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*How Could One Extend the Life of a Dying Relative?*

*How to Use the Four Levels to Help and Save Patients?*

*The Incredible Miracles Induced by Lamp Offering and Hanging of Prayer Banners*

*Regrets and Traumas Due to Selections Made for the Dying Persons*

*Difficulties and Issues of Care-Givers of Dying Persons*

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# The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (32)


By Vajra Master Pema Lhadren

Translated by Simon S.H. Tang

Regrets and Traumas Due to Selections Made for the Dying Persons

Difficulties and Issues of Care-Givers for Dying Persons

What is “True Love”?



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

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

1. The “Separation of the Four Elements” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”, including

all kinds of memories) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the ‘Separation of the Four Elements’ in the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issues 8 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

2. The “Endorphins Inside the Brain” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “endorphins inside the brain” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

3. The “Karmic Forces” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “karmic forces” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death”. This can be further classified into the following two kinds:

i. **Wholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) virtuous retributions (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and (b) the efforts of one’s Dharma practice (the main theme of this article in this issue).

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

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



1. **Protectors or avengers**: (i) **good ones** – saw kith and kin who had passed away, unknown protectors, deities or Buddhas coming to fetch for oneself

(ii) **bad ones** – being besieged by a crowd of ferocious persons or beasts, and going along in company with groups of people who looked confused.

2. **Strange places**: (i) **good ones** – saw pavilions, balconies, buildings, flower fields, rivers, light zones, towns or cities.

(ii) **bad ones** – saw wilderness, forests, darkness, caverns, hells.

3. **Messy Issues that cannot be recalled clearly.**

How would the Buddhist point of view comment on these phenomena? According to the Buddhist teachings, it was said that rebirth would take place within forty-nine days after a person has passed away, then why would a dying person see the kith and kin **who had passed away long time ago** still coming to fetch for him or her? Why had not the kith and kin taken re-



births after so many years posthumously? Are the appearances of these deceased persons merely the illusions of the person who is going to die? Or were they really true? Are there any other reasons? Are those strange places the destinations where they are going to be reborn

into? Under what circumstances would the normal rebirth of a dying person be negatively encumbered? Is there any way to help a deceased person to avert sufferings and elevate to a better place of rebirth?

Human beings have four kinds of conditions of consciousness (please refer to the article [“The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice”](#) in Issue 26 of the [“Lake of Lotus”](#)) as follows:

1. **Beta  $\beta$  waves** – the “conscious condition” of daily living;
2. **Alpha  $\alpha$  waves** – the relaxed “consciousness condition”, such as in entering into the elementary stage of ‘visualization’, or at the first stage of “mental concentration”; or the condition when the “spiritual body” is **slowly separating** from the “physical body”;
3. **Theta  $\theta$  waves** – the peaceful “conscious condition” of having entered into higher levels of “visualization”, or at the deeper levels of “mental concentration”;

4. **Delta  $\delta$  waves** – slow “conscious condition” of not having any dreams, and in a stage of slow-wave deep sleep.

In fact, how does the arising of the different stages in approaching death and its “transformation of consciousness” affect the thoughts and behaviors of dying patients? What are their relationships with the “scenes at the moment of death”? How should the family and kin and



kith who take care of the dying patients respond to the “transformation of consciousness” and change of “scenes at the moment of death” for guiding the emotions and spiritual direction of the dying patients? Could the “transformation of consciousness” and the change of “scenes at the moment of death” be complementary to each other? Furthermore, the **“disintegration of the Four Elements”** of the physical body **also affects** the “transformation of consciousness”, as well as on the change of the “scenes at the moment of death”. Hence, how should one support and provide guidance to a dying patient in order to **reduce or resolve** the predicament from these problems?

### What is the Ultimate Assistance in the First Stage of Approaching Death?

The care-givers, kin and kith and professional counselors should perform the following steps when a dying person is **approaching the “first stage of death”**:





1. Accepting and Understanding
2. Listening and Observing
3. Analyzing and Adopting
4. Leading Out and Guiding In
5. Accompanying with Unspoken Consensus

The key points of application and their importance on

the issues of “Accepting and Understanding” and “Listening and Observing” had been clearly highlighted in the cases of the last chapter (please refer to the article “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”). To most people, the issues of “Accepting and Understanding” and “Listening and Observing”

are not difficult to do and it is relatively easy to carry out under the call of “love” and with one’s wisdom. Not too many skills will be required. Even though a person has never learned of the relevant know-how nor have received any such relevant training, he or she can still spontaneously provide proper care or resolve various problems for the seriously-ill persons, or dying patients.

However, the quality and depth of the resolution to a problem would be inadequate or imperfect, due to lack of relevant know-how or training by the participants. In order that both the care-giving family members and the dying patients do not have re-

morse which will be too late to repent later on, but only ultimate offering in farewell with a “heart-to-heart connection and having no trace of regret”, the following three steps should be included in the issues that must be done when a dying patient is approaching the “first stage of death”.

3. **Analyzing and Adopting** – Analyzing is an important element in every case of success. However, why did so many people fail although having made detailed analysis in advance? Even though they are successful, but then the results are just marginal and barely satisfactory. Many people attribute the outcomes to fortune, or the trend of times, or ability. However, the question is not merely due to these issues. Most importantly, whether the key point has been wrongly set when an analysis is made? Are the facets and direction of the analysis pinpointing to the problem?

There are at least two parts to the issue of “Analyzing and Adopting”. The first part of “Analyzing and Adopting” is to be led by a dying patient, while the second part of “Analyzing and Adopting” is to be led by the care-givers, kin and kith and professional counselors. The first part had been discussed in the last chapter (please refer to the article “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue



31 of the “Lake of Lotus”), and so now we are going to discuss on the issue of “Analyzing and Adopting” as being led by the care-givers, kin and kith and professional counselors.

### Regrets and Traumas Due to Selections Made for the Dying Persons

When people come to their weakest moments, their most wanted wish is to “retain their dignity while seeking for assistance”. Besides expecting the curing of diseases and the palliating of physical pains, the dying persons hope to have the “company” of their family members and intimate friends during the last part of their life journey, so to lessen the feelings of loneliness and of fear for the impending death. Moreover, it gives an opportunity to compensate for the previous shortages and inadequacies in communications among family members and friends, as well as to mutually complement the sentimental and spiritual reluctance and regrets of parting in one's mind.



“Companionship” is the most precious natural gift. “Companionship” is needed whether it is due to the “delight of birth” or the “sorrow of departure”. As long as the patient comes to know that the close kinsmen or best friends are “ready” to be in company with him or her, it would be the best condition. The question is: what does

it mean to be “ready”? If the person who offers to be in company with the patient is not a professional counselor, the chances are that he or she would more or less have made some mistakes. Those mistakes made would usually become “regrets of one's lifetime” that “could not be reverted or remedied” due to the death of the patient. As such, the care-givers would psychologically and spiritually suffer from an inerasable shady memory and trauma without particular reasons. To “love” a person now turns out to be “hurting” that person instead. How could this be a gift to be offered by a “caregiver” or a “companion”?

Therefore, regardless of whether a “caregiver” or a “companion” is a professional counselor or not, one must have to be equipped with adequate relevant know-how. Moreover, one has to make further “analysis” for a decision on the method to be “adopted” when caring for the dying person, in accordance with the particular situations and scenarios, as well as the special characteristics of the dying person. Before our proceeding to further discussions, we can take





a look at some cases for a better understanding on the inner thoughts of the “caregivers” or “companions” from different angles.

### Case 39

A youngster, whose grandmother-in-law had suffered from an **incurable cancer**, has received training on resuscitation. In order to provide the best “**company**” and care to her, the family offered to take her home for caring. This tendering of loving care was a good-intended move, but, on the contrary, it turned out to be this youth’s regret for his entire life. The following was composed by this young man and were excerpts from Taiwan’s “United Daily News”.

#### The Deeply-Embedded Regret / Providing Rescue or Not? – United Daily News/ Lu Lu (Taipei City)/ United Daily News, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Due to my works in school, I have an opportunity to receive CPR training each year. I was so concentrated on the training each time, for the sake that I can offer my service to somebody who might need the rescue some day.

Several years ago, my grandmother-in-law’s cancer recurred. She did



not like to stay in the hospital, and so when her condition was stabilized, she has returned back home for convalescence. One day, I visited her and other people were chatting around her bed. All of a sudden, my grandmother-in-law closed her eyes, her face turned pale and her breath stopped. My mother, uncle and auntie immediately called for the ambulance in an urgent manner. I knew that I must have to make use of this golden period of time, and so immediately I carried out CPR on my grandmother-in-law.

Not long after, her face turned to sanguine and she opened her eyes. I was glad to have rescued the life of my **most beloved** grandmother-in-law.

Nevertheless, my happiness and complacency for this did not last long. In the following months, my grandmother-in-law was gradually getting worse. **Her pains could not be reduced even after being administered with strong analgesic dosages.**

Upon seeing my grandmother-in-law, who used to be optimistic, lying on the bed with **all sorts of tubing being hooked up on her whole body**, I could not help but blaming myself. If I had not carried out the resuscitation on her in the first place, she would not have to endure such kind of sufferings.

What made me even sad was the fact that, at the moment when my grandmother-in-law had just passed away, there were no family members around her besides the nursing staff. If I did not conduct the







resuscitation on her, my grandmother-in-law could have passed away at home, as according to her own wish and not in the hospital. Furthermore, all of her children and grandchildren could have been able to accompany her.

My grandmother-in-law had been passed away for many years by now. My mother, uncle and auntie have never blamed it on me. However, I always have the doubt in my mind as to **whether** my grandmother-in-law **would have blamed me on this or not?**

#### Case 40

**Responses from the Readers/ It's Painful Regardless of Providing Rescue or Not – Xiao Cao (Miao-Li City), United Daily News, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

A few days ago, I had read the article **“Rescue or Not?”** in your column. The writer had attributed the regret on the absence of family members around his grandmother-in-law upon her death due to his making resuscitation on her when she was about to die at the first time. It was about a year ago that I had also experienced the same kind of dilemma of **whether to rescue or not**, and so I can particularly empathize the writer's feeling.

About a year ago, my father was at the terminal stage of cancer. For the convenience of caring, we had chosen

a local hospital nearby our home. It also met the expectations of each member of the family to fulfill their needs of “filial piety”. In the beginning, my father accepted the arrangement delightfully. However, his health condition deteriorated rapidly, and so he felt very painful and had difficulty in breathing. My father had **lost his will to continue on, and demanded to leave the hospital and go home to wait for the final moment.**

Since each effort of resuscitation had been rewarded by a couple of days of warm moments gathering, **how could we resist such an opportunity?** Perhaps, my father had also felt the intent of the family members, and so he **had been cooperating patiently**, until eventually the local hospital had indicated that they



were no longer able to provide with proper medical care and suggested us to transfer him to another hospital. My father was still willing to **strongly endure** the hardships of physical pains and his shortness of breath, and let us transferred him to a large hospital in the North for further treatments. Obviously, he also showed his reluctance to leave us, and so how could we stop his rescue?

The ruthless part was that my father was not able to overcome his illness eventually. In his final moments, his conditions **deteriorated so rapidly** that we became **so startled and were out of our wit**. The torture of pain and shortness of breath had **tortured** him so much so, to the extent of his unceasing attempts to remove the syringes and oxygen mask. Moreover, he **kept on asking us to bring him back home**. Upon **seeing the pains written on his face**, we felt that it was indeed hard for us to make a decision. The carrying on of medical interventions would further enhance his sufferings; however, if we did not, it would mean immediate and permanent separation between us.

Under the conditions of high blood pressure with ceaseless slow-down in heartbeats, we **rushed to the decision** of continual rescue, and hope for a miracle to happen. We had **selected to remove the tubing** in order to lessen his physical pains, and had sent him to

the ICU of which **he was most scared**, hoping that we could gain more time to be with him together.



The second morning after his admission to the ICU, my father had passed away in a lonely manner with no family members to accompany him, and we **had failed to fulfill his wish of returning home**. The fact that he had passed away in a lonely manner, with the scene that he was all alone by himself in the ICU and not caring about me any longer, frequently popped up in my mind. And for each time, I was **so hurt**. Although it has been more than a year by now, but **time does not slightly lessen my painful feelings**.

### Difficulties and Issues of Care-Givers for Dying Persons

Why would the tendering of “love” by the care-giver turn out to be “hurting” the patient ever to become a “gift”? As a matter of fact, the intent of the “gift” is whether to allow the “giver” to have the feeling that “one’s utmost efforts have been exerted”, or whether to “satisfy the real needs” of the “receiver”? If the two scenarios could not co-exist together, then how could a decision to be made? Regardless of how the decision is to be made, if the outcomes would turn out to be merely “sufferings”, then would you



choose to **allow your beloved one to “suffer the least physical pain”**, while letting yourself to “endure the utmost suffering of separation”? Could this, then, be considered as a “gift”?

To those dying patients who **have already been diagnosed** as having incurable diseases with impending death, and which **would bring about great pains to them while dying**, their wills and the “gift” that they most want should be the real “gift” that the care-givers **must try their very best to offer** them. However, the wills and the most wanted “gift” of these dying patients, who are under such painful conditions, would usually be a “quick death for disengagement from the pains and the bindings”. Yet, it is usually this same “gift” that the “care-givers” or “companions” do not want to give out **right away**.



In fact, which should be given the first priority: one's **feeling** or one's **rationality**? Whether “love” should be considered as a kind of “possession”, or whether as a kind of “sacrifice”? If a person merely focuses on one's rationality and purposively buries one's feeling, then would one **be criticized or self-condemned** as being cold-blooded? Would this result in some kind of regrets for one's entire life?

On the other hand, when one's feeling takes over everything, one would **become obsessed and**

**be blind on** the fact that your beloved one is now “suffering from severe physical pains”, but only think of holding onto it and hope that it will continue to “last for at least one more second, waiting for the occurrence of miracles”. By the moment when one's rationality finally comes back, one would then be agonizing on the fact that a fault had already been committed, and so the regret will last forever in one's own mind, which might even be so hurtful that it impinges into the heart. This is all due to the fact that the “care-givers” or “companions” have not conducted the **“analysis”** beforehand well in advance. With a proper and comprehensive **“analysis”**, one would then be able to **“adopt” the appropriate and regretless** arrangements and caring. Then, there would not be any **regrets of criticism or self-condemnation**, neither would there be regretful feelings for the rest of one's life due to **hasty decisions being made**.

The “care-givers” or “companions”, particularly those family members and intimate friends, must make comprehensive and detailed “analysis” well in advance. The **facets of the “analysis”** should include the following items:

1. **The types of diseases** – Is this kind of disease curable or not? What is the time frame of life expectation at this moment? Would it be an extreme torture, due to the futility in managing the physical pains, at the end of one's life? **Is it**

proper to carry out an invasive kind of medical resuscitation for this kind of disease? Whether this disease is a kind of organ failure due to aging, so that even though all sorts of medical means are employed for the prolongation of life, it would only further increase the dying person's sufferings? Whether this disease is apt to apply the painful types of medical treatments for the prolongation of life, such as intubation, restriction of limbs and etc.?



2. The patient's wish – How much does the patient really know about his/her own conditions, as well as the kind of significance and coverage due to this illness? Whether the patient's wish and expectation is in direct proportion to the kind of symptoms occurred, or not deviated too much from it? How difficult will it be to fulfill the wish of the patient? Are there any other alternative methods available? Does the patient accept such kind of alternatives? Is the patient willing to discuss in great lengths with the "care-givers" or "companions" about his own conditions, as well as his own wish? If not, are there any other means of resolution?

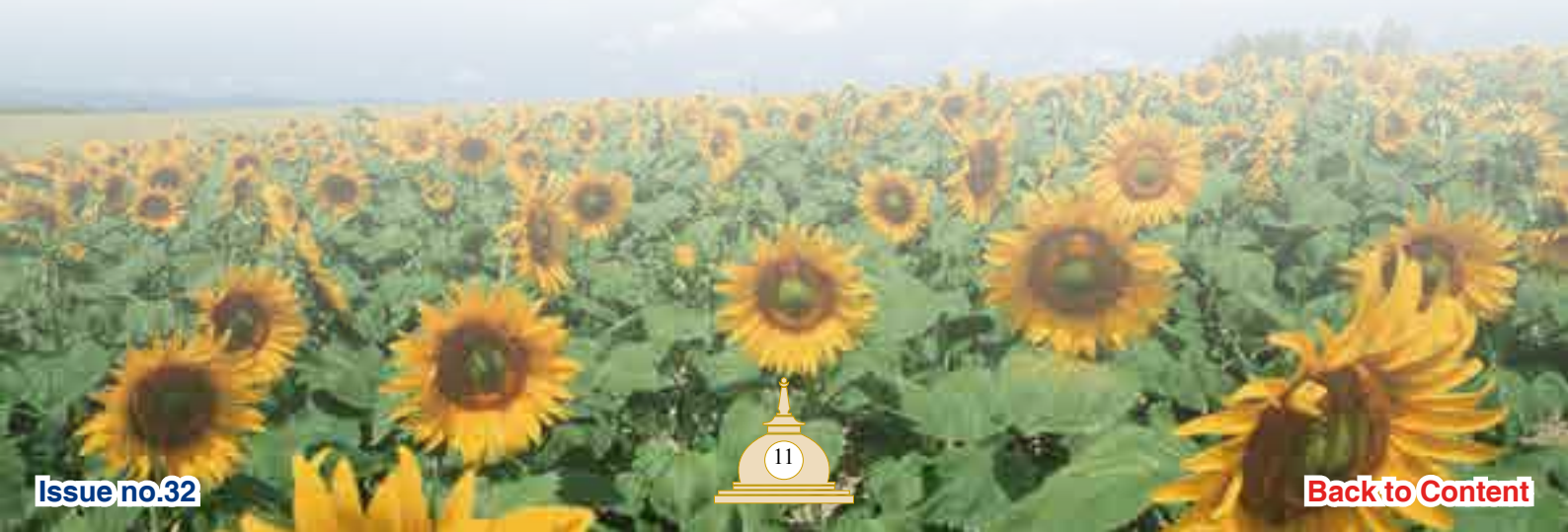
3. The abilities of the "care-givers" or "companions" – How much does a "care-giver" or a "companion"

know about the conditions, as well as the significance and coverage of the symptoms, of the patient? How well is one's understanding about the patient's personality and his/her inner world? How deep are their mutual

communications? How well are the skills and know-how of the "care-givers" or "companions" about palliative care for a dying patient? How close are the relationships between the "care-givers" or "companions" and the patient? How deep is the love or hate relationship between the patient and the "care-givers" or "companions"? Under such circumstances of either love or hate relationship and settings of closeness or not, would either party be so emotional during

critical moments that a naïve but destructive choice is made such the patient would not be able to "pass away in peacefulness"? Can the "care-givers" or "companions" be able to handle the tremendous physical and psychological pressures in caring for the dying person?

4. The assistances from the environment and the peripheral – How well is the knowledge that the "care-givers" or "companions" have about the assistances from the environment and the peripheral concerning the dying person? Do the "care-givers" or "companions" know how







to **make use of** the assistances available from the environment and the peripheral? If the environment is not suitable for the caring of the dying person, how resourceful are the “care-givers” or “companions” in figuring out different methods of resolution? Would the “care-givers” or “companions” be wittily flexible enough in **bringing about changes**? Do the “care-givers” or “companions” have relevant experiences on similar cases available **for references**?

### What is True Love ?

In the above-mentioned two cases, both persons ended up in tremendous remorse due to the lack of detailed and comprehensive “analyses” in covering

all facets beforehand. Both the deceased persons were died of **terminal cancer**. It is usually seen that the conditions of these patients **deteriorate at an amazing speed** at the end of life. The “care-givers” or “companions” usually become **quite startled and disoriented**. Physical pains and shortness of breath would also **torture** a patient to a state of losing control by plugging off the syringes, oxygen mask, and **would rather die immediately**. “Empathy is the greatest exemplification of love”. Kith and kin should take this as the basic standard to make the **most intimate** arrangements and caring for the dying person.

As to the fulfillment of the patient’s wish, even though the environment would not allow one to make good preparations, the “care-givers” or “companions” should take the **principle of “trying one’s very best”** for the arrangements, even if it is not feasible due to different circumstances. They should be **flexible enough to employ all sorts of methods to ensure good communications with the dying persons so as to make them relax and release their anxieties**. In building up a **progressive type** of communication with the patient, basing upon **“mutual trust, mutual admonition, mutual love, mutual support”**, is one of the best methods of resolution in avoiding **all sorts of regrets**. Only this kind of **behavior and expression** of “love” can be called as the **“true love”**.

**On the surface**, it is the “care-givers” or “companions” who render assistances and loving care to the dying persons. However, the **deep-down** underlying fact is that the dying person who **“passes away in peace”** (what we can called as the **“good death”**) would

provide **remedy and assistance** to the kin and kith who had suffered both psychologically and spiritually on the loss of one's loved ones. In order to achieve such kind of an expected effect, one must need to go through proper learning – **to learn all the relevant knowledge about "death"**.

**I thought that I have been learning about living all along, but on the contrary, I am learning about death.**

**—Leonardo da Vinci**



In fact, how important is this kind of learning to both the "dying persons and their survivors"? **How should one learn about this?** Are there any other issues that one should pay attention to, besides the issues of **"analyzing and adopting"**, as well

as on the decisions of whether to resuscitate or not? Furthermore, among the different issues on "maintaining one's life, maintaining the quality of one's life, and maintaining one's dignity at the last moment of life", **which of these should be given the first priority?** How should we take good care of the dying persons? ..... (To be Continued) ✂

#### Remarks:

- (1) Leonardo da Vinci, or Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci in full, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1452 to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1519, Italian. He was **an important and influential figure and intellectual in many fields** during the period of the Renaissance. At the same time, he was an architect, an anatomist, an artist, an engineer, a mathematician and an inventor. His unlimited curiosity and creativity made him a typical artist of the Renaissance. Furthermore, he was one of the most famous artists and painters in history. Together with Michelangelo and Raffaello Sanzio, they were known as the **"Three Heroes of the Renaissance"**. Leonardo da Vinci followed the path of **science, logic and truth** in his entire life to seek for the ideal in art creation and aesthetics.
- (2) The newly-released book on "The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)" has been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences" from Issues 1 to 10.
- (3) The newly-released book on "The Meanings of Near-death Experiences (2) – **The Key Points at the Moment of Death and the Essential Revelations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead**" has been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences" from Issues 11 to 20.]





# ***The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (32)***

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

- How Could One Extend the Life of a Dying Relative?
  - How to Use the Four Levels to Help and Save Patients?
  - The Incredible Miracles Induced by Lamp Offering and Hanging of Prayer Banners



## **Excerpt of Last Issue**

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

1. **Praying for worldly desires** – For example: to seek for oneself and one's own relatives to have "longevity, recovery from illness, success in one's career, good marriage, wealth increase, averting disasters and relief from sufferings, as well as reunion with those deceased loved ones". Also, there are those who hope to get the "ease of heart and security at the present life", etc.; or for "fame, wealth, respect" in order to study Buddhism; as well as for those who put in efforts to practice the Dharma.

2. **Rebirth in the good realms** – For example: to hope and pray for rebirth in the heavenly realm, or in the human realm, and not to fall into the evil realms (of animals, hungry ghosts and hells).

3. **Liberation from the tractions of the “cycle of karmic existence”** – to hope and pray for the **freedom** in deciding for oneself as to whether one would be reborn into the six realms (of heavens, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hells), or whether to remain in the highest level of the “Realm of Form”, such as the “Akanistha” (the “Heaven at the End-of-Form-Realm”), which is beyond the control of the tractions. (Please refer to the explanations on the “Three Realms” in the article on the “Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death: The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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



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

1. **Prayers** – Including confessions, repentance of one’s conducts, and in the making of aspirations and wishes;

2. **Recitations** – mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, or sutras;

3. **Visualizations** – themes include the formulae for different types of “meditation”, or even the making use of the internal functions of one’s body for coordination.

Irrespective of which types of practice methods, it must include the training of one’s “mental strength”. Otherwise, it would not be able to produce any effects. One of the important points for judging which of the practice methods are the most effective ones is the **degree of influence** that these can have on one’s “mental strength”? What percentage will they constitute?

The previous five chapters have clearly explained the effects and mysteries that the sound has produced upon people (Please refer to the articles on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practices” of





Issues 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”). The part on the rationale for the “**resonance**” and “**operations of particles**” is one of the functions on the recitation of mantras. Since the sound of mantra does not necessarily have to

be words that could be translated or understood, particularly those mantra which are meant for the following purposes:

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

The previous few chapters (in particular please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”) have mentioned that the merits of having received the “**relevant teachings**” in the recitation of mantras are remarkable and vast. As to its abstruseness, apart from relating to its rationale on “resonance” and the “motions among the particles”, it is also very much related to **the different high or low levels of the “Right Concentrations”** (or “**Samadhis**” in Sanskrit). According to Bodhisattva Maitreya’s classification, in Volume 45 of the “**Yogacaryabhūmiśāstra**”, “Dharanis” are divided into the following kinds:

- (1) **Dharma** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “**relevant trainings**” in the

proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to **remember the words and sentences of the various Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes** (please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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



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

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

## How Could One Extend the Life of a Dying Relative?

We have made detailed analyses on sutra recitation in the last two chapters.: the merits that could arouse from the reciting of sutras for those Dharma practitioners whose “unconscious” have already

accumulated the Dharma seeds in their endless past lifetimes, their enlightened nature, and the progress of their practices are much faster and deeper than those who had not sown those seeds before. (Please refer to the article on the “Wisdom in

Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issues 30 and 31 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Other than that, what other **practical applications** would the recitations of sutras have to offer? What are the intrinsic contents for Buddhist sutras? Understandably, the “contents” of the Buddhist

sutras are some kind of teachings. These teachings are **very practical**: not only are they **absolutely faultless**, they also are **very efficacious**. The teachings of the Buddhist sutras include the “elaboration on the operating rules and structures of the universe, the environment of the six

realms, and the conditions of those sentient beings who are living in the six realms, the guidance of practices - “the basic principles, the receipt and upholding of precepts, the key points for practice, and the methods of concrete practices”, to admire and praise the merits of all Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, as well as the explanations of their related benefits, explanations on **the beginning and ending of the causes and conditions, and the processes** for certain sentient beings and events”, and so on.

Within the contents of some Buddhist sutras, the Lord Buddha Sakyamuni has **directly indicated** that sentient beings should recite sutras, and widely described the benefits of reciting sutras. The Lord Buddha Sakyamuni has also provided **ways to verify** the effectiveness of sutras recitation. And some benefits are **wonderful merits that are beyond human beings’ imagination**. Nonetheless, you may ask how wonderful and important are they? Hereby, you could understand more thoroughly how wonderful they are from the following contents of the sutra:

The “**Sutra of the Medicine Buddha: His Past Vows, Merits and Virtues**” No. 450 [Nos. 449, 451;





the Sutra of Empowerment Chapter 12, Translated by the Tang dynasty Tripitaka Master Hsuan-tsang [0407b10], “At that time, a Great Bodhisattva in the Assembly, named Salvation, arouse from his seat, adjusted his robe to bare his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed and, with palms joined, respectfully addressed the Buddha: “Great Virtuous World-Honored One, in the Dharma Semblance Age, there will be sentient beings who suffer numerous calamities, and are always sick and emaciated, unable to eat or drink, their throats dry and lips parched, their eyes seeing darkness everywhere. As the signs of death appear, they are surrounded by patients, family, friends and acquaintances weeping and lamenting. As such a patient lies in bed, he sees the messengers of Yama arrive to lead his consciousness before this King of Justice. Now, all sentient beings have inborn spirits who record everything they do, both their transgressions and their merits. These spirits then present the patient’s entire record to King Yama. At that time, the King questions the dying person and tabulates his good and bad karma before deciding upon his fate. If, at that point, the relatives and acquaintances of the patient are able to **take refuge in the World-Honored Medicine Buddha on his behalf, invite monks and nuns to recite this sutra, light seven-tiered lamps and hang five-colored longevity banners**, his consciousness may return then and there, and he will see himself clearly,

as through in a dream. Or else, after 7, 21, 35 or 29 days, when his consciousness returns, as if awakening from a dream, he will recall his good and bad karma and the consequences thereof. Having personally witnessed the consequences of karma, he will never again create evil karma, even if his life is in danger...”



The meanings on the contents of the sutra are as follows: “Among the audiences of the Dharma ceremony, there was a Bodhisattva whose name is ‘Salvation’. He arose from his seat, adjusted his robe to bare his robe to bare his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, bowed and, with palms joined, respectfully saluted and addressed the Buddha: “Great Virtuous World-Honored One, in the “Dharma Semblance Age” (a thousand year after the “Pari-Nirvana” of the Lord Buddha), there will be sentient beings who suffer numerous calamities,

and are always sick and emaciated, unable to eat or drink, their throats dry and lips parched, their eyes seeing darkness everywhere. As the signs of death appear, they are surrounded by patients, family, friends and acquaintances weeping and lamenting. Indeed, this patient is dying and even though he is still lying in his bed, he sees the messengers of Yama arriving to lead his consciousness before this King of Justice to stand for his trial.

Now, all sentient beings have ‘inborn spirits’ who follows us like a shadow, and record everything we



do, whether they are transgressions and merits, or virtue and evil. These spirits records them completely with nothing leave out. And when we died, these spirits will then present the entire record to King Yama. At that time, based on these records, the King questions the dying person and tabulates

his good and bad karma. Then, based on the degree of seriousness of transgressions and merits, the King will decide what karmic consequence he should receive. If, at that point, the relatives and acquaintances of the patient are **able to act upon for the patient to take refuge to the World-Honored Seven Medicine Buddhas on his behalf, invite monks and nuns to recite this sutra, light seven-tiered lamps and hang five-colored longevity banners.** And if this has been appropriately arranged, the patient's consciousness may return then and there. Or else, after 7, 21, 35 or 29 days, when his consciousness returns, and he will recover, as through in a dream with what happen, when he was sick, could remember clearly. And he could truly understand the karmic consequences aroused by the good and bad karma. Having personally witnessed

the consequences of karma, he will never again create evil karma. As from then on, he not only will never do any impermissible behavior, and even if someone is threatening to take his life in order to force him to do any evil doings, he would rather to sacrifice his life and not willing to do any bad karma. ..." ("King Yama" is commonly known as the "King of Hell", or in Sanskrit as "Yama Raja").

## How to Use the Four Levels to Help and Save Patients?

The above-mentioned sutra has pointed out the signs of death of patients, and even unveil that one is going to enter into the initial stage of either virtuous or evil judgment. That means, even though, this person has not yet formally died, he or she **was already stepping into the edge at the "margin of life**

**and death"**. As this is **a critical position**, that whether one could "recover from death, and to extend one's life" or not will have to depend upon how many merits this patient **could have aroused or being induced at that very moment.**



As according to the sutra, if friends and relatives would like to extend the life of the patient, they should immediately act upon in order to **reinforce and arouse** the patient's merits. But, clearly, the methods

should be in "prescribing a specific medicine for that particular disease", and so the methods could be divided into four different levels:



1. To act on behalf of the person in taking refuge from the Seven Medicine Buddhas – Many people may ask that if I have already taken refuge to “Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha”, then someone would probably ask why should I still have to take refuge from the “Seven Medicine Buddhas”? Actually, “taking refuge” is a kind of “making a vow or commitment”. And one of the meanings of “taking refuge” is, on one’s “mental” state, to admit and assure oneself to rely on a specific Guru, Buddha, or Bodhisattva as the object of one’s “taking refuge”, and will listen to their instructions. Indeed, this is an important step. As if the “consciousness of mind” of this patient is “convinced, and will listen to the words and follow the plans”, then it will make the rescue operation for the rescuer to be comparatively more smoother, and a lot easier to avoid many unnecessary hindrances. As a matter of fact, there are countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that exist in this universe, and it is quite difficult for the sentient beings to recognize the forms and merits of each of them. Thus, it would be rather difficult for the sentient beings to have a good attitude to arouse their faith, in order to listen to their words and to follow their plans. Because of that, many rescues would have easily failed, or with the effects of their result to be lessened. As such, the other meaning of one’s “taking refuge” is to let that person who take refuge to understand the object of refuge, to reach to the point of its acceptance, and even to become “convinced, and will listen to the words and follow the plans”. With that, the effect



could eventually be generated. But, how effective it would be will really have to depend upon the degrees of “convincing, and listening to the words and following the plans” by those sentient beings. These two aspects are directly proportional to each other. Therefore, in the Dharma practices of “Vajrayana”, it will let the Dharma practitioner’s “mental consciousness” to “take refuge” from the “Yidam” through empowerment, so that the Dharma practitioner could reach a higher level of “convincing, and listening to the words and following the plans”. Hence, for anyone, and even for someone who has already taken refuge from the “Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha”, they should still follow the guidance of the sutra in “taking refuge from the Seven Medicine Buddhas”, or through the “empowerment of the Seven Medicine Buddhas” so as to conform to the guidance of the sutra. Once “taking refuge from the Seven Medicine Buddhas”, all the yaksas and tens of thousands of “Dharma protector groups” under the system of the Seven Medicine Buddhas would follow their “vows” to help and protect these “sentient beings who have taken refuge from the Seven Medicine Buddhas”. These “vows” are also known as “Samaya”. Having said that, there are still many people who act presumptuously by omitting this important step, such that it will become



very difficult for them to generate any effects. (“Yidam” is the honorable name for “Buddha and Bodhisattva” in “Vajrayana”, and it is also the “Lord of this Dharma practice” in the practice ritual texts of “Vajrayana”).

2. To invite monks and nuns to recite the **“Sutra of the Medicine Buddha: His Past Vows, Merits and Virtues”**—Why inviting monks and nuns to recite? Why not to be recited by friends and relatives, or by the patient himself or herself? It is certainly the best for inviting monks and nuns to recite, as they have great merits being generated by the **“receiving of and upholding of the percepts, the practices and actions amidst their Dharma practices, the solemn-ness and rigorousness of their appearances”**. Indeed, they are supposed to have represented the “professional standards” with professional codes of ethics. As such, it will be easier to let the patient and their friends and relatives to generate confidence in them. And thus, the recue could **get double results with only half the effort**. However, nowadays, the standards of monks and nuns can vary extremely widely. Many of them are passing off the sham as the genuine ones, and even more of them will use Buddhist activities and rituals as shortcuts to earn their fortunes or fames. Indeed, many frauds have emerged in today’s world who have very **little knowledge on Buddhism**, but **often speak of many supernatu-**



**ral stories** in order to cheat others. **All they know are the outer forms of ceremonial rituals and empowerments, but nothing deeper inside.** In view of all these, rather than inviting monks and nuns, one could then invite those virtuous Dharma practitioners or Buddhist groups to help in the recitations of sutras. Buddhist groups can further be divided into two streams of inheritance in their lineages (please refer to the article on the “Eight Manifestations of Guru Rinpoche (7) – Guru

Padmasambhava (9)” in Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”), with those “renunciating from the households as monks or nuns”, and those “who are appearing as householders”, both of which will have the same effects. If there is no way to find suitable ones, then it will also be alright to invite someone who has confidence in for the recitation, but then, of course, **the effects would have been discounted.**

### The Incredible Miracles Induced by Lamp Offering and Hanging of Prayer Banners

3. To light up and offer seven-tiers of lamps – why the lighting of lamps? And why the **lighting of seven-tiers of lamps**? Why not six-tiers of lamps? This is because the patient **is stepping into the edge at the “margin of life and death”**, and it may even unveil the fact that one is going to enter into the initial stage of virtuous or evil judg-





ment. Indeed, it represents that although this person has not formally died, but his “mental consciousness” has already begun to enter into the “spiritual realm”. As the special feature of the “spiritual realm” is “darkness everywhere”, and it is desperately in need of “light”. Another special feature of the “spiritual realm” is “nether chill”, and the “negative energy” is much greater and heavier than the “positive energy”, and so it is extremely necessary for one to easily enter into the “positive energy” of the “spiritual realm”. In fact, what kind of materialistic structure would be easier for one to enter the “spiritual realm” in this world? in which it will also need to possess light, together with the special feature of the “positive energy”? The answer to these questions is the offerings of “lamps to all Buddhas and Bodhisvattas”. As the special feature for the “positive energy” to be more obvious for those lamps to be offered



in the Buddhist altars of those temples and Buddhist halls that are with the correct and right faith on Buddhism, and so that is why many Buddhist sutras



have described in details the “merits of lamp offering”. The above sutra not only mentions about the lighting of lamps, but it also demands a person to light up seven-tiers of lamps. Why? It is because each tier of the lamps represents one stage. The meaning of the seven-tiers is that the patient in the “spiritual realm” is going to experience seven stages. And each stage would correspond approximately to seven days. As for those patients who have lots of merits, they do not require to go through the initial stage. When their friends and relatives follow the guidance of the sutra by going through all the appropriate standards and procedures, then these patients would be able to return from the edge of death, recover and also extend their longevity. In order to ensure that the

hindrances and darkness of the remaining six stages would not stretch out, converge or remain in the initial stage, thus making the patients to become even more painful and difficult, it is still necessary for them to light up the seven-tiers of lamps, even for those patients who have lots of merits. While for those patients that have lesser merits, then they may have to go through each of the seven stages, and thus they will definitely have to require the lighting of the seven-tiers of lamps to ensure that they could have enough light to dispel the darkness, no matter how many stages they would have to go through. From the Buddhist point of view, “light” represents “wisdom”, and it could dispel “ignorance”, such



that the “mental consciousness” of the patients could be “cleansed and brightened up”, and would not fall into traps, and could thus possess enough “positive energy” to breakthrough the hindrances in order to return back to life. Besides the requirement of the lighting of the seven-tiers of lamps, it is definitely also required to illuminate the whole process for an enough number of days, with the best scenario to do so for forty-nine days.

4. To hang five-colored prayer banners for the ransoming of life – the “prayer banner” is known as “wind horse” in Tibetan (Tibetan: “Lungta”), which is a skillful mean of Dharma practice of “Vajrayana” that provides a way to “dispel obstacles and hindrances, induce one’s wisdom, in asking for blessings, and the dedication of merits”. As such, it could help to remedy on one’s karmic obstacles. “Prayer banners” could further be divided into “paper wind horse” and “cloth wind horse”. It has combined both the images of the “dharanis” (i.e. the sutras and the mantras) of “Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Yidams”, and of



the “manis” (i.e. wish-fulfilling gems), precious horse”, etc. which would be written down and printed on either cloths or papers. These will then be hanged or disseminated in areas that are heading towards the wind direction in mountains and forests, residential areas, temples and monasteries, etc. These prayer banners will flow along the wind like a horse riding upon the wind, such that these could carry away all the bad obstacles and hindrances quickly, while bringing along all the virtuous conditions and the power of blessings to where the wind will blow. As such, these have been named as the “wind horse”, which would enable all sentient beings in the ten directions to receive those blessings of the Holy “Buddhist Dharma” and so a lots of virtues could be gathered. Hence, the hanging or the dissemination of these “prayer banners” could help to accumulate countless virtuous merits, and could also be used to dedicate the merits to

those who are intended to be dedicated so as to increase the fortunes and fates of their present lives. And if someone is facing bad conditions and hindrances, then by doing so, one could be relieved with less severe karmic consequences to have occurred. In “Tibetan Buddhism”, the “wind horse” has been regarded as the common medium of communication between



this worldly realm with the spiritual realm. While for its profound meaning, the “wind horse” represents the human’s energy and its fate, or the five elements. “Prayer Banners” have five colors which represent the “five Buddha families of the five directions” and “five major elements” (i.e. earth, water, fire, wind and emptiness), implying the continuous circulations of these five elements such that life could be sustained without stopping. Therefore, the hanging of the “wind horse”, which have been printed with sutras and other wishes of blessings and protections, in places that concentrate spiritual currents and energies, such as holy mountains, holy lakes, temples, Buddhist halls, etc., and when the wind blows, then these would facilitate the transmission and accomplishment of the wishes. As for celebrations, the hanging of the “wind horse” could seek for auspiciousness and the harmony of “sky, earth, humans and animals”; as for the events of using new tents, building new houses, moving into new houses, the hanging of the “wind horse” could drive away misfortunes, avoid disasters and dangers, and seek for safety; as one’s relatives are facing obstacles and hindrances, or having illnesses, or confronting dangers, the hanging of the



“wind horse” could seek for the clearances of obstacles and hindrances, as well as to escape from dangers; as traveling far away, by hanging the “wind horse” in mountains, rivers and intersections of roads, then these could help to

make the travels by cars, ships and airlines to become safe journeys, and to protect one’s safety while traveling; as for the deceased persons, the hanging of the “wind horse” could accumulate merits for them and to help the survivors in releasing their sadness; as for someone who is practicing or taking a retreat, the hanging of the “wind horse” could rapidly increase one’s wisdom, uplift one’s enlightened nature, and seek for protection, etc. As the “prayer banner” is the common medium to communicate between the worldly realm and

the spiritual realm, and so the above-mentioned sutra has asked those people who are helping those patients who are already halfway in-between the spiritual realm to hang up the five-colored prayer banners in order to random, recover and extend their present lives. Most importantly, those sutras that were printed in the prayer banners must have to be related to the “ransoming and extension of life”, in order that it could completely accomplish the goal and effects in assisting those patients to extend their present lives.

The requisitions of these four levels, as listed in the above-mentioned sutra, are indeed extremely important **rescue methods and levels**, and **none of them should be missing**.

The “taking of refuge” belongs to the level of **inner** “mental consciousness”; the recitations of the sutras could “induce supporting forces from the ten directions”, which belongs to the **outer** level; the lighting up of the seven-tiers of lamps belongs to the level of **injecting energy** by “penetrating into the spiritual realm”; and the “hanging of the five-colored life-extending prayer flags/ banners” belongs to the level of **using the energy** to “travel through the worldly realm

and the spiritual realm”, by “extracting oneself from the spiritual realm and returning back to the worldly realm”.

The above-mentioned sutra has further provided a way to verify its effectiveness. If this has been **done 100%** as according to what the sutra has mentioned, then **the patient's life could be extended**. But are there any actual cases for our reference and verification? Indeed, there have been many cases being reported in different communities, and even through these might **not have been done 100%**, they could **still have effects**. In fact, one can simply visit the “world wide web” and could find many successful cases being reported.

Although the above-mentioned sutra has just asked for the **recitation of sutras**, which merely belongs to one of the four levels, it has already been adequate to generate such incredible wonderful merits. In fact, are there any other merits? And are there any

differences in the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? Which of them would have a greater strength? What kinds of benefits

will they have? What are the differences in the techniques in reciting them? There are two levels when producing the human sounds, namely the “conscious” and the “unconscious” levels. Will they be beneficial to one’s Dharma practice? What are the effects that are produced in the practice methods for the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, Or the Sutras”? To what degrees and levels do these practice methods influence one’s “mental strength”? What is the highest objective that can be achieved through these methods? What is the length of

time that one has to spend on these methods? .....

(To be continued) ✂



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



## The Essence of Teachings:

# Everything Comes from the Mind (4)

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



### Excerpt of Last Chapter

The “cycle of karmic existence” is the **interactive function in terms of “Causes and Effects”** by the different “tractions” of various **“causes and conditions”**. In fact, all the phenomena of the “cycle of karmic existence” are true phenomena, and they all fit in well with “scientific” explanations. There are three key points in the formation of the “cycle of karmic existence”.

1. The “cycle of karmic existence” is the **continuously circulating “Law of Causes and Effect”** and which has **“no beginning and no ending”** to it. It is a kind of **“natural law”**.
2. The composition of “everything in the universe” and of the



numerous kinds of “bodily structures” is due to the “**matching of causes and conditions**” together, and these make up the vessels for the “cycle of karmic existence”.

3. The “cycle of karmic existence” appears when there are **appropriate causes and conditions** for its existence, but the true nature of it is basically “Emptiness”.

Then, how about those scientists who, having high-levels of knowledge and wisdom, will look at the “cycle of karmic existence” from a “scientific” perspective?

1. Sir John Eccles, the **Nobel Prize winner of Medicine** in 1963, said that “the human body consists of a kind of ‘**non-materialistic thinking**’ (he did not know how to use the Buddhist



**Sir John Eccles**

terminology, and so he just called it as the ‘**non-materialistic thinking**’). When one is in the embryonic stage, or when one is very young, this type of ‘**non-materialistic thinking**’ has already entered into the “brain” of the physical body and controls the “brain”, as if the “human brain” is in control of the “computer”. This ‘**non-materialistic thinking**’ would exert a concrete motivating force onto the physical materials that made up the brain of one’s body, so as to make the brain’s nerve cells to start functioning. It **links** them **up** together **one by one**, so as to produce various

forces and functions. This kind of ‘**non-materialistic thinking**’ still continues to exist even after the death of one’s brain. It is in existence and still possesses the form of living activities. It is forever in existence.”

2. Another winner of the **Nobel Prize for Medicine** in 1981 was Dr. Roger W. Sperry, a neuroscience biologist, who believed that: “the **ego** of a human being is a ‘non-materialistic’ type of existence. It exists in the complex



**Dr. Roger Sperry**

layers of tissues of the human brain, and controls every part of the brain, making up a total of **one thousand millions nerve cells**, in terms of its **nature of mechanical function**.” Yet, inside the brain, these nerve cells are controlled by ‘non-materialistic’ structured tissues. Hence, these two scientists do recognize the “conscious realm” that I have mentioned before. (According to the Buddhist teachings, the “Mind” is the main body of our spiritual functions. In the “Taisho Tripitaka”, it was said that: “The Consciousness is another name for the Mind.” In other words, the ‘Consciousness’ is the ‘Mind’. Hence, one’s ‘mental consciousness’ is one kind of ‘energy’. Please refer to the article on “Everything Comes From the Mind” in Issue 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”.)

3. Another scientist, Dr Donald Mackay, has said: “up till the present, there is still not yet a known



theory that can overturn Dr. Eccles and Dr. Sperry's theory of "living beings are having non-materialistic consciousness". This 'non-materialistic ego' determines and controls the behaviors of the brain of one's physical body, and is in control of one's 'will power'. When the body and the brain have died, upon which it temporarily rested and lived, it will continue to survive and be in existence forever".



phenomenon. There was a man holding a baby in his arm, while eating a fish in his mouth. After he had finished eating the fish, he threw the remaining fish bones to feed the dog in front of him. One can see that this man loved his baby very much. When the dog had finished eating, it wanted more as it only had fish bones but no flesh, and it seemed to be not enough. This man felt very unhappy, and had casually took up a stone to throw at the dog, hoping to chase it away.

When Katyayana saw this situation, he felt very sad. He realized that the "cycle of karmic existence" was, indeed, very horrible. Thus, he wrote a poem as follows:

## The Cycle of Karmic Existence From the Buddhist Perspective

How does Buddhism explain the "cycle of karmic existence"? The following is a true story about a great Dharma practitioner named "K a t y a y a n a".



This practitioner is very dedicated to his Dharma practices. He did not work and so he had to go begging for food in order to maintain his life.

At one time, he was outside the house of a family begging for food and saw a very strange

"With one's mouth eating one's father's flesh, while throwing the stone to attack one's mother;  
His beloved relative in his embrace was the enemy whom he had killed;  
The wife was eating the bone of her husband;  
The "cycle of karmic existence" is just too horrible to be mentioned".

Because Katyayana had realized a certain level of 'spiritual attainments' in his Dharma practices ("Realization" refers to those experiences that are gained through actual "Dharma practices", and upon reaching certain levels or stages, one could steadily attain the state of "Emptiness" so as to recover one's own "intrinsic nature", please refer to



the details on 'realization' on p.33 in Issue 7 of the "Lake of Lotus"), such as, the state of Arhatship (that is, one can see the previous processes of a person's rebirths for 500 lifetimes. Buddhism calls this kind of 'supernatural power' as "Purvanivasanusmrti-jnana" in Sanskrit). Why is that they can possess this kind of 'supernatural power'? This is because a certain part of the 'limitations of one's own thinking' has been removed. Hence, they could see things that others could not. Of course, this Dharma practitioner did not tell others what he could 'see' as to how many previous lifetimes of other people's rebirths, yet his poem itself explains something. So, what did it represent about his 'seeing' things when judging from his poem?

"With one's mouth eating one's father's flesh, while throwing the stone to attack one's mother". This Dharma practitioner used his 'supernatural power' and saw that the fish that the man ate was, indeed, his father who had been reborn into a fish after death. Why was it so coincident that this man had eaten this fish? This was because there was some kind of "tractional force" between this man and his father's previous life, and it is also this kind of "tractional force" which naturally brings them back together again. Thus, this man had eaten his father



who was reborn as a fish. The "Law of Cause and Effect" and the "Law of Karma" are really inconceivable. ("Karma" literally means "behaviours", and can thus refer to both the "good and evil behaviours" that have been accumulated through our "numerous past lifetimes". "Karmic networks" refer to those "mental strengths" of both oneself and others that are interpenetrating and influencing each other in forming a web or network of "mental strengths" throughout countless past lifetimes. All of these actions would bring about the creations of countless and endless

"mental strengths", which will then act as "forces of tractions" in pushing and pulling all kinds of sentient beings to be "transmigrated" and "reincarnated" within the "cycle of karmic existence", known as "Samsara" in Sanskrit, and to bear all kinds of consequences thereafter. Please refer to the DVD on "The Inconceivable Law of Karma", published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association.)

After the man had eaten the fish, he threw the fish bone to his mother, so that the latter could eat it. Who then was the





mother of this man? It was the dog. The mother of this man had passed away and had been reborn as a dog. Why was it that the dog knew how to come to the door of this man? This was because after one had died and was later reborn as an animal, one would have forgotten all the things in one's previous lifetime. However, one still has the "unconscious", which can be called as one kind of "karma". Hence, without any reason, the dog would unconsciously find its way to the door of the man. This is because it had lived in this place before in its previous lifetime; hence it would come naturally to this household to look for food. His son would naturally chase the dog away as it was not considered as his own dog, and so he would use a stone to chase it away.

"His beloved relative in his embrace was the enemy whom he had killed". The baby whom this man was holding in his embrace was, in fact, his own enemy who had now been reborn as his own son. Since the man was responsible for the death of his enemy, and so his enemy, in order to take revenge against this man, had turned his anger in his "mind" into a form of "tractional force", and thus tried whatever means possible in order to get close to the man for taking revenge. Thus, the enemy had become his son.

Through this kind of a relationship, the enemy hoped to take revenge upon the man. This is a very strong "mind" for taking revenge and it has given rise to the "karmic function".

"The wife was eating the bone of her husband".

The fish bone that the dog was eating was the bone of its own husband in its previous lifetime. (That is, both the husband and his wife had been reborn into a fish and a dog respectively after their deaths). That is why the Dharma practitioner had sadly mentioned that "the 'cycle of karmic existence' was just too horrible to be mentioned". Because this Dharma practitioner had 'supernatural power', and so while he went begging for food, he could see the whole scenario of all the different situations just like a comic story, with the whole chains of scenes and events appearing one after the other. One might feel that this was very dramatic, but, in fact, it is not so.

According to the "function of the tractions", the "cycle of karmic existence" is a natural phenomenon which could easily occur all the times. These would make you and others, who were involved with you in previous countless lifetimes, in one way or another to come together, though in different forms. Hence, the "cycle of karmic existence' is indeed very horrible, and it would make one lose one's memory as a lunatic and forget everything of one's previous lifetimes. The "minds" of sentient beings are being strongly tied down and thus they would suffer endless pains and miseries..... (To Be Continued) 🔑

