of Lives – Forms

According to the “Buddhist teachings”, there are four ways in which sentient beings are to be born, and so they can broadly be divided up into four different types of “**births by womb, or moisture, or egg, or emanation body**”:

1. Birth from a **womb** (**jarayuja**) – as with humans;
2. Birth from **moisture** (**sarhsvedaja**) – as with mosquitoes;
3. Birth from an **egg** (**andaja**) - oviparous, as with birds;
4. Birth from the **emanation body** (**aupapaduka**) - metamorphic, as with “beings in the hells, the bardo beings, and the devas”.

The “emanation body” is a situation that could not be easily seen by us all. According to the “Buddhist Sutras”, there is a “hell” realm. Those sentient beings who would be born in hell would appear in the form of “emanation body”. It does not require any person to give birth to it, and it appears as if just within the “beep” of a sound. It is the same with the “bardo” body, which is also a form of “emanation body” (“Bardo” refers to the intermittent transitional period between the time when one dies and before one is to be reborn again). It is also the same for the “devas” (that is, those beings who are in the heaven realm) who do not require any parents to give birth to them, and are transformed naturally.

However, many people have misunderstood that the “ghost” is also a type of “emanation body”. In fact, there are two types of ghosts: those who are born from the “womb”, and those who are born from the “emanation body”.

Then, what does science have to say about this? At this point, science only recognizes the first **three types**, namely: **births** that are from either “**womb, or moisture, or egg**”. Scientists do not believe that “emanation bodies” ever exist, as they simply could not see them in their naked eyes.

All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Buddhist Perspective

The “Buddhist teachings” mentioned that “**all sentient beings are coming from the same source**”. All kinds of sentient beings, including us human beings, are coming from the one and the same source of origin.

Hence, the “Buddhist teachings” mentioned that “**all sentient beings are equal**, and they all have the same **Buddha Nature**”. It is only because of the fact that they are drawn by their different “karmic forces” [“Karma” literally means “behaviours”, and can thus refer to both the “good and evil behaviours” that have been accumulated through our “numerous past lifetimes”. All of these actions would bring about the creations of countless and endless “mental strengths”, which will then act as “forces

of tractions” in pushing and pulling all kinds of sentient beings to be “transmigrated” and “reincarnated” within the “cycle of karmic existence” (known as “Samsara”) and to bear all kinds of consequences thereafter],





which would then get them to be reborn into the different bodies of different forms. Hence, on the surface of things, this would make us consider that they are of different species, but, in fact, they are all coming from the one and the same source of origin.

It was mentioned in the Sanskrit “[Ekottaragama Sutra](#)” (or “[Anguttara-nikaya Sutta](#)” in Pali, meaning the “[Gradual Sayings](#)”) that “Sentient beings have either two legs, or four legs, or many legs.” That is to say, there are some sentient beings who have two legs, some have four legs, some have many legs, while some others do not have any legs at all.

Again, the “[Ekottaragama Sutra](#)” also mentioned that: “Some sentient beings are with forms, while others are without any forms.” That is to say, those sentient beings with forms are because of their formations by materials. Those without forms are due to their formations without any materials, and so for these sentient beings, we probably would not be able to see their existences in “material formats”. For those sentient beings whose formations are without any materials, they can shuttle and reach to most parts of the space. As for those bodies with material formats, they can only shuttle within

certain specified areas of the space, and so they cannot go and reach to most parts of the space.

Furthermore, the “[Ekottaragama Sutra](#)” again mentioned that: “Some sentient beings are with thoughts, while others are without thoughts.” That is to say, some of them are “with thoughts”, that is, some of them are capable of thinking. While there are other who are “without thoughts”, meaning that there are those who are not capable of thinking.

All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Scientific Perspective

What does it have to say from the scientific perspective? The scientist’s viewpoint is to break down the subject matter for observation and analysis, like how is it being composed? In fact, all human beings and living beings, when they are broken down, are found to be composed of the atoms of different elements, such as hydrogen, oxygen, calcium, carbon, etc. These elements are exactly the same as



the atomic compositions of the various galaxies and milky ways within the universe, without any difference. In other words, what we see in this “[world of the vessel](#)” (In Buddhism, what we now see as the “universe” is called as the “[world of the vessel](#)”), and the “[world of the beings](#)” (which refers to all sentient beings, including human beings), are basically the same, in terms of all of their material compositions, from the scientific

perspective..... (To Be Continued) 

End-of-Life Care (5)



Foreword

**Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye
Vajra Acharya Pema Lhadren**

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 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.

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 second article. **Wish for the Increase of Wholesome Merits !**

Hospice Care on Cancer Patients

By Dorje Drasi

(He is a double-trained nurse in both general and psychiatric nursing. He obtained a certificate with credit in Hospice Training, and had been working in

medical, surgical, orthopaedic and geriatric units in the Princess Margaret Hospital and Tuen Mun Hospital respectively for many years. Since 1993 till now, he has been working in Shatin Hospital Oncology/Hospice unit as a nursing officer for over 16 years. He has rich experiences in caring patients with terminal illnesses, as well as in supporting and soothing their family members.)

Introduction

Hello, everybody! I am a nursing officer. I graduated from the Nursing School thirty years ago and mainly worked at the surgical section of Tuen Mun Hospital. Due to my residential change to Ma On Shan, I had applied for a post at Shatin Hospital in December 1993 and was successful. Except for one year at a medical unit, I have been serving in oncology for almost fifteen years, up till now. Initially, I was not used to the unit as it differed very much from my previous experiences in the surgical unit where patients leave the hospital happily after their operations. However, in the oncology unit, most cancer patients are at their terminal stages. They barely have any positive thinking on their future. Some are **full of fears**. Likewise, their families are **engulfed by dismay with feelings of hopelessness**. They do **not show any smiles** in their visits to their cancer-stricken relatives. Some even **project their negative feelings** towards us, the medical staff, which really drives me to a suffocated condition.

After I have finished a course on the "Hospice Nursing", which took place from January to July



1999, have read some Buddhist books, and later became a disciple of the Dudjom Buddhist Association, I started to learn much more about the meanings of “life, death and impermanence”. I have greater empathy with the patients and/or their families, and increasingly I share their feelings of despair. These understandings not only facilitate me to

satisfactorily deal with and help other patients, and/or their families, but also reduce my phobia and burnout on the job.

Understanding of Cancer

There are many kinds of cancers. The most common ones are Lung Cancer, Liver Cancer, Rectum Cancer, CA Bladder and CA Breast, etc. Most of them may spread to the bones or the brains of the patients, and would thus induce serious bone pains, a loss of mobility, and that the patients would be left bed-bound. Many patients have indicated that they are in utter misery, in the sense that they can “neither live nor die”. Their sufferings are really beyond any expression in words.

Cancer is caused by the problems during the process of cell divisions in a certain part of one's own body, such that the speed of division is in some multiples of times, much faster than the normal rate. Finally, a tumor was formed in some parts of the body. If the tumor presses other tissues or organs, the patient feels particularly painful and some other symptoms may result. For more than ten years of my working experiences, I have encountered innumerable



cancer-stricken patients during their terminal stages. According to my clinical experiences, I came to realize that most of the patients have endured psychologically unhappy lives during their developmental processes. Especially before they contracted the cancer illness, they have suffered long periods of torment in negative emotions, and have become so depressed that they eventually fell sick.

In terms of personality traits, many of these patients are more self-centered, prone to blame on others, more inflexible, and cannot easily forgive others. For the male patients, many of them have experienced

divorces or unhappy married lives. Even quite a few of them have experienced more than one married life, or were having extra-marital affairs. Of course, many of them faced greater pressures comparatively due to poor family conditions. Some patients have encountered business bankruptcy, which made them felt very sad and finally got ill. All in all, most patients have lost their inner balance psychologically.

Cancer Treatment and Positive Thinking

The most common measures in treating cancers are surgical excisions, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Except those cancer patients who were in their early stages of Pharyngeal Carcinoma, the rest of them could not be cured effectively. Instead, they were only offered palliative treatment which can help to



reduce the degree of pains. Besides, physiotherapy and occupational therapy can ease the swallowing problems of patients. As a matter of fact, **up till now, there is no radical treatment of cancer**. In facing death, most people will have the **emotional “fear-of death”**. There is a palliative voluntary worker who has long-term experiences in persuading terminal patients **to let go and live in a more relaxed way**. However, when she actually faced her own death, she became so **very stubborn and angry** about things, which puzzles

and disappoints me. On the whole, **devout** patients, or patients having supportive families, faced their last stages of life in a much calmer manner. Overall speaking, the most important thing for terminal patients is their **ability to “release one’s mind from their own prisons of grasping”**. Regardless of what religions, family backgrounds, or different situations, the most important thing for terminal patients is their **ability to “let go of their grasping”, and to face life with less complaints and more forgiveness**, which would enable them to lead the last journey of their life **in a more peaceful and relaxed manner**.

“Everything comes from the mind”, and thus this “mind” is, indeed, so very important! Of course, every sentient being has one’s own “karmic combinations”, such as the destined planet, country, family background, religion, and so on. Yet, the **most crucial factor is one’s own character**. Oblivious to the situation, either pleasant or not, if one can develop one’s **“Bodhicitta”** (with an altruistic heart and mind), **to offer assistance to others in a selfless manner, and**



to let go of one’s grasping, such that one can maintain a **pure and clean heart** with calm disposition, it will be most likely for one not to contract any cancer disease. Even if one does contract cancer, if one develops “Bodhicitta”, one can live in a more relaxed and happy way for the last stage of one’s life, and also one’s family members and friends will tend to feel better as well. [“Karmas” are “forces of tractions”, and thus **“karmic networks”** refer to those “good and evil behaviours” that have been accumulated

through our **“numerous past lifetimes”**. All these actions of one’s inner self and of others would thus bring about the creations of countless and endless “mental strengths”, which are so much interrelated and intertwined with each other, and will then act together as a network of “tractional forces” of mutual-influencing in the pushing and pulling of all kinds of sentient beings to be “transmigrated” within the “cycle of karmic existence” (known as “Samsara”), and are known as the **“karmic networks”**. Please refer to the DVD on the “Inconceivable Law of Karma”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association.]

However, when faced with adverse environments, most sentient beings will be prone to react negatively in terms of a **“vicious cycle”: being selfish, arrogant, yet with guilty feelings, and/or anger**, as well as other negative emotions as well. In such case, how can we be able to help these patients with “terminal” cancer to face their future? We will try to use the following two cases as a comparison:



	Case one	Case two
Sex/Age	Male mid-six ties	Male mid-fifties
Diagnosis	Ca lung, pleural metastasis, pleural effusion, Ischemic heart disease, hypertension, BPH	Ca lung(left), bone metastasis with cord compression, DM
Education	F5	Two years only, can read newspaper (round 70%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career • Company Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction site worker • Cultivate pig and owned a textile factory when young 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver in hotel for 15 years • Good benefit and support from employer. Full pay sick leave since 07
Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village house in Sai Kung • Inherited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village house near Yuen Long • Bought
Social class	Upper middle class	Middle class
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kwan Tai (a Chinese folk hero) • Nothing after death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims no fear but not exactly true • Strong fear before death 	Calm
Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife, one son and three daughters • Supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife and one daughter • Supportive
Previous Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible husband and father • Wife almost die at age of 28 due to abortion, patient saved her • Gave all money earned to her wife 	Responsible husband and father
Cancer Since	Cancer since 2005	Cancer since 2007
Admitted For	SOB	Lower limb weakness and pain
Treatments	1) Chest drainage 2) Chemotherapy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First line: GCx6 • Second line: Iressa • Third line: Taxotere x5 • Fourth line: BIBW 2992 study • Fifth line: Alimta • Used around 2 million: Mainly private hospital fee, chemotherapy fee and Chinese medicine (\$1000/day)	1) Lobotomy in private hospital 2007 2) Multiple bone metastasis 2007 with RT 3) Chemotherapy: First line Iressa 4) Brain metastasis 4/07 with RT 5) Chemotherapy: second line GC x 6 cycles, initially with good response, CEA dropped to 4.2 6) Palliative RT to bone: L2 to Sacrum for pain control 2009 7) TCM
NCC	Yes	Yes
Patient' s Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand • A bit denial • Strong fear of death 	Understand and accept
Family' s Acceptance	OK	OK
Before Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptized, because daughter is a Christian • Expresses strong fear, presses bell more than 30 times every night • Video taken • 2009 at 0037hr 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already Christian • Occasional confusion but calm and restful overall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified • Mode of Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative at bed side • Relatively calm, sedated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2009 at 1730hr • Peaceful death
Funeral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not mentioned
Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife came with daughter on to SH and gave us a fruit basket and a thankful card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciated our end of life service

Characteristics of Hospice Nursing

Focus on patients with terminal illnesses, mainly cancers (cannot be cured completely under the current Western medical treatment):

- To improve the life quality of terminal patients;
- To provide suitable care (to understand them from their standpoint);

- To pass away peacefully with dignity and respect;
- To support terminal patients and their families in terms of physical pains, mental stresses, society's pressure and spiritual needs so as to relieve them of their burdens. 