

མཚོ་མགོ་

# Lake of Lotus

*Bimonthly*

Issue 3 May 2006

*The Benefits of Observing  
the Great Festival of the Tenth Day*

*The Mysteries on the Entrance &  
Exit Doors of Life and Death*

*"Authentic" versus "Fake" Gurus*



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蓮花生大士之虹光身



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### Tibetan Version :

༡༣། ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་འཕུལ་པ་ལྟོ་ལོན་མཛོད་བསྟན་པ་ལྟོ་ལོན་། ..... 1-4

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### Editor's Heart-felt Message



Since the first issue of the "Lake of Lotus", we have received very distinct and strongly supportive feedbacks from our readers, reflecting to us that: the contents of our journal are very timely, inspiring and insightful, with in-depth analyses and practical applications. At the same time, these details are dealt with in very simplified ways of explanations so that it can be clear, lively and easy to understand by all sorts of people, including non-Buddhists. Furthermore, the designs of the journal are very beautiful and attractive, while the printing of it is most elegant. As a whole, this has uplifted the overall image of "Buddhism" as an "in" thing in our modern day society!

Supportive letters and emails came flooding in like snowflakes falling from the sky, which brought about a strong sense of the warm current that came in during the cold season in warming up the hearts of all our volunteers, triggering the passions of selfless offerings at the depths of their hearts, and thus giving them limitless energy and momentum to carry on with their missions and visions.

As there are numerous works that need to be done, we are extremely sorry that we cannot reply to thank all of those who wrote those supportive letters and emails. Hence, we would like to take this opportunity here to extend our utmost appreciation to all these people from the great depths of our hearts: **your great supports and encouragements are, indeed, most important to us all!**

This issue of the "Lake of Lotus" has dramatically increased from the original 60 pages to the present 80 pages. In order to ease the heavy financial burdens and pressures that we have to bear, as well as to have enough resources to continue on with this publication in the future, so starting from this issue, the price of the "Lake of Lotus" will be regulated to HK\$10. In order to thank you for your kind supports, the price of the annual subscription rate for our readers will remain the same until 30th June, 2006.

Once again, with our most humble and sincere gratitude to the people and organizations from all walks of life!

Editorial Committee

蓮花海 Lake of Lotus

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ལུག་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་བཅུར་རྒྱ་གར་ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ལུ་སྟེགས་པས་  
ནང་པའི་བསྟན་པ་ལ་གིན་ཏུ་འཛོལ་བ་ན་ལུ་སྟེགས་ལྷ་སྤྱང་  
དང་བཅས་པ་རྩུ་འབྲུལ་ཆེན་པོས་ཐལ་བར་བརྒྱག་ནས་  
སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཆོན་དགྲུང་དུ་སྤྱོད་པའི་ཆོ་ག་  
རུ་མེད་གོ་སྒྲ་སྟོགས་སུ་གྲགས། བདུན་པ་བྱ་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་  
བཅུར་ཐངས་སྤྱིང་གི་ལུ་སྟེགས་པས་གཞུང་ཆུང་བསྐྱར་བ་ན་  
ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་རྩི་རྩེའི་གར་མཛད་ཅིང་རྒྱ་པོ་བྱེན་དུ་བསྒྲོག་  
པའི་རྩུ་འབྲུལ་གྱིས་དད་ནས་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་ནང་པའི་བསྟན་པ་  
ལ་བཀོད་པའི་ཆོ་ག་རུ་མཁའ་སྤྱིང་རྩལ་དུ་གྲགས། བརྒྱད་  
པ་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་བཅུར་ལུ་སྟེགས་པའི་དུག་སྦྱོར་གྱིས་མ་  
ཚུགས་པར་བདུད་རྩིར་བསྐྱར་ནས་གཟི་མདངས་སྤར་ལས་  
ལྷག་པར་རྒྱས་པའི་རྩུ་འབྲུལ་གྱིས་དད་པར་མཛད་དེ་ལུ་  
སྟེགས་འཁོར་བཅས་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་ལ་བརྒྱག་པའི་  
ཆོ་ག་རུ་ཉི་མ་འོད་ཟེར་དུ་གྲགས། དགུ་པའི་པག་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་  
བཅུར་བལ་ཡུལ་ཡང་ལེ་ཤོད་དུ་རྩི་རྩེ་གཞོན་ལུ་སྤྱོད་སྐྱར་  
བཞེངས་ནས་བལ་པོད་ཀྱི་ལྷ་འདྲེ་རྣམས་དམ་ལ་བཏགས་  
ཤིང་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཡང་དག་གི་སྒྲུབ་པ་མཛད་དེ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་  
མཆོག་གི་རིག་འཛིན་གྲུབ་པའི་ཆོ་ག་རུ་རྩི་རྩེ་ཐོད་ཐོད་རྩལ་  
དུ་གྲགས། བརྒྱ་པ་བྱ་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་བཅུར་པོད་ཡུལ་དབུས་སུ་  
བྱོན་ཏེ་པོད་ཀྱི་ལྷ་འདྲེ་མ་རུང་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་བརྒྱལ་ནས་ཆོས་  
འཁོར་དཔལ་གྱི་བསམ་ཡས་བཞེངས་ཤིང་མདོ་སྟགས་དམ་  
པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྒྲོན་མེ་སྤར་ཏེ་སྐལ་ལྷན་རྩི་འབངས་རྣམས་སྤོན་  
གྲོལ་དུ་མཛད་པའི་ཆོ་ག་རུ་བརྒྱ་མཁ་ལྷ་སྤར་གྲགས། བརྒྱ

གཅིག་པ་བྱང་ཁྲིའི་ཆོས་བཅུར་མོན་གྱི་སྤྱ་གྲོ་སྟག་ཚང་  
སོགས་སུ་ཁྲི་པོ་འཛོལ་པའི་སྐྱར་བཞེངས་ནས་པོད་ཀྱི་གཞི་  
བདག་གཏེར་སྤྱང་ཐམས་ཅད་དམ་འོག་ཏུ་བརྒྱག་སྟེ་གངས་  
ཅན་མཐའ་དབུས་ཀྱན་ཏུ་ཆོས་ལོར་དམ་ཆས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་  
གཏེར་ཁ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱལ་པ་སྤུས་ཤིང་བསྟན་ཞབས་  
གཏེར་གྱིས་སྦྱོང་བར་ལུང་བསྟན་ཞལ་གདམས་གནང་བའི་  
ཆོ་ག་རུ་རྩི་རྩེ་གྲོ་ལོད་རྩལ་དུ་གྲགས་པ་སྟེ། དེ་ལྟར་དུས་  
ཆེན་ཆོས་བཅུ་སོ་སོར་དུས་མཆོད་བརྒྱུད་བའི་དམིགས་  
གསལ་གྱི་པན་ཡོན་ཀྱང་གོང་གི་གོ་རིམ་བཞིན། བད་གདོན་  
བགོགས་རིགས་ཞི་ཞིང་ཆོ་བསྟོད་དཔལ་འབྱོར་འཕེལ། །  
ཡིད་བདེ་སྟོབས་པ་སྐྱར་ཞིང་གཟི་བརྩིང་རྒྱས་པས་མི་དང་མི་  
མིན་དབང་དུ་འདུ་མངའ་ཐང་ལོངས་སྦྱོང་འཕེལ་ཞིང་གཞི་  
བདག་སྤྱང་མས་བྱན་བཞིན་དུ་ཉན། འཆི་བདག་སྟེ་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་  
གཞོད་འཆོ་ཞི་ནས་རྩལ་བྲིམས་རྣམ་པར་དག་ཅིང་ཤེས་རབ་  
སྟོགས་མེད་དུ་འབར། གཟའ་སྐར་སྟོགས་ངན་དག་ཀྱན་གྱི་  
གཞོད་པས་མི་རྒྱག་ཅིང་གཞི་བྱེད་ཀྱན་ཏུ་བག་ཤིས་བདེ་  
ལེགས་འཕེལ། ས་བདག་གྲུ་གཉན་གྱི་གཞོད་པས་མི་རྒྱགས་  
ཅིང་ཆོས་སྦྱོང་སྤྱང་མས་ཅི་བཅོལ་བའི་ལས་སྒྲུབ། བར་ཆད་  
དག་གདོན་གྱི་འཆོ་བ་ཞི་ཞིང་འདོད་དོན་དབང་དུ་འདུ། །  
གཅོད་ནད་སོགས་བྱང་ནས་ལུས་བདེ་སེམས་སྦྱིད་འཁོར་  
དང་ལོངས་སྦྱོང་འཕེལ་ཞིང་བསམ་པའི་དོན་འགྲུབ། ལོ་རྒྱ་  
ཞག་དུས་ཀྱི་ཀེག་དང་ལྷས་ངན་སོགས་ཞི་ནས་དབང་ཐང་  
རྒྱུད་ཏུ་གྲུབ་པ་སོར་རྒྱད། སྟེ་བརྒྱད་འབྱུང་པའི་ནད་གདོན་





དུས་མིན་འཛི་རྒྱུན་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི་བ་དང་གཏད་སེལ་བྱུང་ཁ་  
 རྒྱུན་གཏོང་ལས་གྲོལ་ཏེ་རང་ལུས་རྡོ་རྗེར་འགྱུར། ཡུལ་དམ་  
 བ་ལ་སྐྱར་བ་བཏབ་བ་སོགས་སྒྲོམ་བ་གསུམ་གྱི་ཉིས་ལྷུང་  
 དམ་ཚིག་ཆག་ཉམས་ཐམས་ཅད་བྱུང་ནས་རང་རྒྱུད་དག །  
 དུས་མ་ཡིན་པའི་འཛི་བ་སོགས་འཕྲུལ་རྒྱུན་མི་འབྱུང་ཞིང་  
 འཕྲོས་མ་ཐག་ཏུ་བརྒྱ་འོད་ཞིང་གྲུ་དུའི་དྲུང་དུ་སྒྲེ་བར་འགྱུར་  
 བ་སོགས་ཕན་ཡོན་མཐའ་ཡས་བ་དང་ལྷན་པར་མ་ཟད། །  
 ཚོགས་གསོག་གསོལ་འདེབས་གྱི་རིམ་པ་ལ་འབད་པས་དུས་  
 སྐབས་བྱུང་པར་ཅན་དུ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་རྒྱུ་ཡང་། ལྷ་མ་  
 གསར་འདུས་ལས། སྒྲེལ་ཡེ་སྒྲེལ་སྒྲེལ་ཆོས་བཅུ་དང་  
 ེ དུས་གྱི་ཆོས་བཅུ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལེ སྐུལ་པ་འཛམ་གླིང་  
 རྒྱལ་པར་འབྱེད མཚོག་སྐྱུན་དངོས་གྲུབ་ང་ཡིས་  
 སྒྲེར མི་ཚོ་སྐྱམ་སྐྱུབ་པ་ལ བསྐྱེད་ན་ཆོ་ཡི་དུས་བྱས་  
 ཚོ ཨོ་རྒྱུན་ང་ཡི་ཐུགས་ཀར་ཐིམ ཞེ་དང་། རྒྱ་གླིང་  
 པའི་གཏོར་ལུང་ལས། ལྷ་བ་ཆོས་བཅུ་ཤར་རེས་གྱི ང་ཡི་  
 བཟེད་རྩོ་སུས་འཛིན་པ གེ་དང་ང་ལ་འདུ་འབྲལ་  
 མེད བོད་གྱི་རྒྱལ་སྒོན་བུ་སྒོལ་ལ བྱུང་ངོ་ལྷ་བའི་ཆོས་  
 བཅུ་ལ ང་ཉིད་འབྱོན་པའི་དབུ་སྐྱུང་མཛད བརྒྱ་འབྱུང་  
 གནས་གཞན་མི་བསྐྱེ ཞེས་དང་། ཞལ་གདམས་གསེར་  
 བྱེད་ལས། རྒྱུད་པར་དུས་ཆེན་ཆོས་བཅུ་ཨོ་རྒྱུན་  
 ང གངས་ཅན་བོད་ཡུལ་ས་སྒྲེང་རྒྱལ་པར་འོང ཉི་ལྷའི་  
 ཟེར་དང་འཇའ་ཆེན་ཆར་རྒྱལ་ལ ཆེབས་ཏེ་མོས་པའི་བུ་ཡི་  
 བར་ཆད་སེལ རི་ལྷར་འདོད་པའི་དབང་བཞི་མི་བསྐྱར་

རེ ཐ་ཚོག་ཡིན་ནོ་བསྐྱེས་བསྐྱེ་རེ་ཀན ང་ལ་མོས་ན་  
 ཆོས་བཅུའི་མཚོད་རྒྱུན་རྒྱུགས བཀའ་བཞིན་བསྐྱེད་པས་  
 བས་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་བདེ་ལ་འགོད། ཅེས་སོགས་བདེན་  
 གསུངས་རྡོ་རྗེའི་ཆོག་གིས་ལན་གཅིག་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཞལ་  
 གྱིས་བཞེས་པ་ལ་ནམ་ཡང་བསྐྱེད་པའི་དབང་པས་ན་རྗེས་འཇུག་  
 རྣམས་གྱིས་སྒྲིང་ནས་གཡར་དམ་དུ་བཟུང་སྟེ་རང་གཞན་  
 འདི་གཏན་པན་བདེའི་དགའ་སྟོན་སྟེལ་བ་ལ་བཙོན་པ་ཆེ་ཐང་  
 དུ་བསྐྱེད་པར་རིགས་སོ། །དག་བསྐྱེད་གཏམ་གྱི་ན་རྒྱུང་  
 མཚར་སྐྱེག་ཅན། རྩོན་བཟང་ལེགས་བཤད་འཕྲོར་སྟེག་  
 རོམས་བཞིན་དུ། ཐར་འདོད་སྒྲེ་བའི་མདུན་སར་ཆས་  
 འདིས་གྱང་། ལན་བདེའི་དགའ་སྟོན་ཅི་ཡང་སྐྱིན་གྱུར་  
 ཅིག ཅེས་པའང་བརྒྱའི་སོ་ཉ་སྟེགས་ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱུ་བ་འཛིགས་  
 བལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྡོ་རྗེས་གིས་བ་དག་ཞིང་བཀྲ་ཤིས། གོང་གི་  
 སྒྲེལ་སྒྲེལ་འཛིན་འདི་སྐྱེ་མ་དགོངས་འདུས་ལྷར་བཀོད་  
 པ་སྟེ། གཞན་ཡོངས་གྲགས་ཐུག་ལུགས་པས་ལྷ་པ་སྟོན་  
 ལྷར་རོས་འཛིན་མཛད་དོ།

ཡེ་ཤེས་ཐུན་ཚོགས་གྱི་ཆོས་སྐྱིན་གྱི་ཆེད་དུ་དེབ་གྲངས་ 3000 པར་  
 བསྐྱེན་ཞུས་པ་དགོའོ།







## The Benefits of Observing the Great Festival of the Tenth Day

By H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche

OM SVASTI

May we obtain refuge in all our future rebirths in the **Uddiyana Vajradhara** who removes all difficulties; the mere recollection of Him brings about the bestowing of many desires, siddhis and blessings, just as does a wish-granting gem, a wish-granting tree, and a precious wish-granting vessel.



*H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche*

According to the *Pad-dong-Tsek-pa* (Pad-sdongs-brtsegs-pa), that root Tantra which embodies the Mind of the Guru, the Guru Himself proclaimed:

“I am He who is known as the Self-originated Lotus,  
And who emanated from the heart centre of the **Buddha Amitabha**.

I am **Arya Avalokitesvara** who is the light ray of Speech.

I am the brother of all the Dakinis and the king of the Viras.

I am the spiritual activity of all the Buddhas of the three times.

I am He who, possessing great strength of compassion,  
Appears as the Nirmanakaya of the incomparable **Samantabhadra Mahavajradhara**.

I am a great wave of spiritual activity which converts everyone,

Filling the minds of all sentient beings with hope.”

With the voice of the fearless lion which is itself Secret Adamantine Speech, He reveals His face. From His divine form which embodies all the Buddhas in their infinity, He emanates and then re-absorbs again into



Himself all the Mandalas of the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis. Particularly to His disciples in the Snowy Land of Tibet, He has shown even greater kindness than the actual Buddha Himself by His coming personally to that country, where He is universally known as **Padmasambhava** or **Pema-jungne** (Padma byung-gnas), **the Vajra Guru**. For anyone who beholds His deeds, the understanding of a disciple will grow within him. As for the several occasions on which He displayed the great deeds of His marvellous career (rnam-ther), they came precisely on the **Tenth Day** (tshes bcu) of the waxing moon during the twelve months of the year.

1. **The Sixth Month:** At sunrise on the Tenth Day of the month of the Monkey (sprel-zla), He was born miraculously inside a lotus bud in the middle of Lake Dhanakosha. At the time of His turning the wheel of the Dharma for the Dakinis on the island in this lake, He became known as **Guru Tso-kye Dorje** (mTsho-skyes rdo-rje) or Saroruhavajra, the Guru who is the Lotus-born Vajra.



*Guru Rinpoche*

2. **The Twelfth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Tiger (stag-zla), having been invited by the king Indrabodhi, the king of the country of Uddiyana, He was installed as the crown prince, and received in marriage as His wife the Princess Bhasadhara ('Od 'chang-ma). At the time of His preserving this kingdom in accordance with the Dharma, He became known as **Guru Pema Gyalpo** (Padma rgyal-po) or Padmaraja, the Guru who is the Lotus King.
3. **The First Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Hare (yos-zla), having renounced His kingdom, He practiced austerities, yoga and liberation in the great cemetery of Sitavana (bSil-ba'i tshal), the Cool Forest. At the time of gathering all the Matrikas and Dakinis under His power, He became known as **Guru Shantarakshita**, the Guru who is the Guardian of Peace.
4. **The Second Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Dragon ('brug-zla), He took Pravrajya ordination from the Bhiksu Ananda. At the time of demonstrating His attainment of unsurpassed comprehension of all the knowledge and learning contained in the Sutra and Mantra systems as taught by various scholars, He became known as **Guru Shakya Senge** or Shakyasimha, the Guru who is the Lion of the Shakyas, and as **Guru Loden Chogse** (bLo-ldan mChod-sred) or Matiman Vararuci, the Guru possessing Intelligence and Supreme Desire.
5. **The Third Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Snake (sbrul-zla), at the time when the king of Zahor tried to burn Him alive, by his magical powers, He transformed the middle of the fire into a lake (called Tsopema, at Rewalsar). Since the people developed faith in Him, He established the Dharma in the kingdom. Then having taken up with His divine consort Mandarava, at the time of displaying His Adamantine Body, He became known as the **Guru Immortal Pema Jungne** (Padma 'byung-gnas) or **Guru Padmakara**, He who is born of the lotus.



6. **The Fourth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Horse (rta-zla), when certain evil ministers of the land of Uddiyana tried to burn alive this Divine Couple, by His power He transformed the fire into a lake. Then by his magical powers he caused the radiant and resplendent form of the Divine Couple to appear on top of the stem of a lotus plant, and thus He arranged for the arising of faith in the people. At the time of accomplishing their ripening and liberation, since He was an ocean of Dharma embodying the word of the Buddha, He became known as **Guru Padmavajra** (Padma Vajra rtsal), the Guru with the Lotus and the Vajra.

7. **The Fifth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Sheep (lug-zla), since certain Tirthikas from South India were causing great harm to the Buddhist Doctrine, with His great magical powers He ground the Tirthikas gods together with their guardians into dust. At the time of the waving triumphantly in the sky of the victory banner of the Doctrine of the Buddha, He became known as **Guru**



*H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche*

**Senge Dra-drok** (Seng-ge sgra-sgrogs) or Simharavana, the Guru who roars like the lion.

8. **The Seventh Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Bird (bya-zla), the Tirthikas from Tamradvipa (Zangs-gling) threw Him into the River Ganges. But having performed a vajra dance in the sky, by His magical powers He caused the waters of the river to reverse their flow. Having awakened faith in them, at the time of establishing the Doctrine in their kingdom, He became known as **Guru Khadging Tsal** (mKha'-lding rtsal) or Khagamana, He who soars in the sky like the Garuda.

9. **The Eighth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Dog (khyi-zla), having been given a poisonous concoction by the Tirthikas, He transformed it into amrita which could do no harm. Thus in the presence of His own radiant and healthy countenance, by His greatly expanded magical powers, He caused faith to arise in them all. At the time of converting the Tirthikas together with their retinues to the Doctrine of the Buddha, He became known as **Guru Nyima Odzer** (Nyima 'od-zer) or Suryaprabha, the Guru who is like the rays of the sun.



*Guru Rinpoche and Eight Manifestations*



10. **The Ninth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the Pig (phag-zla), having assumed the divine form the Vajrakumara (rDo-rje gzhon-nu) at Yang-le-shod in Nepal, He bound by fierce oaths the gods and demons of the countries of Nepal and Tibet. Having performed the Sadhana of Sri Visuddha Heruka (dPal-chen Yang-dag), at the time of attaining the Vidyadhara stage of the Supreme Mahamudra, He became known as **Guru Dorje Tod-treng Tsal** (rDo-rje thod-phreng rtсал) or Vajra Kapalamalin, the Adamantine Guru with the garland of skulls.

11. **The Tenth Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Mouse (byi-zla), He arrived in Central Tibet. Having subdued the hostile gods and demons of Tibet, He erected the great monastery of Cho-khor Pal-gyi Samye, and lit the lamp of the Holy Dharma of the Sutras and the Mantras. At the time of accomplishing the ripening and liberation of the fortunate king and twenty-five disciples, He became known as **Guru Padmasambhava**, the Lotus-born Guru.

12. **The Eleventh Month:** On the Tenth Day of the month of the Ox (glang-zla), having conjured up His wrathful form at Paro, at Tak-tsang, and elsewhere in Monyul (the country of Bhutan), He put under oath all the local deities and treasure guardians (gzhi-bdag gter-srung). He then concealed in both central and remote places within the Himalayas those Hidden Treasures which are incomprehensible to the mind, consisting of doctrines, jewels, and other holy things. Then at the time of bestowing secret oral instructions and making prophecies regarding the protection of the Hidden Treasures by the Deities, He became known as **Guru Dorje Dro-lod** (rDo-rje Gro-lod) or Vajrakrodha, the Guru of Adamantine Wrath.



*Guru Dorje Dro-lod*

Similarly, there are **special benefits** accruing to us from the observing of the monthly pujas on each of the Tenth Day great festivals in the order given above. For example, those **evil spirits** which cause diseases will be **pacified**. Our length of life, virtue, and wealth will increase; and our happiness of mind, quick courage, and brilliance of personality will likewise increase. Both human beings and non-human spirits will be gathered under our power; our **dominion and prosperity will increase**; and the local deities and guardian spirits will heed us as if they are our servants. The harm and injury caused by the Lord of Death and the eight groups of spirits will be mitigated. Our **moral precepts** will be completely **purified**, and our **wisdom will radiate** into every area.

The dangers due to unfavourable planets and stars, unlucky days, enemies and thieves will no longer threaten us; **good fortune and well being will increase everywhere at home and abroad**. The mischief due to earth-spirits (sa-bdag), Nagas, and fierce subterranean beings (gnyan) will likewise no longer threaten us; and the Dharma Protectors and Guardians will accomplish those deeds with which they are charged. The damage caused by hindrances, enemies, and evil spirits will be ameliorated; and we will gather under our power whatever we desire. Diseases which cause the body to waste away will be cleansed; **bodily health and happiness of mind** for ourselves as well as our friends and relatives **will increase**; and we will obtain whatever object we contemplate.

Unlucky periods among the days, months and years, as well as ill omens generally, will be mitigated; and we will **fully recover whatever dominion and good fortune we may have lost**. Evil spirits, who cause diseases, such as the Bhutas and the eight groups of spirits, as well as the conditions of untimely death will likewise be pacified. We shall be **freed from the ill effects** of contagious magic (gtad), the disabling effects of mantras which impair the function of the intellect (sel) and which disturb our peace of mind (byad-kha), as well as elemental spirits evoked to harm us by causing disease or calamity (rbod-gtong). Indeed, our **own body will become as strong as diamond**.

Hypocritical deeds in violation of our precepts, such



as any defect or default of the three types of vows, as well as all transgressions of the samaya vows, will be cleansed; and our mind will become pure. Untimely death and other accidental disasters will not arise, and immediately upon passing from this life we shall be reborn in the presence of the Guru Himself in the Realm of Lotus Light, Padmaprabhaksetra, (Padma 'od zhing). Also, from the practice of reciting the prayers in their proper order particularly at the time of performing puja, we shall become as one who possesses infinite benefits; our accumulated merit shall be inexhaustible.

According to the *Lama Sang-du* (bla-ma gsang- 'dus):

“On the Tenth Day of the monkey month of the monkey year:

And on all the Tenth Days of the other months,

My manifestations will emanate throughout Jambudvipa in particular;

And I shall bestow siddhis both ordinary and supreme.

As for those who perform the sadhana of the Guru throughout their entire life,

If they persist in this, then at the time of passing from this present life,

They will be absorbed into My own heart centre.”

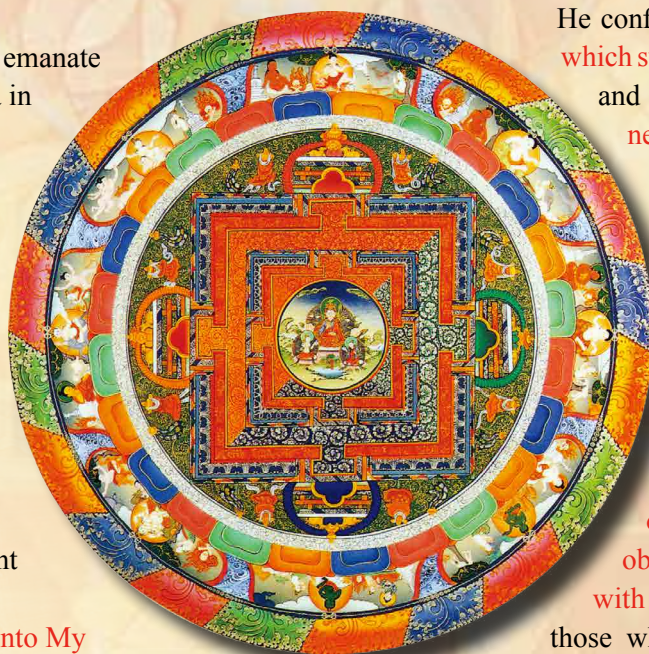
According to the *Treasure tradition* (gter-lung) of *Ratna Lingpa*:

“When each Tenth Day of the month arises, Those who remember Me, as if carrying a pebble in their pocket as a reminder, They and I shall indeed be inseparable. To My sons, My disciples, the king and ministers of Tibet, On the Tenth Day of each month, I Myself will appear; **this I promise.** I, **Padmasambhava, would never deceive others.**”

According to the *Zhal-dam Ser-treng* (Zhal-gdams gser-phreng):

“I, **Urgyan**, particularly on the Tenth Day which

is the Great Festival,  
Will come to the Snowy Land of Tibet,  
Riding upon the rays of sun and moon, the rainbow, the mists or rain;  
And shall remove all obstacles impeding My devoted disciples.  
Upon each I shall bestow the Four Consecrations which they desire.  
This is my promise and **Padma would never deceive anyone.**  
If one who is devoted to Me always observes the puja on the Tenth Day,  
By virtue of practising the sadhana according to My instructions,  
He will realize the well being of the kingdom.”



He confirmed these **adamantine verses, which surely speak the truth**, many times and not one time only. **He would never deceive those disciples** appearing in later times who believe in His promise with all their heart. With ever increasing efforts **may they spread widely this festival** which is always productive of benefits and happiness in one's present life and in all future lives. **May this festival of benefit and joy be always observed everywhere, together with the Dharma**, in the presence of those who desire liberation. Similarly, may these glad tidings be displayed like a beautiful young maiden, attractively bejeweled and graced with well-explained excellent meanings for every word. May the messengers of Padma wander everywhere in every direction.

This text was composed by **Jigdral Yeshe Dorje** (H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche). May happiness and good fortune come!

*This precious text was translated from the original Tibetan into the English language by Vajranatha (John Reynolds). Done at Santiniketan this Eighth Tibetan Lunar Month in the Year of the Water-Mouse (September 1972). May all sentient beings swiftly attain Enlightenment.*





# The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death : The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (3)



By Pema Lhadren  
Translated by Simon S.H. Tang

## The Mystery of “Light”

In the actual cases of “near-death experience” (NDE) survivors, who had various facets of contacts with “Light”, there came to have different sensations and perception towards “Light”. Most common people, even scientists, all believe that this is mainly due to the different psychological states of individuals, and hence their different experiences. Is there a deeper level of understanding behind this? Would this “Light”, which is exhibiting itself in various forms, with various intensities, and even within various periods of time, contain a profound meaning behind its mystery? What is more important is: **why is it that most of the NDE survivors have the experiences of “Light”?** Does it mean that the manifestation of “Light” is a kind of natural phenomenon that will definitely appear at the moment of death?

If so, then, why is it that there are some people who did not feel the existence of “Light”? Many religions give explanations on this “Light” as the manifestations of the deities of their own religions. But then, why does Vajrayana Buddhism deem this “Light” as representing the various natural phenomena, and that it even needs to distinguish the various “Lights” among them? Furthermore, with the trainings of Dharma practice while one was still alive, together with the distinction of the “Lights” during the “near-death experience” (NDE), a person could then be able to liberate oneself from the **“law of reincarnation”** which compels one to be reborn without any self-autonomy and self-determination. Does it mean that the mystery of “Light” should be explored and be made known, since this “Light” is the **critical key** to the “abstruseness of life and death”?

## SPARK OF WISDOM

*“Just let it be” basically means stomping off and “jumping up and down blindly”, and just let one’s own “karmic forces” to take control of one’s own destiny, while the individual himself has no self-autonomy to it. Hence, when there comes a good moment, everything seems to go well but unfortunately it does not last long. However, when the bad time comes, there is nowhere that one can turn to for help. One could be trapped in this for quite a long period of time, and thus suffer for numerous agonies. The worst part is that even when one may have the chances to come across good opportunities, but one would simply miss them all one by one.*



### Case 3:

It was in an international conference of IANDS (International Association for Near-Death Studies) that a Swedish anesthetist, Dr. Claunan Kolipu, described his own personal experience of “near-death experience” (NDE) to the participants from all over the world. He had received a surgery at the age of five. As the operation was not going smooth, he had stopped breathing for a short while and thus experienced the “near-death experience” (NDE) at that time. The following was his personal account of what had happened:



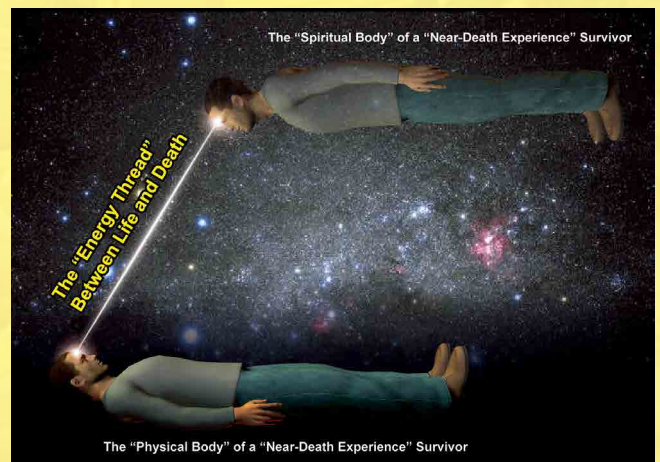
“I didn’t have any experiences of “out-of-body” or of “encountering deceased relatives”. However, I had experienced the “Being of Light”, as well as the “review of life”. The “Being of Light” is a common experience of most NDE survivors; however, the experience of the “review of life” seldom occurred in infants. It may probably be that the life span of a child is relatively short, and so there isn’t much for one to review. However, I had suffered from mental injury at the age of five. According to my own memories, I suddenly entered into the “Being of Light”. Perhaps there was a phase before it, but then I didn’t have the slightest impression of it.

I could merely recall that the “Path of Light” was stretching to the other side of the horizon, and I was flying above it. When I reached the end of the path, I encountered a situation that was hard to describe by words. The end of the path was like an ancient castle wall but without any entrance or exit door to it; or

there might be an entrance or exit door, but then it was locked up and couldn’t be opened. Thereafter, the “Being of Light” appeared in front of me and was masculine in nature. Please don’t ask me why I knew it was a “he”, but I just simply knew it anyway.

The “Being of Light” **could read through my mind**, and knew everything that I had done in my short life. I immediately turned around and ran away. I was eager to escape from him because I hated, and was also very jealous of, my younger brother who is three years younger than me. My mother had gotten post-natal depression after giving birth to my younger brother, and had thus completely ignored my presence. For a three-year old child, who was badly in need of maternal love at that time, it was a horrible experience to me.

Such kind of a situation had sustained for several months, and I deemed my younger brother should not have been



born. So, whenever there was a chance, I would beat him up. I began to enjoy bullying my younger brother. Though I knew this was not right deep down inside, I still kept on doing it and felt happy about it. The “Being of Light” knew about all these; he even knew all the things that my parents would have never known of as to what I had done to my younger brother. Hence, my intent of trying to escape from it. However, this idea just popped up for only an



instant, and in the next moment I experienced the **unlimited affection** that was radiating out from the “Being of Light”. The reason for my intent to escape had just disappeared.

Not only that, I even hope to stay behind and be together with the “Being of Light”, so that we can once again review all the sections of my whole life one by one. There were many occasions where I had shown jealousy and dislike towards my younger brother, but once in a while there was also my love towards him. I discovered that I had not only bullied my younger brother all the time, but there were also moments of affection for him. Once again, I could experience my younger brother’s feelings, his sufferings, his angers, and his eagerness to take revenge upon me. I also came to realize his surprise and affection towards me when I was being gentle to him.

The “Being of Light” made me reviewed all my past, and also made me understand what would be the consequences of my own deeds; even more so, it made me realize the kinds of repayments that would be made upon me ultimately. The “Being of Light” did not make any adjudication upon me, but has only offered me **endless love**. He said to me, ‘Think about this: besides what you have already done, what else can you do?’ The “Being of Light” didn’t tell me ‘what should be done’, but only asked me to ‘think about it as to what else can be done?’ There was not even a trace of compulsion for me to use my sense of morality in the judgment. I considered myself not having committed any

faults, neither did my younger brother nor my mother.

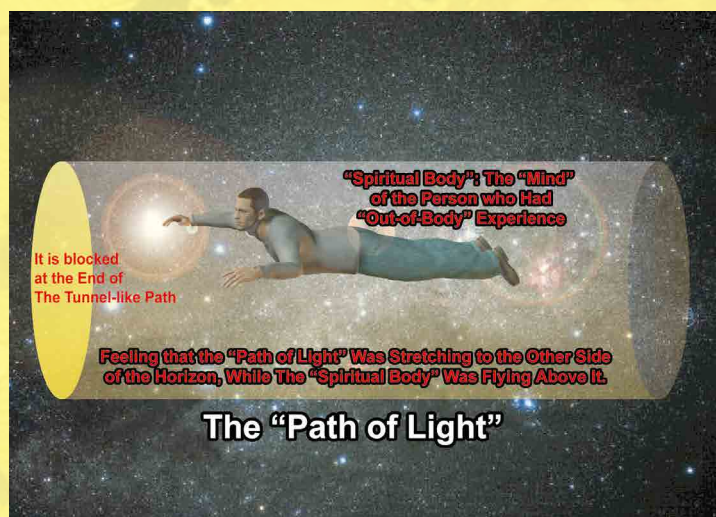
After my revival from the NDE, I have changed my attitude toward my younger brother, always trying to treat him gently. Pitifully, my parents were not aware of this change of mine. They still frequently lost temper at me, scolding me for bullying my younger brother again. How could I endure it as a small child? I had apparently corrected my faults, but I was still being scolded and punished by my parents. So eventually, I resumed my old habits and just like before, I fought with my younger brother, bullied him and was jealous of him. At the same time, I was **deeply discontented** with my parents, and was upset about their mistreating

me. From then on, I had **decided no longer to rely** upon such kind of parents. **I began to alienate myself from my parents, and since then our relationship had become apathetic, and I was pretty much all alone by myself.**


Until eight years ago, I read the book “Life after Life” that was written by Raymond Moody, whereupon I

recalled my “near-death experience” (NDE). After further analysis, I realized that my parents were irksome by a heap of problems at that time, and so they had no time to notice the changes in me. I was too young at that time to empathize with my parents’ situations, and so I merely ended up with complaints. At last, I finally came to realize everything and have since then forgiven everything. I no longer complained about my parents because they had already done all they could for me.

About the “Being of Light”, I always **wonder what is it really?** I don’t think that is God as I just don’t believe in the existence of God at all. Neither



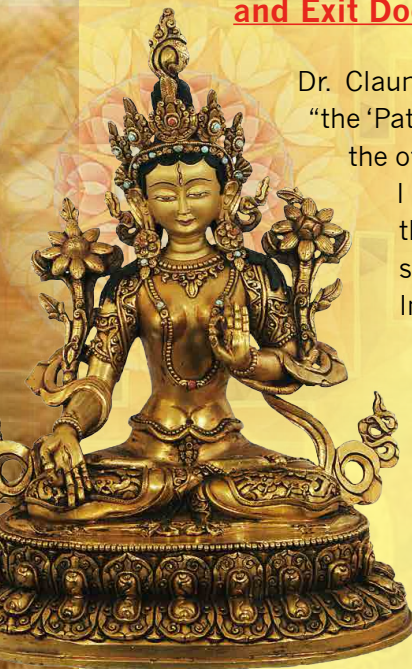




did my parents believe in God, and so there was not a shred of religious atmosphere at my home. The “who” that I had encountered, whether it was “God, Christ, Allah, Buddha or Charles Smith (a general name of any American people)”, didn’t really have any relations with me.

Furthermore, some people think that NDE is some kind of an induced illusion due to insufficient oxygen in the brain. I just can’t accept such kind of a theory. To me, the most important thing is **what I have learned from the experiences, and how practical and applicable such learning experiences are in this real world.** For example, a person has discovered the secret treasures of the pirates in a dream. After waking up, if he finds that there was nothing at all, then definitely it is a dream. However, when he opens his eyes, he sees gold coins in his hands which can have purchasing powers in the markets, then it is not a dream. Because of NDE, I have seized upon myself certain kind of truths. When I opened my eyes, I put them into practice, and as a result I found its truthfulness. Being good to my brother, I know it is praiseworthy. Therefore, it is very different from the experiences in an illusory dream.”

### **The Mysteries on the Entrance and Exit Doors of Life and Death**



Dr. Claunan Kolipu has mentioned: “the ‘Path of Light’ was stretching to the other end of the horizon and I was flying above it.” Does this statement describe some sort of a phenomenon? In the practical teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism, especially during the actual practices at the moment of death, a Spiritual Master (Guru) who has been authorized to teach, and has the actual experiences of, the Dharma practices

would explain to the Dharma practitioners the various stages during the dying process.

Furthermore, the Spiritual Master (Guru) would instruct the Dharma practitioners as to how to make all the necessary preparations and trainings for death. In between life and death, there exists a very important **“turning-point of changes”**, and for which these preparations and trainings could turn around all sorts of so-called pre-destined arrangements which we called “fate”. Therefore, these sorts of preparations and trainings are exceedingly necessary and most crucial to everyone. Regrettably, those people who realize the truth and understand the significance of it are indeed so scarce, perhaps less than one in a billion. In other words, for all the human species on the globe, those who can **thoroughly and comprehensively realize all these mysteries and their importance**, and then further know how to **put them into practice for saving others** are most pitifully very few in numbers!

Among the various preparations and trainings, some of them can be disclosed to the general public. In fact, some of the descriptions can rightly explain the phenomenon of the above-mentioned statement. These descriptions are as follows:

“Since death would cause the physical body to gradually debilitate and decompose, so that the linkage between the Spiritual Body and the physical body would be weakened. When the weakening status has reached the threshold for the occurrence of the “out-of-body” experience, the Spiritual Body would then depart from the physical body. **There are altogether nine different doors and their paths of exit at the moment of departure in ordinary people.** As it is prohibited to disclose these nine doors and their paths of exit, as well as the ways for departure, it will not be mentioned here. Departing from the different doors of exit would mean different kinds of phenomena as well as consequences.”

Dr. Claunan Kolipu saw himself as flying from above towards the other end of the horizon, indicating that the distance from him to the exit door is forming a straight line without any bends. In the actual practices of Vajrayana teachings, a Spiritual Master (Guru) will, before conducting the relevant practices, elaborate in details about the different



treatments of these various doors and paths of exit to his disciples.

According to the descriptions of NDE survivors, most of them had to depart from their physical bodies through a **tunnel-like path**, with its straightness and flatness, lumpiness, curvature and width to be rather different from one person to another. Experienced Spiritual Masters (Gurus) can then predict which one of the exit doors within the location of the body that one's Spiritual Body will depart from. Departures from different exit doors will result in different consequences, and therefore it is **necessary to recognize the exit doors**.

In fact, can a person who undergoes "out-of-body" experience be free to choose and select an exit door? At the moment of departure, whether one can utilize certain skillful means to alter the consequences of it? The answer is affirmative. Yet, it is **conditional upon the fact that the person with the "out-of-body" experience must have to go through thorough trainings, and thus know the various exit doors and paths, as well as the skillful methods for one's departure**.

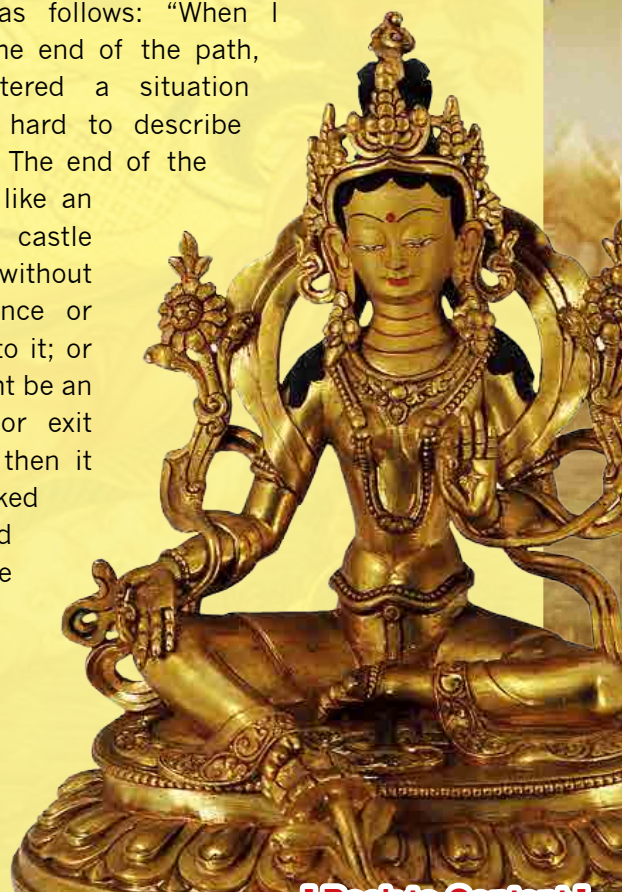
The departure from the different exit doors indicates that the person who is undergoing the "out-of-body" experience, if once deceased, would be reborn either in a good place or a bad place. The definition of "death" as used here is not the same as that used in the medical profession. In modern medicine, it has different levels of definition on "death". From the cessation of breathing and the stopping of pulses, to the non-detection of reactions, the enlargement of the pupil, the decrease in body temperature, the stiffness of the limbs, to the stopping of the encephalographic signals, all of which indicate that the person will no longer has the physiological functions of a living being. Yet, any one of the previous standards alone is inadequate to define the phenomenon of "death", as it had so happened before that a person who was considered clinically dead was in actuality alive, and there were a few cases that were proven to have revived later on. **Here, we use the definition of "death" as the time when the "energy thread of life and death" is disconnected.** (Please refer to the article on "The Meaning of the Near-Death Experience (2)" in the second issue of "The Lake of Lotus".)

When Vajrayana Buddhism proclaims that **'the**

**departure from the different exit doors will determine the good or bad environment of one's rebirth'**, it would seem to be rather mythical and somewhat superstitious. But in fact, there isn't the slightest trace of superstition in it, simply because all of these are just natural physical phenomena. Then, what is the main cause behind things that determines which of the exit doors an individual will depart from?

**It is through the natural law of "cause and effect" that the linkage between an individual's own energy and a gigantic "energy web networking" will jointly create the pull and push forces of "traction", which will in turn determine an individual's exit door, that is, the direction and the place of where the person would be reborn.** In Buddhism, this pull and push forces of "traction" is commonly known as the **"karmic forces"**. Its compositions and functions are extremely complicated. In the future chapters and sections, we would explain these **natural phenomena** in greater details (please refer to the VCD on "The Inconceivable Law of Cause and Effect", published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).

As for these entrance and exit doors, even though one may know the paths to get there, some of these exit doors will be **shut off** due to one's own "karmic forces". That is why Dr. Claunan Kolipu had described the situation at that moment as follows: "When I reached the end of the path, I encountered a situation that was hard to describe by words. The end of the path was like an ancient castle wall but without any entrance or exit door to it; or there might be an entrance or exit door, but then it was locked up and couldn't be opened."





When encountering such a situation, would there be any solutions to it? If the person “just let it be”, then what would happen? **“Just let it be” basically means stomping off carelessly and jumping up and down blindly, and just let one’s own “karmic forces” to take control of one’s own destiny, while the individual himself has no self-autonomy to it.** Hence, when there comes a good moment, everything seems to go well but unfortunately it does not last long. However, when the bad time comes, there is nowhere that one can turn to for help. One could be trapped in this for quite a long period of time, and thus suffer for numerous agonies. The worst part of it is that **even when one may have the chances to come across good opportunities, but one would simply miss them all one by one.**

Therefore, Spiritual Masters (Gurus) of Vajrayana Buddhism would train their Dharma practitioners to be able **to take control of one’s own destiny and to have self-autonomy.** The trainings include how to select the most beneficial exit door, how to seal off the most adverse exit doors, how to unlock the door of life and death, and **the most important of all, how to master the “Being of Light”,** how to disengage oneself from all those entanglements and bondages, **how to restore one’s primordial natural abilities, how to become totally free and self-determined,** so as not to have any more arbitrary rebirths, and neither should deaths be allowed to recur unceasingly.

Without clear guidance, as well as proper and meticulous trainings, the road for one’s Dharma practice will be long and winding, and full of risks as if a blind is walking alone all by himself who merely depends on pure guessing and conjectures. How can it be possible for one to achieve the expected results? Therefore, a well trained and qualified Spiritual Master (Guru) is highly valued in Vajrayana Buddhism. One of the main reasons for this is simply because **a Spiritual Master (Guru) is being perceived as an experienced guide for the journey.** However, Spiritual Masters (Gurus) can

be distinguished between those who are authentic ones, as against those who are fake ones. If following a “fake guru”, then one would end up in a totally converse situation, that is, the chance of being reincarnated in an extremely bad environment is over 90%. (Please refer to the article on “Authentic vs Fake Gurus (Spiritual Masters)” in this issue of the “Lake of Lotus”, as well as in the VCD with the same title, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).

### **The Origin of the Linking Thread Between Life and Death**

According to the descriptions in the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”, when a person is dying, the various organic structures of the physical body would decompose due to debilitations. The process of decomposition can mainly be categorized into four gross aggregated substances at large: the **physical body** itself (including skeletons, muscles, cells), **liquids** (including blood and internal secretions), **temperature** (including the temperatures of the various parts of the body), **air** (including all the gases inside the body). Furthermore, there is also the process of decomposition of four other subtle microscopic psycho-physical substances. Finally, the most important thing that would be simultaneously decomposed is the pull and push forces of “traction” that had been generated by the entanglements of the various “karmic forces”.

The physical changes during decomposition would affect the sensations of the deceased person through two conduits. The first one is the nerves and cells which have not yet ceased functioning completely. Secondly, it is the “energy thread” between life and death. In this way, the Spiritual Body of the deceased would have various kinds of sensations according to the different phases of decomposition. These sensations would allow the deceased to experience various illusions through







the projections of **the individual's mental states, experiences and motivations**. For instance, the deceased might see lights of various sorts, such as: haze and fog, erratic lights of dawn, lights of fireflies, lamp lights, and lights as in different geometrical shapes.

In general, ordinary people would be heeding the normal sequences of decomposition until one becomes truly deceased. **The definition of death herewith is the time when the disconnection of the "energy thread of life and death" takes place.** If the process of decomposition cannot be deferred by any other medical and/or pharmaceutical methods, the "energy thread of life and death" would then be disconnected around a time period of three-and-a-half days. On the other hand, if the decomposition process can be delayed by medical and/or pharmaceutical methods, then the duration could be prolonged to an in-determinate period. During this period, even though the Spiritual Body might have left the physical body, parts of the sensations and environments of the wandering Spiritual Body is still being controlled by the physical body, due to the connection of this "energy thread of life and death".

The structural formation of this **"energy thread**

**of life and death"** is mainly composed of two categories, namely:-

1. The energy being radiated jointly by **all the building blocks of one's physical body** ;
2. The energy from one's **"karmic forces"**.

Therefore, when "death" is approaching, the various organic parts of the body start decomposing due to debilitations, with the energy so emitted is becoming weaker and weaker. At the same time, the energy from one's "karmic forces", which has bound the Spiritual Body from moving away freely from the physical body, also undergoes transformation and decomposition during this "dying" process. As these two kinds of energy diminished, it enables some NDE survivors to experience the "out-of-body" experience, and as a result creating various kinds of Near-Death experiences (NDEs).

According to the revelations from a great deal of findings from scientific research, if the bodily functions of an individual are being set to debilitate in such a way that the overall "rate of metabolism" is being reduced, then the phenomenon of "out-of-body" experience would occur (there is another terminology in Chinese for the same phenomenon





of this “out-of-body” experience). In such cases, the person would also experience some of the experiences of the NDE survivors, but they **cannot be as complete as theirs**.

From the relevant scientific research findings, it was found that the “out-of-body” experience could occur in any one of the following situations:

1. In a normal and healthy sleeping condition;
2. Any moment during awake, even while one is walking, or writing;
3. Moments of serious accident, explosion, or being frightened;
4. Under the induced effects of narcotics, chloroform, cactus narcotics, marijuana;
5. During meditation;
6. Under hypnosis;
7. With variations in consciousness;
8. Forced segregations;
9. Under ascetic practices;
10. Under Hunger;
11. Under depressions;
12. Dancing under drowsy conditions.

[The sources for the above 12 items of information include: (1) Walker, “Beyond the Body”, page 66; (2) Celia Green, “Lucid Dreams”, page 18; (3) Bardens, “Mysterious Worlds”, page 144; (4) Parker, “States of Mind”, pages 110-111; (5) Michael Grosso, “Some Varieties of OBE,” JASPR 70, no.2, pages 176-192.]

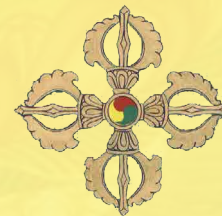
From the above-mentioned information, it is feasible to cause the Spiritual Body to leave its

physical body, either through tackling this from the “spiritual” domain, or from the “bodily” functional domain. The only difference lies in the fact that if one is tackling this from the different domains, the experiences that one would have will be quite different due to the different degrees of strengths or weaknesses of the “energy thread of life and death”.

But, there is one thing in common: regardless of what methods in inducing this “out-of-body” experience, once the “energy thread of life and death” is disconnected, the person in question would truly enter into the state of “death”. In fact, under many circumstances, **the “energy thread of life and death” is very easy to be disconnected**. Therefore, this “out-of-body” experience is a kind of “dangerous” action, and so any intended action of trying out this “out-of-body” experience is no different from the “risking of one’s own life”.

Hence, an authentic Spiritual Master (Guru) with wisdom will not allow a Dharma practitioner to deliberately conduct an “out-of-body” practice. If, unfortunately, this has occurred due to some natural causes or accidents, the **Spiritual Master (Guru) will, according to the “Dharma teachings”, guide the Dharma practitioner that one must stop such kind of occurrence. Only a “fake guru” would try to show off one’s ability to get this “out-of-body” experience, then further teach his followers the skills for doing so, and preach mystified theories of spirits for attracting followers, in order to fulfill ones’ personal “selfish desires”, but ending in the hurting of both himself and his followers....**

*(To be continued).*



## SPARK OF WISDOM

*However, Spiritual Masters (Gurus) can be distinguished between those who are authentic ones, as against those who are fake ones. If following a fake guru, then one would end up in a totally converse situation, that is, the chance of being reincarnated in an extremely bad environment is over 90%. (Please refer to the article on “Authentic vs Fake Gurus (Spiritual Masters)” in this issue of the “Lake of Lotus”, as well as in the VCD with the same title, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association).*



# The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (3)



By **Pema Lhadren**  
Translated by **Anne W. M. Chow**



### The Skills in the Setting-up of "Objectives"

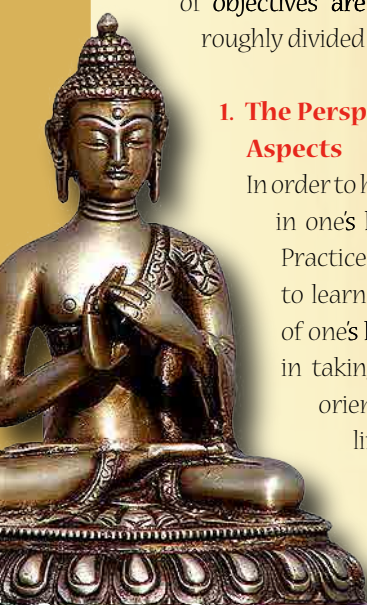
The primary condition of 'success' is the setting-up of 'objectives', upon which it will enable us to plan our steps of action leading towards success. While one's own preferences, abilities and ideals are the key factors in the setting-up of one's 'objectives', the necessary skills for the setting-up of 'objectives' are also important. These skills can be roughly divided into two parts:-

#### 1. The Perspective From Macro to Micro Aspects

In order to have any kinds of achievements either in one's life path or on the path of Dharma Practice, the first thing that one has to do is to learn how to map out a macro blueprint of one's life. By visualizing oneself as a garuda in taking a bird's-eye view of what are the orientations and wishes of one's whole life, this can help one to establish one's own goals and 'objectives' clearly in life. No matter how big and how far your 'objectives' may be, you

should know how to break them down into numerous smaller 'objectives' which could be achieved either immediately, or within a short period of time, or within a specific period of time.

Why we have to do so? The reason is that the farther and bigger the 'objective', the longer it will take for the time of its accomplishment, and hence more obstacles will be encountered. In order to become successful, there should be plans of action that are systematic, well organized and wisely arranged. When a smaller, easier, short-term 'objective' has been achieved, a sense of success will give you a momentum to actively propel you further towards the way ahead. By accumulating the different successes of numerous smaller 'objectives', it would be much easier for you to measure and assess your progress. At the same time, this will enable you to effectively handle and adjust more correctly the directions and methods in advancing towards the various 'objectives'. Just think of what a wonderful strategy of chain-reaction this can be! Hence, there must be short-term, medium-term and long-term 'objectives' for all those outstanding enterprises.







The same principle should be applied to a wise Dharma practitioner.

Then one would ask: would it be possible to set the 'objectives' in an ascending order, starting from the smaller ones to the big ones? The answer is yes, but then its efficiency and the overall result will not be good. The setting-up of smaller 'objectives' should be based upon the big 'objectives' in guiding their directions for the overall goal. However, if the establishment of the big 'objectives' is made according to the smaller 'objectives' which were set in an un-orderly manner, it will just end up like 'the blinds touching an elephant' (that is, one will only know the parts but not the whole elephant), in other words, one will only know the trees but not the whole forest.

## 2. The Setting of a Time-Frame

No matter how big or how small is the objective, there must be a time-frame for its completion. The time-frame may be adjusted according to the changes in the environmental factors, but it must be set up. Why?

Take for example, if the greatest 'objective' of a wise Dharma practitioner is to attain 'Buddhahood', the first thing that he has to do is to set a time-frame for the completion of this very 'objective'. Would one want to achieve this 'objective' within this very life time, or within the next seven life times, or in future countless life times? If one goes to interview any of those outstanding successful persons in the world, asking them about the importance in the setting-up of the time-frames for their 'objectives', they will assure you with a positive answer to this question. The reason is simply because if there is no time limit being set to achieve the 'objective', there wouldn't be any urgency, neither motivation, for its accomplishment. As a result, it will be left behind in

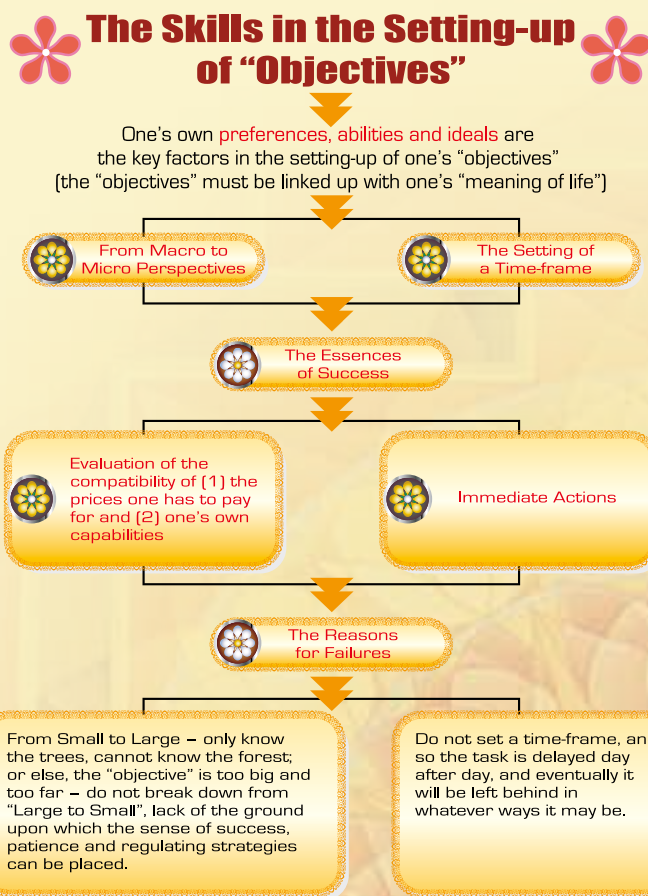
whatever ways it may be.

When choosing methods for one's Dharma practice, if a person's 'objective' is to attain 'Buddhahood' within this very life time, one has to select a method that will enable one to have the opportunity to reach this 'objective' within the set time-frame. In the Inaugural Issue of the 'Lake of Lotus', there is an article entitled 'An Introduction to the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism Guru Padmasambhava', in which it talks about the essences

of the 'Nine Yanas'. It clearly introduces the different methods of Dharma practice with varying speeds for the attainment of 'Buddhahood'. If one does not set forth the time-frame for accomplishing one's 'objective', then how could one know what to choose as the appropriate method for one's own Dharma practice?

If one's 'objective' is to attain 'Buddhahood' in future countless life times, then the prices and efforts that one has to pay for 'right now' will be much less, comparatively speaking. As there is no urgency to achieve this 'objective', one can slowly start off with the teachings of 'Sutra-yana' to regulate one's body and mind for spiritual comfort. As there is no such necessity

for practical Dharma practice, and hence the recitation of the Buddhas' names will be sufficient enough. However, the prices that one has to pay for later on in his subsequent countless life times will surely be very huge. Perhaps, it would be so huge that it is beyond one's own imagination. Why? It is because 'countless life times' is a time period that is very difficult to assess. The longer the time period,





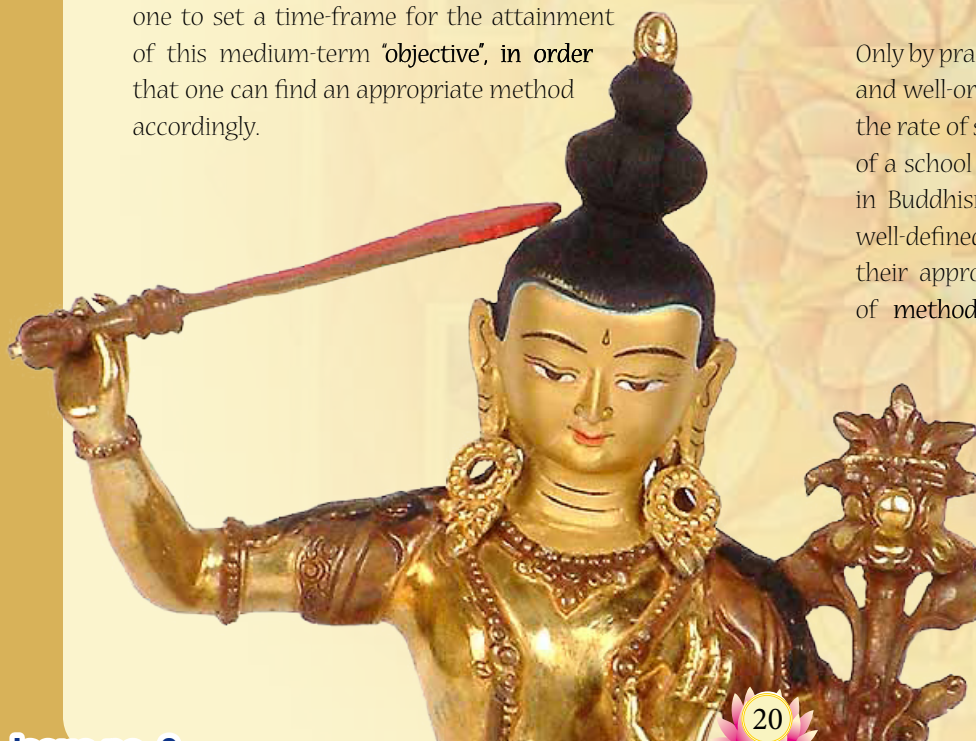


the more the obstacles and variations there will be, and so the higher the rate of failure it will become. At the end of the day, one will be left in whatever ways it may be, and so one will not be able to reach the set 'objective' as envisaged. The price that one will have to pay for is that one will continue to be in the 'cycle of karmic existence' (Samsara), will lose numerous opportunities to be liberated, and will continue to be endlessly trapped and tortured without any self-autonomy and self-control. This is the usual problem of those people who opt for 'slow actions', as they are always unable to seize the opportunity at the present moment.

Once a person has an 'objective', one will start to have the direction of, and also the meaning for, one's own life. The breaking down of the 'objective' into smaller ones is equivalent to one's having 'actions plans' heading for success. In setting the time-frame for the goal achievement is like possessing the methods that would enable one to forge ahead for success, simply because one has to find the ways out to do so before the deadline comes. Take Dharma practice for example, if one could not achieve the biggest 'objective' of attaining 'Buddhahood' within this very life time, then would one have the next best 'objective'? The answer is yes. There is a medium-term 'objective' of hoping 'to be reborn in the Buddha-Field' after one's death. Since there are many methods that will enable one to reach this medium-term 'objective', it can either be achieved within this very life time, or in the subsequent seven lives, or in future countless life times just like the first 'objective', therefore it is necessary for one to set a time-frame for the attainment of this medium-term 'objective', in order that one can find an appropriate method accordingly.

It is much more flexible in the setting-up of smaller 'objectives', but there is one key point to remember: that is, the best way to do so is to quantify the set 'objectives'. Examples of such quantifiable smaller 'objectives' may include: the demand on oneself to complete a certain amount of Dharma practices everyday; or to require oneself to have certain kinds of changes, or certain amount of improvements, in one's mentality when dealing with different matters and people; or to fix the daily amount of people or animals that one has to help out; or to fix the daily amount of good deeds that one has to perform; or one has to set at least a certain number of pages of Buddhist books that one has to read for each day, etc. As long as these are within the confines of one's own capabilities, one should be able to complete them. After a certain period of time, every now and then, one can have an evaluation of this process and slowly one will be able to find out that all these things are improving and progressing well: whether it be one's own mental status, or one's degree of understanding on the Buddhist teachings, or one's own perceptions of people and things. This sense of achievement will further lead you towards the set 'objective', and will also enable you to know how to regulate and modify the setting-up of smaller 'objectives' later on. The more time you spent on its examination and evaluation, the better the mingling of your 'objective' with your daily life and their subsequent inter-penetration. The smaller the setting-up of one's 'objectives' in greater details, the higher the successful rate one will be able to achieve, and also it will be easier for one to master.

Only by practicing one's Dharma Practice in a systematic and well-organized manner can one be able to increase the rate of success. Wouldn't it be nice to have such kind of a school in Buddhism? In fact, is there such a school in Buddhism which is extremely well-organized with well-defined structures, having different categories in their appropriate orders, can include a great variety of methods in terms of their different speeds of achievement, and has both theory and practice at the same time? The answer is yes, and that is Tantra-yana, or more commonly known as the teachings of Vajrayana. For example, in Vajrayana, the standard for assessing the achievement of a small 'objective' would be something like: the counting of the number of mantras recited, or the amount of 'practice manuals' (sadhanas) practiced,







or the degree of clarity of one's 'visualizations'. For the 'objective' of a higher order, the standard for assessing its achievement would focus on the number of days, or even years, that one has spent in 'retreats', or what level one has achieved in one's 'meditative state'. Then, for assessing one's own achievement on the 'objective' of an even higher order, both the understanding and the practicing of 'emptiness' would be used as the standard. (Please refer to the VCD on "Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness", published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association.)

The methods taught by Vajrayana are all very practical and are applying the theories in one's daily practices. No matter whether the 'objectives' are large ones, medium-sized ones, or small ones, there are always specifically-designed plans from which people can choose for themselves. Furthermore, it will be complemented by instructions from a designated person - the 'spiritual teacher' (Guru), who will be there to guide you in the setting-up of the various 'objectives'. The speeds for either attaining 'Buddhahood', or to be reborn into the Buddha-Field, can vary from the quickest way for achievement within this very life time, or at the moment of death, or else within the next seven lives. It is indeed a very comprehensive and well-developed school of Buddhism.

The 'quantifications' of one's Dharma practices is a very efficient and scientific way for Dharma practice. Yet, Buddhism transcends and goes beyond science. Thus, when the Dharma practitioner's practical experiences and the level of realization on 'emptiness' have reached the Bodhisattva level of the 'eighth bhumi' or above [the 'eighth bhumi' is an indicator used to measure the attainment level of one's realization, upon which the degree of stability on one's realization has already achieved the stage of 'never-to-subside-nor-turn-back'. Its 'meditative state' can allow the Dharma practitioner

to see well beyond the 'visible light' (i.e., the spectrum of light intensity that can be seen by the human eyes), and thus be able to see only a fraction of the strong lights that are emitted by the 'enjoyment-bodies' of the Buddhas (Sambhogakaya Buddhas), who can emit the light intensity of one thousand suns], the quantifiable scientific ways of Dharma practice and mentality will no longer be applicable. Such methods of Dharma practice must now be directly replaced by the practice of 'emptiness', which will be further upgraded and consolidated through practicing it 'spontaneously and naturally', a condition which can be called as the 'practice of no-practice'.



However, if there are those people who have misinterpreted that they can bypass the foundation of practicing quantifiable Dharma practices, and then falsified themselves as if they are already performing the 'practice of no-practice' (even though they have not yet attained the Bodhisattva level of the 'eighth bhumi'), they are in fact just like 'those blinds touching the elephant' as they do not know the real and complete picture of 'Emptiness'. Without the support of practical experiences of Dharma practices, their so-called achievements could be much slower than those who perform quantifiable Dharma practices. Even more so is that when they die, they

will misunderstand and wrongly enter into the state of 'voidness' (which is a realm within the cycle of karmic existence) as if 'everything is emptiness' (in order to know the true meaning of 'emptiness', please refer to the VCD on 'Emptiness: Neither Existence Nor Voidness', published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association), and will thus be trapped in the long-lasting 'Realm of Voidness' within Samsara. The end result of this is that: the deeper one's 'meditative state' in this state of 'voidness', the longer one will be trapped in this 'Realm of Voidness'. In this case, one will normally be trapped for billions of years, or in its multiples.

This kind of self-deceptive Dharma practitioners, in using the excuse of having direct practice of 'emptiness', will instruct others to bypass the foundation of quantifiable





Dharma practices, and thus act like the 'blind leading the blinds' and mislead a group of innocent Dharma practitioners to fall prey into great abysses. Being in an arrogant and self-boasting manner, and without any real experiences of Dharma practices to fall back upon, they will fall, and to be reborn, in adverse environments. Upon losing one's 'meditative state', the one who has misled others astray will be dragged by the push and pull forces of the 'law of cause and effect', while causing others' downfalls, into even worse conditions. As the 'practice of no-practice' is some kind of a practice that sees no boundaries, nor does it have any norms, and can thus easily lead oneself astray towards this state of 'voidness', resulting in 'gaining nothing' in return, and so this has the same effect as the 'king's new cloak' in deceiving oneself and others. Hence, this kind of practice can only be suitable for those Dharma practitioners whose level of realization have already achieved the stage of 'never-to-subside-nor-turn-back', and thus reached the Bodhisattva level of the 'eighth bhumi' or above. Even though the result of 'gaining nothing' might also happen to these Dharma practitioners, but one thing for sure is that at least this will not lead to one's own downfall, and may only prolong the time period for one's Dharma practice.

Hence, Kyabje Chadrang Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, the living great realized Dzogchen Master of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism and now aged 95, renders an important piece of Spiritual Advice to the present-day Dharma practitioners: 'It is extremely wrong for those people who think that there is no need for them to practice the foundational 'Preliminaries', and instead they can go directly for the practice of 'Great Perfection' (Dzogchen). Whether it be the teachers themselves or their followers, if they believe that this will be the correct way for their teachings, they are definitely going to have many obstacles in their Dharma practices. Not only will their speed be slowed down by this so-called 'short cut', it will in fact be very dangerous to all of them!' (Please refer to the CD on 'The Importance of the Preliminaries', published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association).

### Price to be Paid

If one wants to succeed, one has to pay a price no matter what one's 'objective' might be. Yet, in order to be successful, how much does one have to pay for? Would it be that the more you are committed to pay for, the earlier and the faster you will succeed? The answer is that: it is not the amount of the price that one has to pay for that is in direct correlation to one's success. Rather, it



KYABJE CHADRANG SANGYE DORJE RINPOCHE

has a direct relationship with the 'method' that one has chosen to use. There are some methods that can help one to succeed in the shortest time span, yet having to pay the least price. However, there are other methods that will only bring one to failures no matter how much price you have to pay for them. Since the chosen method is the key factor in either success or failure, and is also the indicator for the price to be paid, and so all wise persons would first try their very best in finding out the 'methods' before taking any actions. They would not move around blindly, or being careless in choosing their 'methods' subjectively.

How can a person think and consider before he can be able to find a fast and accurate method? In choosing the 'method', is it whether one should be looking at it from: the time that one would have to spend on it, or the efforts that one would have to spend on it, or the price that one would have to pay for it? Sorry, the answer is none of these. It is, indeed, not an easy task to find a fast and accurate method, and so one must have to use one's





own wisdom in thinking. Strategically, one must have to collect the relevant information rationally, the more the better. After which, one has to further analyze, calculate its statistics, and filter through all the data in the dataset. Furthermore, with the set 'objective' to be placed in the central point, one can then try to list out the short-listed methods and then make comparisons among them one by one. You will then be able to find out that the one method that is nearest to the central point which will be the fastest and the most accurate method.

When comparing each of the related elements and factors, it is necessary to include the prices that one needs to pay for in each of the methods as well. Basing upon each individual's actual situation and the price that one is willing to pay for, then one can choose a 'method' that can help to reach the 'objective'. This is an important step! If a person is not aware of the amount of efforts to be paid, and is not psychologically well prepared, one will be most likely to give it up long before he would reach the 'objective'. Any efforts that he has put in previously will then be wasted! Hence, it is better for one to be well prepared beforehand, and then forge ahead wholeheartedly towards one's 'objective' with a confident attitude that 'all things are under one's own control, and one would not even bother when mishaps might occur'. In this way, the chances of success will certainly be high. Take one's Dharma practice as an example, the reason why so many people might give up their Dharma practice in the middle of their path is mainly due to the mismatch of their motivations with their set 'objectives'. Even more so is the fact that the methods that they use are 'so far away from the main theme', and so they could not grasp the key points. It is only when they finally realize that the rewards that they might have gained are inversely proportional to the prices that they have been paying for, or even with opposite results, they will then give them up in the middle of their path and thus surely it will end up in failures.

For instance, the major key point of Buddhism is that: all worldly things are only transient existences of all kinds of phenomena, and will continuously change and become extinct with the lapse of time. Hence, there is no such a thing called everlasting or 'permanence' in this world. If one is so indulged with these worldly phenomena and thus try to spend your whole life's efforts, time and energy in order to keep

them there, you will become their slaves, losing the good opportunities and will be unable to perform things that are of utter importance to you: namely, to make good use of the present limited resources in order to free oneself from the present bondages, and to get hold of the opportunity for self autonomy to be reborn in the future. Or even better is that you may regain the greatest freedom of all -- never to be reborn again -- and to become the great 'Mighty One', that is, the 'Enlightened One' (Buddha). It can be very painful if one does not possess the freedom of this great 'Mighty One', as one will never be able to predict as to what kind of living creature one will become in the next life. Neither will one be able to get rid of it, nor will one have any control of it.

Thus, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had warned people, time and again, that it would be very difficult for them to fight against this natural law of 'rebirths by permutations and combinations' after death. Therefore, people should make full use of the present opportunities that they can have, in terms of their capabilities, time, energy and resources, so as to equip themselves with the trainings for Dharma practice to strive for the right of self autonomy, in order not to waste the 'meaning of life' for our present living. In order to achieve this, one has to receive special trainings in correcting all wrongful thoughts and behaviors, as well as to have in-depth trainings of one's own 'mind'.

From the perspective of Vajrayana, these kinds of trainings are very systematic and organized, with varied levels and great depths. It is, indeed, a very special kind of practice embedded with wisdom, unlike those ordinary 'psychological counseling'. Most ordinary people will use wrong motivations for their Dharma practices, mainly in terms of praying for wealth, for longevity, or for supernatural powers, and so on. These are the kinds of things that Buddhism exactly asks people to give up, or are those temporarily phenomena to be used and then discarded. One should not grip hold of them, as at the end of the day one will have to give them up anyway. In reality, one







just cannot have this kind of grasping at all!

## Immediate Actions

When everything is being ready: the 'objective' is set up, the time-frame has also been set, the methods have been chosen, and even a detailed plan has already been drafted, what has been missing now is the 'immediate actions'. The reason for the failures of so many people is simply because of the fact that they 'love to dream rather than to face reality'. In so doing, they will simply 'run away before their fight, and to lose even before the battle actually starts'. Therefore, another important factor for success is to take actions immediately.

Take Dharma practice as an example, many people would pray and worship the Buddha, reciting some of the Buddhas' names in order to have the peace of mind. Or they will try to understand some Buddhist doctrines for the further comforting of mind. However, when it comes to the actual Dharma practices, one would always try to defer it day after day. Only when the time of death comes, would they then rush to perform some Dharma practices, hoping that there will be miracles. Right at the beginning, the Buddhist teachings have clearly stated that where there is a 'cause', there will be an 'effect'. So, if one just prays and worships the Buddha once in a while, without having any training, how could one expect powerful miracles to happen? Particularly, if one wants to attain 'Buddhahood', one has to have in-depth trainings on 'Emptiness' before one can attain this very 'objective'. According to the 'law of cause and effect', one will get a melon when one plants a melon seed, and would not be able to get beans out of that. As to what kind of 'seeds' one has planted, one will then reap the same kind of 'fruits'.

Any kind of Dharma practice without training on 'emptiness' will not enable one to attain 'Buddhahood'. However, there are still merits for the worship of the Buddha, in the recitation of Buddhas' names, and in the learning of some Buddhist teachings. At least, one has already put in the 'cause' by linking up oneself with Buddhism. As for the 'effect', it might be that one will be able to have a chance to learn Buddhism again after countless lives. By then, one might be able to act more promptly in practicing Dharma practice, with more-focused trainings and up to the point. Well, do you think these 'causes' and 'effects' are too slow, too uncertain and too superficial? Will it be too naïve and self-comforting for such kind of contemplation?

As long as you have the wisdom and be willing to spend some time to think through and analyze them, you will understand the real meaning of 'cause and effect' in a rational way, which can never be explained merely by some piecemeal knowledge and 'superstition'. In awakening from the sensations of pains, one starts to realize the strong urge to search and head for the way out. In so doing, one has to really make up one's mind in order to commence one's Dharma practice by the using of some mild yet practical methods. For instance, one can start by writing down the 'objectives' and the 'plans' on a piece of paper. Read out the key points loudly everyday. Do not look down upon this method: it is indeed a very practical way to remind oneself of upholding one's own determination, and is also a good means to nurture and induce one's own wisdom.

In writing out your 'objectives' and 'plans', your thinking will become more systematic, realistic, practical and clear. It will also be easier for you to find out if there are any loopholes, so that you can make up for them or modify them. During your daily recitation, your determination will be slowly and subconsciously strengthened and consolidated, your memory will become clearer and clearer, while your associations will become even better. All these are some of the methods that can nurture and induce one's wisdom thinking, and are also the practical means that can lead one towards success.

Of course, there are many others factors that one has to pay attention to if one wants to successfully attain the final 'objective'. We will continue to share them with you in the next issue of the 'Lake of Lotus'. Wishing all of you to be filled with wisdom!



## SPARK OF WISDOM

Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had warned people, time and again, that it would be very difficult for them to fight against this natural law of "rebirths by permutations and combinations" after death. Hence, people should make full use of the present opportunities that they can have, in terms of their capabilities, time, energy and resources, so as to equip themselves with the trainings for Dharma practice to strive for the right of self autonomy, in order not to waste the "meaning of life" for our present living.



# “AUTHENTIC” VERSUS “FAKE” GURUS (SPIRITUAL TEACHERS) (1)



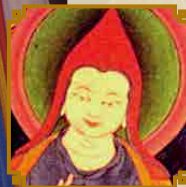
Yeshe Thaye

Translated by Byron K.K. Yiu



Guru Padmasambhava, the Great Master of Oddiyana, warns:

“Not to examine the teacher is like drinking poison;  
Not to examine the disciple is like leaping from a precipice.”



Lord Atisa mentioned in *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

“One should receive Bodhi vows from virtuous Gurus.  
Those teachers should be qualified,  
To have those attributes and qualifications,  
To have in-depth understanding of the various vows and sadhanas,  
To have kept the vows purely within himself,  
To be able to transmit the Dharma teachings with compassion.  
This is, indeed, the virtuous Guru.”



The Tibetan Saint Jetsun Milarepa said in his *Song on How to Benefit*:

If the lineage of one's Guru is impure,  
What benefits does one have to receive initiations from him?



## General Introduction

Basically, Buddhism can be divided into **Sutra-yana** (or **Prajnaparamita-yana**) and **Mantra-yana** (or **Vajra-yana**). In Sutra-yana, one takes refuges from the Three Jewels; that is, one takes refuges from the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. In Mantra-yana, one takes four refuges, namely: to take refuges from the Guru, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

In this way, Mantra-yana puts one's refuge from the





The present Lord Buddha Shakyamuni

“Guru” before those of the Three Jewels, and thus regards the “Guru” as the core of one’s practices, and thus has a supreme position. Furthermore, Mantra-yana conceives that the “Guru’s Body” is equivalent to the Jewel of the Sangha, the “Guru’s Speech” is equivalent to the Jewel of the Dharma, while the “Guru’s Mind” is equivalent to the Jewel of the Buddha. Hence, the “Guru” is being conceived as the “Combined Totality of the Three Jewels”. This kind of phenomenon has always been controversial and has become the main focus of criticism by the general practitioners of Sutra-yana.

“While water can hold a boat, it can also sink it.” Similarly, “while fire can have numerous benefits, it can also be causes of destruction.” Hence, both the merits and demerits of “water and fire” (used here as examples for illustration) are not necessarily contradictory to each other. There is no need to completely prohibit the usage of “water and fire” because of the various harms that they can bring. Neither is there a need to avoid discussing their harmful effects, even though they can have tremendous benefits.

Then, why is it that the “Guru” is being positioned in such a high place in the practices of Vajrayana Buddhism? What is the merit of doing so? Is it really necessary? And what is the harm that this might bring? What will be the consequences if

this positioning is being eliminated? Why is it that Mahayana Buddhism does not have this issue? Since both Mahayana and Vajrayana belong to Buddhism, why is it that there is such a difference? So, what are their major similarities and differences?

## The Similarities and Differences for Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism

The teachings of Mahayana Buddhism is based mainly on theoretical knowledge. It starts off with one’s own thinking through reflection, so as to inspire the awareness of the practitioner, and thus slowly leads on to one’s own practice. However, comparatively speaking, the part on the “inspiration of awareness” does not have substantial methods of practices for one’s own guidance, but instead the practitioner has to purely rely upon the degree and the level of one’s own wisdom in understanding the essence of the Dharma teachings, in order to inspire upon one’s awareness. For the part on the “actualization of practices”, it is rather weak. Indeed, there is not even a single set of “specific and rigorous methods” on the practice, in order to guide and support the trainings of one’s own “thoughts” and “mind”.

Whereas, in the teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism, both theory and practice are of equal importance, and thus it can be said that it is “half-and-half”. Thus in Tibetan Buddhism, first of all, a Dharma practitioner was traditionally required to take twelve



Refuge Tree of the “Dudjom Tersar Lineage”





years of study in learning all the essential teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. It is only after that will the Dharma practitioner be allowed to continue on with further trainings in the various Dharma practices of Vajrayana Buddhism.

For the part on the “ways of Dharma practices” in Mahayana Buddhism, it emphasizes on the fundamental and outer trainings of the “body and speech”. For instance, the trainings of the “body and speech” include the carrying out of the “Six Paramitas and tens of thousand of other virtuous deeds”, the various meditation practices in order to gain the “Right Meditation” (Samadhi), as well as the recitation of the various Sutras and the Sacred Names of the Different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and so on.

As for the method of Dharma practice in the Ch’an (Zen in Japanese) School, which puts comparatively much more emphasis on actual practices, its level for the training of the “mind” is very high indeed. However, it will require only those Dharma practitioners with great wisdom to be able to use the “mind (of the Master) to mind (of the disciple) transmission”, and thus enable the disciple to come to realize and receive the transmissions of the great Ch’an Masters in a “non-conventional” way of “not elaborating by words, but by pointing directly to one’s own mind, so as to realize the true nature and to become a Buddha.”

For those Dharma practitioners who do not have such great capabilities and wisdom, this kind of method is too high for them. Thus for them, the training of



Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of Chan School of Chinese Buddhism

the mind in the Ch’an School, such as its methods of sitting meditation (Dhyana) and of reflecting upon a word or a sentence in a “Koan” (and so on), has quite often become some kind of a ritualistic type of homework, which then becomes hollow and not reliable as a way of solid practice. In fact, this kind of practice is actually equivalent to the practice of nothing.

There are other methods of practices

in the different schools, such as the “Meditation on the Immaterial Universal Reality Beyond All Phenomena” by the “School of the Three Sastras”; the “School of Dharmalakshana” on the “Meditation of the Five Levels of Vijnanamatra”; the “Tian-tai School” on the “Meditation of the One Mind and Three Visions (of past, present, and future)”; the “Hua-yen (or Avatamsaka) School” on the “Meditation on the Dharmadhatu”; the “Ch’an (Zen in Japanese) School” on the “Meditation on the Original Face”; the “Pure-land (or Sukhavati) School” on the “Sixteen Meditations on the Buddha Amitabha”; and so on.

However, when comparing the “mind-training” practices of both Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism through the methods of “calm-abiding (Shamatha) and penetrative-insight (Vipasyana)”, Mahayana Buddhism seems to lack a comprehensive and detailed plan of guidance, oral instructions and practical skills. As for the various worldly skillful means, as well as for the protection and clearing of obstacles, and so on, they are comparatively inadequate. For those practitioners (with “limited merits and wisdom”) who are practicing in this “world with five impurities”, their help seems to be very limited indeed.

For the part on the “actual practices” of Vajrayana Buddhism, it emphasizes on the deeper layers of trainings in the three aspects of the “Body, Speech and Mind”. Hence, on top of the trainings on the fundamental and outer layers, it further includes the following aspects:-

1. To use one’s “body” in order to train one’s “channels, winds and wisdom drops”, in using specific meditational techniques to lead one’s mind, and thus help to mingle theory with practice in order to reach a balanced state of mutual support for both the body and the mind. In doing so, it helps to arouse one’s hidden inner potentials of the body. This power, if strong enough, can help to trigger and inspire one’s wisdom, and to deepen one’s “mental concentration”, resulting in different attainments in a much shorter period of time.

For example, the “Vairocana’s Seven-pointed Meditation”, the “Concentration of Inner Heat” (Tummo), the “Vajra Recitation”, the “Breath of the Precious Vase”, the method on the “Drinking of Emptiness and Prolonging One’s Longevity”, and so on, could all be described as the classic examples of trainings on “using the Illusion (of the Body) to practice the Truth (of Reality)”. With all these practices, at the junior level, it could help one to strengthen one’s health,





avoid sickness and prolong longevity; while at the more advanced and senior level, it could help the Dharma practitioner to realize one's own "Buddha Nature". Hence, it encompasses both the worldly and spiritual matters, and this is indeed the most unique feature of Vajrayana Buddhism.

2. To use one's "speech" to recite the "secret mantras" of different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and together with specific meditations of the "mind", it helps to arouse the "channels, winds and wisdom drops" to reach a state of "smoothness, balance and clearness", in order to elevate to a higher level towards the "Buddha's Wisdom".
3. To use one's "mind" to meditate, in accordance with the trainings on "the Emptiness (Sunyata) of the Nature of the Three Wheels (eg. the donor, the person being donated and the act of donation)", thus enabling oneself to get rid of the graspings of both the "Ego and Dharma". In borrowing the support of one's "body and speech", it will further help oneself to enter towards the state of "Neither Existence Nor Voidness" (the Reality of True Emptiness – readers can refer to the English version of the VCD with this title, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association). Thus, with special trainings, it could be part of the "mind-training" process.
4. To use one's "Body, Speech and Mind" as media for the practices, so as to help mingled the authentic Dharma teachings with one's own daily life, or during long-term retreats, in order to swiftly accomplish enlightenment. For example, **Guru Padmasambhava, the Second Buddha** of our time and the Founding Father of Tibetan Buddhism, had taught the "Methods of Liberation in the Bardo (the intermediate period between death and rebirth)", through which he truly unveiled the conditions during this period in great details, and taught the methods that can liberate oneself. Hence, if these teachings are further practiced in accordance with other Dharma practices, so as to help them mingled with one's daily life, or long-term retreats, it will become a "natural" process for one to continue practice within twenty-four hours of one's daily life. It is practical, pragmatic and very convenient as well.

Besides, for the teachings on the "Preliminaries" (Ngondro), they can benefit and broadly attune to all levels of sentient beings. At the same



Guru Padmasambhava, the Second Buddha of our time and the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism

time, these teachings have gathered all the essential elements of the different teachings of the "Development Stage, Completion Stage and the Great Perfection", and so can help to consolidate the foundations of Dharma practitioners. In the practice of it in a general manner, Dharma practitioners could be liberated from the "cycle of karmic existence" (Samsara) and enter the Buddha's Pure-land, while to practice it in a much more profound way, the Dharma practitioners could "realize one's Buddha Nature and become a Buddha". Furthermore, it could be practiced in accordance with the deeper layers of practices, for example: in the practices of the "Six Yogas" of "dream yoga, luminosity, illusory body, bardo, transference, inner heat", as well as in the practices of **Thekchod** and **Thodgal** in the Great Perfection, in such a way that the power of practices can be so strong that it could lead the Dharma practitioner to realize and attain one's own "Buddhahood" (total perfect enlightenment) either with this very body, or within this very life time.

5. "Blessings" – The "Ch'an (Zen in Japanese) School" emphasizes on the importance of using "one's own forces", while the "Pure-land (or Sukhavati) School" emphasizes on the importance of using the "forces from others". In the case of Vajrayana Buddhism, again it





emphasizes that half should be on the “forces of oneself” and the other half should be on the “forces from others”.

6. If one only emphasizes on the “forces of oneself”, the level of difficulty will be very high indeed, and so it is very easy to fail and with no safeguard at all. On the other hand, if one only emphasizes on the “forces from others”, it will lose one’s own freedom, and will be too passive. Hence, it will be quite difficult for one to grasp the successful rate.
7. Besides the blessings from the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, there are also the blessings from one’s own “**Gurus and all the Lineage Masters**” in Vajrayana Buddhism. Hence, when the Dharma practitioner lacks the “forces of oneself”, one could still rely upon the “forces from others” in order to be liberated from Samsara. As both the forces “of oneself” and “from others” are interacting together, in bringing about the effects, the chance of success from both forces will be much higher than that from either one of them.
8. Clearance of obstacles and obscurations – for the various obstacles and obscurations that might exist during the path of one’s practice, such as: with many diseases, short life-span, many obscurations, poverty, stupidity and ignorance, feelings of inferiority, arrogance and vanity, enormous past karmic debts from relatives, as well as debtors demanding for repayments of various sorts, and so on. In Vajrayana practices, one will be able to handle these obstacles and obscurations in very practical ways, such that the Dharma practitioners could clear away obstacles and obscurations on the one hand, and to do one’s own practices at the same time.
9. Hence, it is not the way to handle things blindly as if these obstacles and obscurations do not exist. Otherwise, this could make the path of one’s practice to be full of obstacles and

obscurations. There are various methods in Vajrayana practices of clearing away obstacles and obscurations, such as the different activities of “**pacification, increase, magnetization, subjugation**”, together with other methods of doing repentance and confessions of sins, like the practicing of Vajrasattva purification, smoke and water offerings, and offerings of tormas and food, etc. Hence, with the correct instructions from a “**Guru with Pure Lineage**”, to be supported with oral instructions on “mind-training”, all these practices will be extremely helpful to those Dharma practitioners who have practiced the Dharma only within a short period of time and are rather weak in terms of their “mind-training” practice.

### The Significance of the “Guru” (Spiritual Master or Teacher)



Guru Rinpoche & His 8 Manifestations

As Vajrayana Buddhism focuses on the actual practices of the Dharma, it is very in-depth, detailed and concentrated, and thus requires a “**Guru (spiritual master or teacher)**” who is well-versed in both theory (with theoretical foundation) and practice (with practical experiences) of the Buddhist Dharma in order to impart upon oneself the “correct instructions”. Hence, one needs to receive the teachings and instructions from a “realized Guru” in order that what one has learnt can become really effective. **This is most crucial and important: because if the teachings and instructions are wrong, the slightest effect one will get is that one’s “mind” will become distorted, while the strongest effects one will have will be a**

**disbelief in the Dharma while one is still alive, and will have downward movement to the lower realms when one passes away.** This is what is meant by “even a very slight deviation of less than a fraction of a mini-meter at the very beginning, will eventually end up missing the target thousands of miles away”. Therefore, in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, the “**Lineages**” of one’s **Guru** is extremely important and is much emphasized.

The source of the Dharma has been transmitted and came down all the way from the top (of the lists





Guru Rinpoche, the Precious Wish-fulfilling Gem

of past “Gurus”) to the bottom (of oneself) with one direct path that links them up together. This kind of the **transmission** of the lineage, in passing on from one generation to another generation, is to have designated the most qualified **holder** of the lineage to become the **“Lineage Guru”**, in order to uphold and integrate all the teachings and to preserve the essences of the Dharma in order to benefit all sentient beings. In this way, it also helps to keep the pure and most supreme teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism from being distorted by others, or mixed with impurities, and thus avoid many changes, distortions, pollutions and misunderstandings of various kinds, which might bring about harmful effects to all sentient beings.

In order to ascertain and preserve the high quality on the qualifications of the “Gurus”, so as to pass on the **correct and authentic Dharma teachings and instructions of the lineage** without any kinds of disruption, distortion, pollution and weakness in its strength, it is most important to have special selection criteria in choosing those disciples that are suitable vessels to be responsible and have the abilities to **keep it pure and clean**, thus being able to **uphold the lineage** as it is. As the correct and authentic Dharma teachings and instructions can dispel the darkness of ignorance, it is analogous to the **“Lamp**

**of the Dharma”**. Thus, in this way, the transmission of the lineage can continue on from one generation to another generation in its purest form, just like the transmission of the flame from one lamp to another lamp, and so this important step of the transmission of the lineage is called the **“transmission of the lamp”**, while the disciple who has been transmitted the lineage and who can uphold it is called the **“lineage holder”**.

This phenomenon of the **“transmission of the lamp”** is not unique to Vajrayana Buddhism. As the “Ch’an (Zen in Japanese) School” also emphasized on the actual practices of the Dharma, and therefore it also emphasized on the importance of the “Lineages of the Ch’an (Zen in Japanese) Masters”, as well as the **“transmission of the lamp”**. Hence, there were the various religious chronicles, which depicted the important transmissions of the Ch’an (Zen in Japanese) Lineages from Masters to disciples all through the various historical periods, such as Tao-yuan’s “Ching-te Chuan-teng Lu” (the “Transmission of the Lamp of Ching-te”) during the Northern Sung Dynasty, the “Biographies of the Great Masters”, the “Chronicles of the Fingers Pointing to the Moon”, and so on. Similar situations also occurred in the “Pure-land (or Sukhavati) School” and the Japanese Shingon School of Esoteric Buddhism, all of which supported the view of the importance of the **“Gurus and the Lineages”**.

The teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism emphasize that the “Guru” is the core of all practices with the following main reasons:-

1. **The Source of the Dharma:** even though the source of the Dharma comes from the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, because of the fact that the “Guru” is equipped with all aspects of knowledge, realizations, wisdom, experiences, skillful means, spiritual and physical efforts, and so on, he is **being authorized and appointed by the “Lineage Gurus” of the past to transmit the Dharma teachings**, and so this is indeed the root that cannot be missed.

If a Dharma practitioner does not have the instructions from a qualified “Guru”, he will find it difficult to merge with the essences of the Vajrayana practices. If one simply relies on one’s own wisdom to realize the essences of the sutras and tantras, it would require “three great Asankhya” (one “Asankhya” is the concept of 10 to the power of 51, and is estimated to be around the time period for 1.3 billion plus 43 million 840 thousand years,





and so “three great Asankhya” is referring to an extremely prolonged period of time that requires countless rebirths) in order for one to have accomplishments.

If one can receive accurate and precise instructions from a qualified “Guru”, one could then avoid a very long and winding road in which one would just blindly spend a lot of time and efforts in trying to do various practices in the wrong ways, would go in the wrong directions, and would face a lot of obstacles as a result. All these doings will result in nothing substantial about the real Dharma practices, but will only be wasting one’s precious time and efforts. On the contrary, if one can be guided by one’s own “Guru”, who will be directly pointing to the essences of the Dharma, helping one to re-establish a firm basis of the foundation, awakening one’s drowsiness by “hitting right-at-the-spot”, arousing the wisdom of one’s mind, and the triggering of more accurate, concise and profound actual Dharma practices, this will allow the Dharma practitioner to use only half of the efforts in order to get the full benefits, and thus hopefully to become liberated in this very life.

For example, for the abovementioned “Six Yogas”, if there are no clear instructions from a qualified “Guru”, it can be very dangerous for a Dharma practitioner to do so on his own, and that it will also be quite difficult for one to have a chance of success. Hence, for the Dharma practitioners of Vajrayana Buddhism, one’s “Guru” is not only the source of the Dharma but, in fact, **the “Guru” is also one’s own “creator of**



Lord Maitreya, the Coming Future Buddha

**spiritual life” endowed with great kindness and compassion.**

2. **The Focal Point of All Blessings:** The Great Vajrayana Master **Sakya Pandita** has compared the Buddha’s kindness and blessings to the rays of the sun. Let us use a match as an example, no matter how strong the power of the sun, the match will not be able to burn by itself even under the powerful sun; instead it will require a “magnifying glass” to concentrate and focus the sun’s rays onto a point, and to a very great extent that it will finally ignite the match. In the same way, though the power of the Buddha is so strong that it can give blessings to Dharma practitioners by sending lights of wisdom just like the sunlight, yet it cannot help to aggregate such strong blessings in order to assist oneself to become swiftly liberated from the cycle of karmic existence (or Samsara). Hence, one will still need a **“Guru” as a medium** (of the magnifying glass) upon which the **Buddha’s kindness and blessings can be concentrated and focused** to have a quick effect of a **“quantum leap of faith”** in order to assist oneself to become swiftly liberated from the cycle of karmic existence.



Sakya Pandita, one of the great Lineage Masters of the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism





Hence, in all the practices of Vajrayana Buddhism, before one meditate, one must always visualize one's own "Guru" to be sitting upon one's own head. In receiving the "Guru's lineage" as one's own, then the **lineage blessings** will come directly through him. The blessings from all the "Lineage Gurus" of the past, as well as those from the Yidams, Dakas and Dakinis, will only be connected and recognized through the present "Lineage Guru" just **like the flow of a pipeline**. Thus, it is only upon the trust on the present "Lineage Guru", and then only through him, that the blessings from all these Holy Beings can be transmitted to a Dharma practitioner. Both the worldly and spiritual Dharma protectors will only accept requests from "Lineage Gurus" in order to assist Dharma practitioners. Similarly, depending upon the various circumstances, the "Guru" would then decide whether or not to use his own power of blessings to directly impart upon his own disciples. Thus, according to Vajrayana Buddhism, the "Guru" is the focal point of all blessings.

"Guru" is indeed the cornerstone of "faith".

3. **The Cornerstone of "Faith"**: If one does not have "faith", one could not be able to enter into the great Ocean of the Buddhist Dharma. Indeed, "faith" is the most basic and fundamental cornerstone of all practices. "Faith" can allow a Dharma practitioner, in an "anxiety-free" situation, to generate an incomparable strength and momentum which is inexplicable, and can thus follow the teachings of Dharma practice whole-heartedly with one hundred percent, resulting in the successful rate to be greatly increased. However, if one's "faith" is being reduced by just 1%, then the successful rate might fall all the way down to zero, and that is the main reason for the failure. This concludes the statement that: **"success and failure will depend upon the minutest details, while the slightest bit of hesitation can decide whether one will win or lose"**.

As for Vajrayana Buddhism, all the teachings of the Dharma come from the "Guru". All the teachings of pith instructions, the instructions for pointing out directions at the various crossroads, the guiding wisdom for solving doubts and worries within one's mind, the skillful means for the avoidance of traps of various sorts in one's real Dharma practices, and so on, will all come from the "Guru". If there is no trust and faith upon the "Guru", then all the teachings do not have the basic grounding, neither do they have any root and foundation to stand upon, and so all of that will become meaningless. Hence, the

4. **The Major Auxiliary Condition for one's "Liberation from Samsara"**: All Dharma practitioners will need to rely upon "one's own forces" to practice in order to become liberated from Samsara, regardless of any of the schools of Buddhism. Even in the case of the "Pure-land (or Sukhavati) School", the active recitation of the Names of the Buddhas is considered as part of "one's own forces". One's own active participation is in itself the **"main cause"**, while to act in concert with other supplementary practices are considered as the auxiliary conditions. **Master Yan Kwong**, the late contemporary Great Master of the "Pure-Land (or Sukhavati) School", said: **"All Dharma teachings rely on 'one's own forces'". Even though one may have a very deep and strong foundation from past lives and can thus has a mind of thorough understanding, if one still has some minor doubts of the 'view' (when differentiations and confusions arise in the mind) and of the 'thought' (when attachments and graspings arise in the five senses), then one will still not be able to become liberated from the 'cyclic existence of life and death' (Samsara). Particularly, for those who have reached the moment of rebirth, when one has encountered**



Master Yan Kwong, the great master of Pure-Land School of Chinese Buddhism

**the situation and started to grip onto it, those who could pass from awareness to further awareness are few, while those who pass from confusion to further confusion are many indeed."** This statement clearly verifies the importance of "one's own forces". From the Vajrayana perspective, the "Guru" has given "the essences of the Dharma teachings" to the Dharma practitioner so as to empower, reinforce and increase the disciple's "own forces" up to the maximum level. It is in this way that the "Guru" is the major auxiliary condition to help oneself to "become liberated from Samsara in this very life". Indeed, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a Dharma practitioner to find, to take and to tread on the "path of short-cut" of one's own Dharma practice





without the assistance from one's own "Guru", in order to avoid the tens of thousands of obstructive and dangerous situations of the "general path".

5. **Direct Communications:** As the "Guru" is a human being and is living in the same realm as the Dharma practitioner, and so they can directly communicate with each other through language. In this way, the "Guru" can help the Dharma practitioner by explaining in details the Dharma teachings, as well as to help him solved his doubts and problems. More importantly, **through in-depth communications and understandings, the "Guru" can teach the different levels of the Dharma teachings according to the specific levels of the Dharma practitioners.** If there is no direct verbal communication, it will be very difficult to rely solely upon one's understanding through the intuition of one's own mind, which can be easily misunderstood. Non-verbal communications could only be possible and can be applied to only a very few Dharma practitioners of great wisdom. If one relies upon translation, the degree of progress will be very slow, while the true meanings of the messages might either be easily lost, or even be distorted.

As Vajrayana Buddhism is a very practical way of Dharma practice, and so all the teachings involved should not have any kind of discrepancy during the teaching and learning process between the "Guru" and the disciple. This will require the empowerment to practice, the follow up with each case of Dharma practice, the correcting of mistakes at the right moment, and the guidance towards understanding and realization, and so on, all of which will need the attention and vigilance from the "Guru". Hence, there requires **a mutual in-depth understanding and trust between the "Guru" and the disciple.** In this way, the direct communications between the "Guru" and the disciple has become a very important part of Dharma practice and cannot be missed. Thus, **for Vajrayana Buddhism, to be able to have direct communications with the "Guru" is, indeed, where the preciousness of the "Guru" lies !**

6. **The Place of Refuge and the Best "Field of Merit":** Within the many lineages and sects of Vajrayana Buddhism, they all have their own "Refuge Trees" comprising of all the Holy Assemblies of their own lineages. This "Refuge Tree" has aggregated, within each of their lineages, their entire list of all the past "Lineage Gurus", all the Buddhas of the past, present and future, Bodhisattvas, Arhats, Sangha, Yidams, sutras and tantras, Dakas, Dakinis and Dharma protectors. In this way, it has collected all



Buddha Shakyamuni, the Lord Buddha of our time

the splendid merits, as well as deep and profound blessings into one place, and thus it becomes the most condensed **"Main Refuge Place"** for all those who take the refuge from this particular lineage, as well as the most splendid and the best **"Field of Merit"**. In this regard, the "Refuge Tree" is the source of all the Dharma practices of Vajrayana Buddhism as this has aggregated all the merits of the Holy Assemblies. In regarding this "Refuge Tree" as the object of Dharma practice, the merits so accumulated would be countless and limitless, and its strengths profound and broad.

In the centre of the "Refuge Tree" is the **"Guru"**, who is being considered as the **"Gem of all gems"**. In Tibetan language, the term of **"Rinpoche"** means **"a precious Gem"**. The "preciousness" of the "Guru" is that he can directly bring benefits to the Dharma practitioners. The "Guru" will not only be able to directly communicate with the Dharma practitioners, but he can also help them to comfort their minds, and thus become their ultimate "Refuge Place", upon which various offerings can be made directly to him. This mutual deed of "making" and "receiving" the offerings between the disciple and the "Guru" has no gap and no hindrance in between, and so **the Dharma practitioner is being grateful to, and directly repaying the kindness of, the "Guru".** In so doing,





the “Guru” is being revered as the most splendid and the best “Field of Merit”, among all kinds of offerings. Basing upon the essences of all the sutras and tantras, the Bodhisattva Ashvagosha had condensed, summarized and wrote “The Fifty Stanzas of Guru Devotion” which clearly spelt out the significance of the “Guru”, and that all disciples should strictly adhere to the rituals of worship, making prostrations and offerings to the “Guru”.

### “Authentic” vs “Fake” Gurus

The “Guru” has taken upon himself heavy responsibilities of all sorts, because of his wisdom and compassion, in order to help liberate sentient beings. Among these, he is not only the “guide” to lead other Dharma practitioners to spiritual accomplishments, but he is also the “regulator” who helps other Dharma practitioners to re-adjust and re-structure their thinking and behavioural patterns. As the Dharma practices of Vajrayana Buddhism strongly require a Dharma practitioner to have complete obedience, with strong devotion and faith, towards one’s own “Guru”, this fact thus gives the opportunity to be used by many impudent persons of crooks who make their livings by cheating others in numerous ways, those who are very greedy and with great arrogance, as well as those ambitious people with ulterior motives. These kinds of “fake gurus”, like the “worms inside the lion’s belly”\*, are those people who claimed themselves to be teaching Buddhism but in fact they are not. These “con men” just use Buddhism as a tool to cheat on others, through the use of their “evil and distorted views” to lead other people astray, while they want to become the “controller of others” by controlling their thinking and behaviour, both at present and in the future. In this way, they will lead a lot of Dharma practitioners to fall into painful abysses.

(\* The Lord Buddha Himself had used the parable of the “worms inside the lion’s belly” to predict about the future of His teachings and the Spiritual Community that He Himself had founded. This parable is to compare the Lord Buddha’s teachings and the Spiritual Community as the lion, the king of the animal

kingdom. Buddhism and its Spiritual Community, being invincible and cannot be destroyed by other outside forces, yet there will be those who claimed themselves to be the followers of the Buddha’s teachings, but in fact they will be destroying the Holy Dharma and the Sangha Community. In the same way, the lion, after its death, will not be devoured by other animals which just dared not to do so, but then it will be the “worms inside the lion’s belly” that will decay and destroy the lion’s dead body.)

Since this is the “Degenerate Age” when sentient beings are having very limited merits and wisdom, and so these “fake gurus” are everywhere. The numbers of sentient beings that had been cheated by these “fake gurus” all through the ages were countless indeed.



Longchenpa, one of the great Lineage Masters of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism

It is most shocking to realize that the wounds that were being inflicted upon countless sentient beings were so huge, deep and intense. For the outer wounds, such as: with one’s physical body being played around, or one was being cheated in terms of monies and other precious objects, or being controlled and used as slaves, or bodily injuries due to the wrong teachings, or even one’s life was being controlled, and so on. As for the inner wounds, such as: one was being hit and shattered emotionally, or one’s own belief system was being tread upon mercilessly, or one’s own mind and spirit were being led astray to painful abysses, while those who wanted to leave these “fake gurus” would then be cursed and threatened with

their lives, and so on. Whereas for the wounds at the deepest level, such as: one’s “life of wisdom” (that is, one’s spiritual life) would be terminated, or one’s mind and thinking patterns would be distorted and polluted, or to be misled in the wrong directions such that one’s “greed, hatred and ignorance” to be increased rapidly. Because all these actions have been much intensified, it will further lead to the rapid increase of “negative causes” while sharply reducing the “positive causes”. Hence, in such a way, one’s Dharma practice now becomes the “cause” for the further deterioration and degeneration of one’s spiritual life, resulting in triggering the reflection of one’s mind to fall into “three lower realms” (of hells, hungry ghosts or animals) when one dies, never to be able to liberate oneself





from the painful existence of Samsara.

Therefore, for those people who would genuinely like to practice the Holy Dharma, before they would like to take the refuge from the “Gurus”, they should carefully and seriously observe these “Gurus”. In the past, the Dharma practitioners in Tibet would spend twelve years in order to observe one’s “Gurus”. So, how to distinguish an “authentic Guru” from a “fake” one has become the most important topic for those genuine practitioners of the Buddhist Dharma, and is indeed the first difficult issue to be tackled.

Hence, the following are the most essential elements that can help us to distinguish the characteristics of a “Guru” as to his “authenticity” or “fakeness”:

1. **The Degree and Level of One’s Mind-Training:**

The first key point to practice the Buddhist Dharma, which is also the most important key point that cannot be changed, is **to help oneself to reduce, and even to eliminate, the three poisons of “greed, hatred and ignorance”**. When a sentient being is passing away, the reflection of one’s “mind” will take the lead. Thus, the level of “greed, hatred and ignorance” that would be projected by one’s mind, as well as the direction of one’s Dharma practice, will determine whether one will be reborn either in the “three upper realms” (of gods, humans, or demi-gods), or to fall to the “three lower realms”, or to be liberated from Samsara, or to become totally enlightened (i.e. attaining Buddhahood). In this respect, the “Guru” himself must have an extremely high **“degree and level of mind-training”**, and that the “Guru” must also be **employing “mind-training” as the main thrust of his teachings**. No matter how the “Guru” is “being mystified and disguised”, if the “Guru” only teaches his disciples in such a way that the ultimate goal of Dharma practice is to fulfill his personal vanity, pride, greed, arrogance, evil thoughts, ignorance, and so on, then whether this person has enough evidence to prove himself to have the transmission of the “lineage” or not (as



a “Lineage Guru”) is no longer relevant and important. We can still treat him as a “fake guru”, simply because **this present “lineage” will be terminated right there and then by this contaminated person** (through his perverted views which are full of “greed, hatred and ignorance”), resulting in the present “lineage” will **no longer have the “blessings”** that it once had carried from the previous “Lineage Gurus” (again, using the analogy that **all the essences will be totally lost in a bursting pipeline**). In the final analysis, the practice of those transmitted teachings from this “fake guru” will **no longer be effective at all**. That is why it was mentioned by the **Tibetan Saint Jetsun Milarepa**, in his *Song on How to Benefit*: “If the lineage of one’s Guru is impure, what benefits does one have to receive initiations from him?”

“When an evil person uses the authentic Dharma for his evil ends (such that his totally perverted thinking will distort the authentic Dharma, and then he will use these **“already-distorted-Dharma in disguise as authentic ones”** as his selling-point to mislead and misguide others, and so in the end), **the authentic Dharma will also become tools of evil actions.**” For an evil-minded person to teach the authentic Dharma (i.e., the using of the authentic Dharma as a means to an evil end) is as dangerous as having a person who, while having mental illness with an inclination to kill, is keen to teach others in the methods of using a knife. **The knife itself is neutral.** It could be used to cut food and make delicious cuisines, or to be used to carve wood into beautiful sculptures; yet it could also be used as an instrument to kill and murder people. So, it really depends on the intention of the “user” of the knife. **This is similar for the “Holy Dharma”**: the reason why we call those teachings that can help one to become liberated from Samsara as the **“authentic Dharma”** is simply because they are leading the Dharma practitioners in the **“right and correct direction” of salvation and liberation**, the path that was originally taught by the Buddha Himself. On the contrary, if someone has misguided and misled others on the Dharma practice via a distorted way in the





“wrong direction”, such as: it can help one to become rich, and to gain countless precious objects in the whole world, but then he did not explain what will be the consequences of such kinds of actions. In this way, the attitude and the direction of the Dharma practitioner will be misguided into an ever-increasing “greediness”, resulting in **getting deeper and deeper into the trap of the continuous cycle of Samsara**. Even though, on the surface, the structural frameworks and the contents of the “authentic Dharma” still remains, yet deep down inside, its directions and meanings have all been changed, resulting in this **so-called “authentic Dharma”** (which is really the **“already-distorted-Dharma in disguise as authentic ones”**) to become the **“evil Dharma”** that will eventually and really lead others astray towards the continuous cycle of Samsara.

Hence, in following a “fake guru” for one’s Dharma practice, the damage is severe and unimaginable, and it will be detrimental to both the body and the mind. On the contrary, for those “Gurus” with high levels of mind-training, they will have high levels of self-cultivation. Though one might have great fame, for those “Gurus” who can have the higher levels of self-cultivation, there is always the humility, peacefulness and the humbleness of heart, and the more one will not be fastened by the worldly concerns of fame, glory and wealth. Thus, **the “views” and the “conducts” of these “Gurus” are in congruence with each other**, and these are the “Gurus” that one should pay respects and reverence. Conversely, **“fake gurus”** usually will have some or all of the following **characteristics**: they act so as to please the public with claptraps, behave with pride and arrogance, boastful about their so-called “miraculous acts”, their minds are filled with heavy dosages of “greed, hatred

and ignorance”, indulge themselves heavily with worldly concerns, full of dissimulations and cheatings in their daily activities, pretentious of their so-called connections with the “supernatural beings”, such that **their “views” and their “conducts” are so vastly different** (i.e., what they said are not what they meant and acted upon), and so on. All these characteristics can be distinguished right away as long as one can pay serious attention to them.

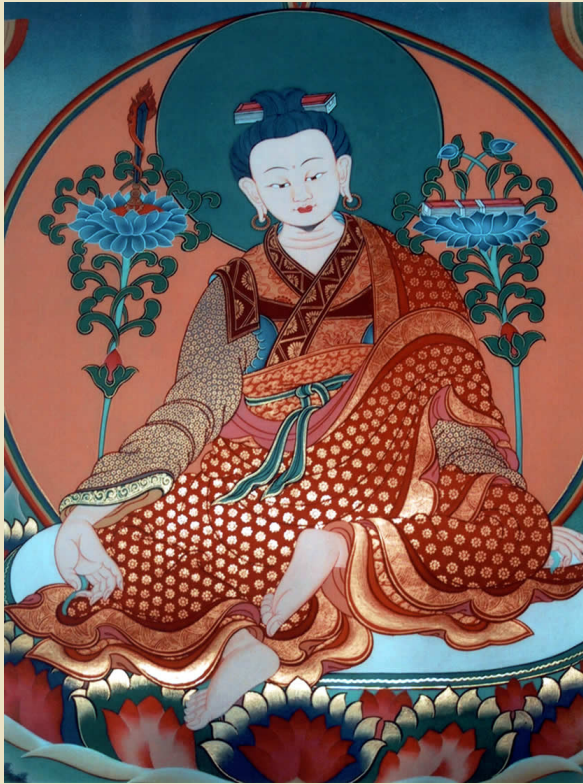
2. **The Empowerments of the Lineage**: For those who want to practice the Dharma practices of Vajrayana Buddhism, **one should follow a “pure lineage system” and to be taught by an empowered, authorized and appointed “Lineage Guru” in order that it can be beneficial to oneself**. There are some of those “fake gurus” who are both cheating others and themselves by believing that: (a) there is no need for them to receive the transmission of the lineage from a “Lineage Guru”, so long as they have received some Dharma teachings from some of these “Lineage Gurus”; and (b) that if they have practiced the Dharma teachings well, then they can have the right to transmit these Dharma teachings to others.

**Kyabje Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche**, who is publicly recognized as one of the greatest realized Dzogchen Masters of Tibetan Buddhism and is now 95 years of age, said these sincere words with earnest wishes: **“There are too many gurus that are transmitting the Dharma teachings nowadays. So many of them do not have the authorization for such kind of Dharma transmission, or that some of them only have some partial empowerments and yet they just go ahead to transmit all the teachings. As they have not received the authorization and recognition from the past Lineage Gurus, Yidams, Dakinis and Dharma protectors, but still went ahead to transmit the teachings, and so they will have many obstacles, with numerous illnesses and short life-spans. For those dissimulate and inappropriate ‘fake gurus’, whether it be themselves or their disciples, not only will there be no benefits at all for them, and when they die, both will fall into the ‘three lower realms’. Therefore, one should be very prudent on the matter of selecting one’s own ‘Guru’, and should not treat this lightly!”** That is why **Guru Padmasambhava**, the Founder of Tibetan Buddhism, warned his future disciples that **“not to examine the teacher is like drinking poison”**, and it is indeed so serious. Even though some “Gurus” may have the authorizations to transmit



Kyabje Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, the present Lord of the Mandala (Vajra Regent) for the “Dudjom Tersar Lineage.”





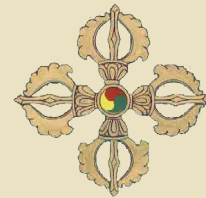
Jigme Lingpa, one of the great Lineage Masters of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism

the teachings, but whether their “lineage systems” are pure or not will also affect those who receive the teachings from them. As it is quite difficult for one to research and verify on the authenticity and the purity of the lineages for a particular “Guru”, and also because people in general are rather impatient to do so, or that they just want to get more teachings and to receive blessings without questioning. All these are the reasons why **nowadays there are so many “false lineages and fake Gurus” everywhere** in the whole world, simply because of the fact that where there are huge demands, there will be huge supplies!

The Original Master Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had once said, “To verify whether someone’s teachings are correct or not is like the verification of the purity of gold by a goldsmith. First, he will use fire to burn it, then he will use a knife to cut it, and then he will try to grind it.” So for those who would like to learn the Holy Dharma, we should follow the instructions of the Lord Buddha. In order to take refuge from a “Guru”, one should examine him critically for a very long period of time and try to inspect his “degree and level of mind-training”, the amounts of “greed, hatred and ignorance” that he might have, whether he has any Bodhicitta and compassion or not, the “truthfulness” of his teachings, and whether his “view” and his “conduct” match each other or not, so on and so on. But never should

one blindly and passionately just believe and follow without questioning, neither should one be attracted to his very limited and narrowly-focused acts of so-called “worldly miracles” and worldly cleverness, etc, in order to avoid being harmed beyond repair, which is inconceivable, both in this life and in future lives. Whether or not one has already taken refuge from this kind of “guru”, once we have found out that he is a “fake guru” or is one who has no, or very low level of, “mind-training”, then one should immediately leave him and do not stay behind. One should not respond to his threats, or else the damages done would be even worst and one will then have degradation once and forever. The so-called “worldly miracles” could be something that were left behind from one’s virtuous deeds of past lives, or through a bit of “mental concentration” to create the so-called “super-normal abilities”, and thus could be considered as illusionary magic of some sort. After all, these are rather unsound ways of “searching for the Dharma from outside of one’s own mind”, and are not **the “authentic Buddhist Dharma” that can truly liberate people from the cycle of Samsara**. To be reluctant to leave, or even to attach to it, is like seeking temporary relief of one’s problems regardless of the ultimate consequences, just like the drinking of a poisonous concoction in order to quench one’s thirst – **the result will be fatal!...**

(To be continued)



## SPARK OF WISDOM

*If the teachings and instructions are wrong, the slightest effect one will get is that one’s “mind” will become distorted, while the strongest effects one will have will be a disbelief in the Dharma while one is still alive, and will have downward movement to the lower realms when one passes away.*



**Kyabje Chadral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche:** “... For those dissimulate and inappropriate ‘fake gurus’, whether it be themselves or their disciples, not only will there be no benefits at all for them, and when they die, both will fall into the ‘three lower realms’. Therefore, one should be very prudent on the matter of selecting one’s own ‘Guru’, and should not treat this lightly!”





## EPILOGUE

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

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

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		Areas outside Hong Kong (include other parts of Asia, Europe & America)	<input type="checkbox"/> Surface mail \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> Airmail \$120		
3	<b>Charity Donations</b> to Dudjom Buddhist Association International Limited		<input type="checkbox"/>		
4	<b>Mail Orders for Other Products of the Association</b>				
(1)			_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
(2)			_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
(3)			_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
Name		Phone		Total Amount	
Address					
Two Subscriptions with Different Addresses		Name		Phone	
Address					

\* This form can be photocopied for use.