

# མཚོ་པ་མཆོག་ *Lake of Lotus*

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**A Kind of "Anomalous Expansion" that  
Developed in One's "Consciousness"  
when Approaching Death**

**Revelations from the "Tuesdays with Morrie"**

**What is Actually the "Gratitude to the King"  
That Needs To Be Repaid by Sentient  
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**What Are the "Heavenly Gods" in the Human World?**

**Paro Taktshang  
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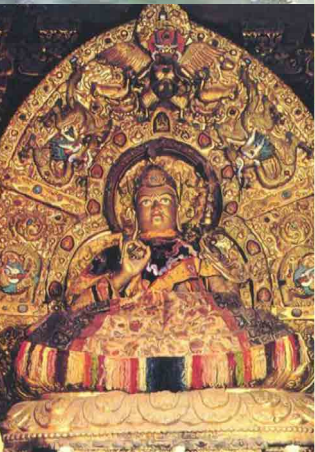


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# The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (42)

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

- **A Kind of “Anomalous Expansion” that Developed in One’s “Consciousness” when Approaching Death**
- **Revelations from the “Tuesdays with Morrie”**

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

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

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



2. The “Endorphins Inside the Brain” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “endorphins inside the brain” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
3. The “Karmic Forces” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “karmic forces” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death”. This can be further classified into the following two kinds:
  - i. Wholesome Ones – arising from: (a) virtuous retributions (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and (b) the efforts of one’s Dharma practice (the main theme of this article in this issue).
  - ii. Unwholesome Ones – arising from: (a) vicious retributions; and (b) the forces of karmic creditors in seeking compensations on one's karmic debts.

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

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

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



Guru Rinpoche  
Padmasambhava Buddha

Human beings have four kinds of conditions of consciousness ([please refer to the article on “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”? ([Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice” in Issue 29 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)) 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** ([please refer to Issue 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#));
2. **Listening and Observing** ([please refer to Issue 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#));
3. **Analyzing and Adopting** ([please refer to Issues 31, 32 and 33 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#));
4. **Leading Out and Guiding In** ([please refer to Issue 34 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#));
5. **Accompanying with Unspoken Consensus** ([please refer to Issues 35-40 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).







## A Kind of “Anomalous Expansion” that Developed in One’s “Consciousness” when Approaching Death

To a dying person, the second stage of approaching the end-of-life can be said to be the most painful and unbearable period of time, among the five different stages in approaching one’s death.

- 1) **Confusions in One’s “Consciousness”** – The emotions and memories of a dying person would be elevated from whose inner world to **the level of one’s “consciousness” in developing a kind of “anomalous expansion”**. From the information provided by the near-death experiencers, there is a session of life review after death. The dying person in this stage would also experience part of the life review. They can also **sense the feelings of the person engaged, as well as those of the other third parties**. The impact of this kind of emotions and memories would make the dying person to feel unrest and confused. Consequently, they would yearn and **seek for peace and tranquility in one’s mind**. In order to attain this purpose, the dying person would clear up some unfinished matters or desires. For the emotional changes that the dying persons might have, please refer to the elaboration in the above chapter. ([Please refer back to Issue 41 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).
- 2) **Confusions in Receipts of Messages** – It is mentioned in the previous chapter that the dying person’s carrier of emotions would be separated from the physical body so the dying person could receive **sounds and images** from the spiritual world. The carrier of emotions which is one of the various carriers of energies of human beings is a kind of the electromagnetic field of the mind consciousness. The dying person would hear the sound of explosion, bell, noise “sa, sa .....” or music from heaven. Furthermore, it could be the special sound of mantra chanting depending on what the electromagnetic field of mind consciousness receives at the moment. Since the dying person might **simultaneously** be receiving the peculiar sound of the spiritual world as well as the mundane world. When the two sorts of sounds mix together, it would confuse the dying person. **Same situations might occur in the receipts of images**. For instance, the dying person might see images of the real world and images of the spiritual world at the same time. There are images that can be comprehended. For example, visit of relatives who have died, or presence of religious sages. There are scenes that cannot be understood, for instance, groups of strangers, unfamiliar inferior environments, bizarre phenomena and etc. All depends on the images being received by the electromagnetic field of the mind consciousness at that moment.





Shakyamuni Prayer Shrine  
Buddhist Stupa

- 3) **Chaos of “Negative Emotions”** – Detachment of carrier of emotions from the physical body means that passions of the past cannot be suppressed any longer. Issues such as scenes that cannot be erased, fears that cannot be overcome and melancholy that cannot be soothed would show up in the facet of mind consciousness. When the mind consciousness cannot sustain them, the inner pressure could be reduced by the **venting out of the “negative” feelings and behaviors**. Therefore, this stage becomes the most difficult and painful stage in the entire process of death. The consciousness of the dying person continuously undulates with the quantity, magnitude and degree of mangle-mangle of melancholy and fear. The **feelings and behaviors** also appear to be **unsteady and unstable** as if the dying person has been contracted with mania and then becomes irrational. If the relatives and friends who nurse the dying person cannot realize and accept whose expressive behaviors, they would not be able to render assistance and would share the **same feelings of loss and distress**.

Nowadays, since the kind of education about “death” and the “care for the dying” is not popular in society, and even the topic of death is a taboo, thus resulting in the happenings everyday of **countless cases of “lifetime regrets”**. When family members or nursing staff who give care to the patient cannot accept the above-mentioned phenomena as an indispensable part of the dying process, they will **not be able to handle the situation in time** and take the fact seriously that the dying person is transmitting are messages from another world. Not only have they let the dying persons down, but will also cause him to be wrongly deemed as **an insane trouble-maker**. They would make ways to **isolate** the dying person. The person would be **completely neglected and misunderstood**, and in no way will he end up in the situation that he has been longing for: **“being accepted and being cared of”**.

When the dying person starts groaning or sighing, it represents that he is feeling uneasy. What he is doing helps him to reduce his pains, and soothe the dissipation of the physical body’s magnetic field. Family members who nurse the dying **need not feel disgusted or panic**. At that moment, they should **provide proper guidance** to the dying person for realization of what the behaviors mean and how he should confront with the situation. Additionally, they should provide the dying person **with support and encouragement**. However the problem is that relatives and friends who nurse the dying might even be more lacking of the relevant knowledge. After all, the dying person is facing death, but the relatives and friends are merely a bunch of “anxious and panic **onlookers**” who cannot render much help, and would probably even **create hindrances** rather than assistances. This is exactly the situation that **this kind of “crucial education” is most lacking in our current education system**.

Everybody would have to face the fate of “death”, and that everyone would have the occasion to take care of a dying person. However, everyone is lacking of comprehensive knowledge in these areas, especially the issue concerning the “overlapping moments” of both the living and the posthumous worlds. The kind of knowledge that were taught in schools does not cover this important issue of “how to face death and grieve”, which will definitely occur to everyone “at least once, or even more” in one’s lifetime, as well as on “how to take care of a dying person”.

The ironical point is that, after hundreds of years, the reforms in our educational systems did not slightly involve in the teachings of the proper knowledge in the “elevation” of the “spiritual aspect” of human beings. There might be some **fragmented** kinds of assistance in the religious aspects. For those who do not have religious beliefs, or those who have **wrongly chosen some problematic religious cults, they would end up in a helpless predicament**. While progressing in the materialistic technologies, the human spirit, on the other hand, is becoming more and more superficial and meager. **The kind of education and knowledge that human beings really need has not been popularized**. Under such circumstances, most of the people are caused to extremely fear of death. When they are facing death and grief and dying person, they appear to be very “innocent”, as if new born babies who just kept on crying. Thus, **both parties tend to create the forever regrets**. Since relevant knowledge is not available in standard education, one must have “extraordinary opportunity” to learn the subject, just like the following case study.



### **Revelations from the “Tuesdays with Morrie”**

#### **Case 47**

Mitch Albom who was in his middle-age had been a person of hope in his teacher’s eyes. Sixteen years later after graduation, incidentally he saw his college teacher appearing in a TV program. From this connection, he came to know his teacher, Morrie Schwartz, was about to die. Upon knowing this, Mitch immediately paid a visit to the teacher. And he started to attend a class entitled “A lesson without textbooks”. The curriculum of the program was rather broad, including all sorts of issues of living. The class was on every Tuesdays.

Morrie told Mitch all the know-how that he realized in his life. Mitch had also made a record of all the happenings to Morrie from the time when he got sick until his death. He watched Morrie from the mood of frustration and giving-up to re-valuing the meanings of life and faced his death with a positive attitude. Morrie had taken his fear and weakness before death sincerely and expressed his feelings. He admitted he could not forsake his sentiments and attachment to the worldly life. After a period of darkness, he started to move away from the emotions and unfold clearness and serenity after his discernment of life; and with some senses of humor as well. Similar to the aforesaid situation, Morrie felt uneasy and confused due to the impact of emotions and memories. Thus, he yearned for and attempted **to seek for inner peace and tranquility** in his mind. To achieve this objective, he cleared up some unfinished issues which he had longed for accomplishment. And he did it strikingly successful.





Not only has Morrie had his spiritual condition to **have uplifted rapidly**, such that he was able to have himself released from “death” while alive. Furthermore, through his dialogue with his student, Mitch’s inflexible mind due to worldly sophistication became softened gradually. As such, Mitch was able to re-examine life from a new angle and regain his lost mind. He endeavored to elevate his “spiritual aspect” relentlessly, and can thus lead his own life really as a living person.

The awakening of Mitch induced his kind-hearted thoughts of providing education to human beings. Thus, the issues of “how to seek for the meanings of life” and “how to learn about death” were then taken as topics of a tremendously famous book – **‘Tuesdays with Morrie’**. In a not lasting for long period of time, Morrie completed many issues. Mitch also accomplished his teacher’s dream of publishing the book. The reason that this book **‘Tuesdays with Morrie’** was so well received by the public is that it was not only due to Morrie’s striking views, but also because of the dedication of Mitch’s personal passions. It is the **most important vivid lesson** of life.

There is plenty of philosophical wisdom in the book. It also elaborated the difficulties, helplessness and grief in nursing dying persons. Its inspiration is good enough to let the audience to better seize the opportunities of their own lives. And one might be able to face “death” and accept the fate **with calmness in one’s mind**. The “attitude and knowledge of how to face death” need to be “studied and put into practice”. Human beings all **need to understand, study and practice** the weakness of life, as well as the unpredictability and impermanence of life. We need to know the reality of “death”, and practice in not becoming panic when facing one’s “death”. After we gear up ourselves to the level that we are prepared for the fatal moment, then we are **able to master it with full confidence**, and be completely free from the fear of “death”. Only then, will human beings ultimately be able to “live freely and happily”, resulting in **the elevation of our spiritual state for the “rebirth” of a better future**.

.....(To be Continued)

### Remarks:

1. The newly-released book on **“The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)”** has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meanings of the Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 1 to 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
2. 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 Meaning of the Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 11 to 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
3. The newly-released book on **“The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (3) – The Various Ways of Realization and Rescue of Dying Kith and Kin”** has been published. Its contents include the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” from Issues 21 to 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”.



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# ***The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (42)***

## **The Mind-Training Episode (5)**

By Vajra Master Pema Lhadren  
Translated by Fong Wei

- **What is Actually the “Gratitude to the King” That Needs To Be Repaid by Sentient Beings as Requested by the Lord Buddha?**
- **What Are the “Heavenly Gods” in the Human World?**

### **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 “Mind-Training Episode”

The focus of “mind-training” is on how to “visualize one’s mind”. Starting from [Issue No.38 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#), the various articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” have clearly described those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”, and is the important guideline in the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**. Then comes the question as to how to “visualize one’s mind”? Whether it will be fine by just “visualizing” oneself as the Buddha or the “deity”?

What are the contents and procedures of one’s “Visualization”? In modern terminology, it is the question of how to proceed with the programming of one’s “visualization” in order to be most effective? **There are countless and endless methods of “visualization”, and so which kinds of them are correct? To which levels of “visualization” do they belong? What kind of situations are they specifically for? How are their effectiveness being demonstrated? Are there any opposing effects, or side effects?** A series of such questions are the “important points for consideration” in choosing one’s method of “mental visualization” ([please refer to the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” from Issues 38 to 41 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#)).

In the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the due process and conditions of “Mental Visualization”. Hence, this Sutra can be said to be **a pivotal point and convergence of all kinds of “mental visualization” methods**, and is also the **foundational base** for all the Dharma practices which can help all sentient beings to **swiftly attain “Buddhahood”**.

Then what actually are the grading/levels, procedures and conditions for these methods of “mental visualization” in Dharma practices? Can one jump some of the steps in these practices? Before further explanations are given, let us first have a look at the **“Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”** to see how the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had generally classified the “mental visualization” methods, **from shallow to deep, and from the foundational basis to progressive elevations** :

1. Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude ([please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issues 40-42 of the “Lake of Lotus”](#))
2. Mental Visualization on the Repulsion of Desires
3. Averting the Delusive Mind
4. Visualization of Entry into the Holy Wisdom
5. Visualization Method of the Mind Ground
6. Mental Visualization on the Bodhicitta
7. Visualization on the Three Great Secret Dharmas



## What is Actually the “Gratitude to the King” That Needs To Be Repaid by Sentient Beings as Requested by the Lord Buddha?

In the “**Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the “Mental Visualization” method for the “**Mind Ground Visualization on the Requit of the Four Kinds of Gratitude**”. These four kinds of gratitude and kindness that require one’s requital are:

1. **Filial Gratitude to Parents** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issue 40 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
2. **Gratitude to All Sentient Beings** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issues 41 of the “Lake of Lotus”);
3. **Gratitude to the King** (Please refer to the article on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” in Issues 42 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and
4. **Gratitude to the Three Jewels** - the Gratitude to the Buddha Jewel, the Gratitude to the Dharma Jewel, the Gratitude to the Sangha Jewel.

The mindsets and thinking patterns of most sentient beings today in this contemporary world focus mostly on the “self-centered, free and equal” kind of “liberated, confrontational and anti-authority” behavioural programming. It seems to be an extremely difficult thing to ask them to understand what is meant by the “**Gratitude to the King**”, and even request them to make requital in their behaviours.

Our current “century thinking” nowadays is “No king but elections”. Is this kind of thinking actually a counterbalance to what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said without any commonality?

In Volume Two on the Requit of Gratitude Section No.2 [0297a07] of the “**Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has made the following explanations (in modern terminologies): [“**The Gratitude to the King**” means that this sentient being who is called the “King” has supreme and very high virtuous merits, so much so that he can still obtain “free comforts”, namely: power, wealth and their abilities, even when he was reborn in the human world. Besides, all the “heavenly gods” in the “33 Heavens” of the “Heavenly Realm” will also constantly use their abilities to protect and bless this sentient being. In the country under his rule, all mountains, rivers and lands within the national boundaries, including the seas, do belong to the jurisdiction of this sentient being called “the King”. (The words “belong to” do not refer to the “possession right of properties” because the land can be traded by prevailing legal means at that time). This is due to the fact that his own virtuous merits are more superior to those of all other sentient beings. To be called as “the King”, this sentient being must be a “great sage/saintly king” who can use the convenience of the “right Dharma” (meaning exercising ways of the “right path” and not using “black practices”) to enable all sentient beings to attain comforts/peace and happiness].







**Kuan Yin Statue  
on Lotus Pedestal**

By applying the modern mode of our current “century thinking”, it will then read like this :[all mountains, rivers and lands within the national boundaries, including the seas, do belong to “this Country” and “this Country” is ruled by an elected president]. Hence, this president is still regarded as a sentient being [who can still obtain “free comforts”, namely: power, wealth and their abilities]. He would be the “King, the great sage/saintly king” as referred to by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, so long as he can make use of all resources and [to use the convenience of the “right Dharma” to enable all sentient beings to attain comforts/peace and happiness]. In fact, if this sentient being does not have certain amount of virtuous merits, it would not be possible for him to become the president of a country. His election manifesto must have been [his abilities to enable most of the sentient beings to attain comforts/peace and happiness]. It is so applied because the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had not specified the “method of making a King”. Hence, the “making of a King” is not a “hereditary or inborn” type of stipulation. It is formed in accordance with the “evolving laws” that are prevailing in that particular historical era.

Therefore, this “Gratitude to the King” as expounded by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni will not become non-existent as a result of the differences in historical circumstances in different eras. It is still “a kind of Law of Causes and Effects in Nature that needs to be observed”. The word “King” can easily be misinterpreted as “hereditary kingship”, but the “Gratitude to the King” as mentioned by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni does not indicate that it falls into the meaning of “hereditary kingship”. The word “King” was used simply because it was a generic term that was adopted at the time of the Lord Buddha.

Why did the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni attach so much importance to this “Gratitude to the King”? Why did He ask all sentient beings to repay it? What are the consequences if sentient beings do not make any requital? Again, in Volume Two on the Requit of Gratitude Section No.2 [0297a07] of the “Mahāyāna Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni explained the followings (in modern terminologies): “For instance, all worldly palaces have “columns” as their foundational base. The wealth and happiness of citizens are based on “the King” (that is the “ruler”, or one who has the mandate to rule and govern, regardless of being chosen either by election, hereditary



or other legally acceptable means) as their foundation. Their possession of the same relies on the existence of the “King”. Same as the so-called “God and King of Brahma-deva” who is able to “create” everything, the “sages/saintly kings” also possess the abilities to “create” good governance, laws and ways in order to benefit all sentient beings. Also, the emperors/kings can shine upon and brighten up the world with their virtues like the sun. The “sages/saintly kings” can also observe the comforts and happiness of the common people in the nation. If a “ruler” loses the right abilities to rule the country, then the common people will have nothing to rely upon. If “proper governance” is used to rule a country, the eight kinds of massive horrors can be eradicated and will not intrude into that country. These **eight kinds of massive horrors** are: (i) invasion by neighbouring countries, (ii) domestic/internal rebellions, (iii) diseases (for instance, those leading to bio-chemical warfares) that are caused by evil spirits (including wicked people and evil ghosts), (iv) famine and hunger in homeland, (v) untimely winds and rainfall (abnormal weather conditions), (vi) out-of-time winds and rainfall (no rain when it should rain, etc.), (vii) thin eclipses of the sun and the moon, and (viii) strange constellations (astronomical abnormalities). A “sage/saintly king” who uses “proper governance” to rule his country can benefit all the common people without the intrusion and infliction of these eight kinds of massive horrors.

Take an example of an elderly person who has got only one son. He loves his son deeply and thinks of him fondly with compassion. He often gives his son comfort, stability and happiness, day and night without deserting him. A great sage/saintly king of a country should be like this. He should treat his people as a group of his biological sons with the same “depth of love” as he has for his only son. He gives them support, comfort and protection day and night without desertion. As this “ruler” has done the “ten virtuous acts”, he is known as the “**Lord of Virtuous Merits**”. As for a “ruler” who has not done enough for the “ten virtuous acts”, he is known as the “Lord of Non-virtuous Merits”.

So, what impacts would a “Lord of Virtuous Merits” and a “Lord of Non-virtuous Merits” actually have on a nation? If in a country, there is a person practising virtuous acts, the merits of his actions will be divided into seven parts. The virtuous practising person will receive five sevenths of it, while the ruler of his respective country can get two sevenths of it. It is because the ruler of the country has also done the same virtuous act by creating a good environment and atmosphere for the “good causes” to be performed. Therefore, the ruler could have two sevenths of the merits received. This kind of **phenomenon in having this “cause-and-effect relationship”** would also appear when the “ten evil acts” are done. By the same token, all things born in the fields, lands, gardens and forests within the country are divided into seven parts. Whether they are flourishing in abundance, thriving in scientific technology, or facing domestic hardship, regression and dilapidation, these are all related to the governance and policies of the ruler. Hence, a ruler will have to bear and receive “two sevenths of either good or bad retributions”.



Mañjuśrī

## What Are the “Heavenly Gods” in the Human World?

If there is a ruler who can possess the right knowledge and insights, and use them properly to educate and inspire the people of the world, he is known as a “heavenly god”. It is because he knows how to use the “virtuous ways in the Heavenly Realm” to educate and inspire the people of the world. Also the various celestial gods and world-protecting lords will often come to bless and protect him and his dwelling place. Though living in the human world, this ruler is practising actions that belong to those in the Heavenly Realm. It is because there is no favouritism or partiality in his mind for both punishments and rewards. All saintly sage kings should do things in this way. Holy Sages in this way are known as the “Righteous Dharma Kings”.

Acting on such causal conditions can accomplish ten kinds of virtues. They are:

1. “**Illumination**” – because he (the ruler) can use wisdom eyes to light up the world.
2. “**Adornment**” – because he can use the wisdom of his great virtuous merits to adorn his country-land.
3. “Happiness in Sharing” – because he can give people great comfort and happiness.
4. “**Suppression of Resentments**” – because he can tame and suppress all opponents and enemies naturally.
5. “**Removal of Horrors**” – because he can eradicate the eight kinds of massive horrors that are extremely difficult to be dispelled.
6. “**Appointment of Meritorious Men**” – because he is able to gather different types of meritorious and benevolent people to assist him in the state affairs.
7. “**Base of Law**” – because he can make people of more than 10,000 different clans, different races and different mentalities to live in peace and harmony together without grudges, and be loyal and obedient to the king.
8. “**Upholding the Integrity of the World**” – because he is able to administer and uphold the integrity of the world by using the Laws of the Heavenly Realm (such as using the Ten Virtuous Deeds as laws).
9. “**Master of Karmas**” – because he is the master capable of controlling the actions of the both “good” and “bad” karmas.
10. “**Master of the People**” – because he is able to make and convince all his people to take on his policies and views, and abide by them as the basic principles.

The fact that all kings, presidents, rulers, policy-makers and decision-makers can accomplish these ten supreme merits is because they have possessed virtuous merits accumulated from their past lifetimes. The King of Brahma-deva, as well as the gods and empowered beings of the “33 Heavens” (Pali: *Tāvātimsa*; Sanskrit: *Trayastrimśa*) often assist the kings, presidents, rulers, policy-makers and decision-makers of the human world to enjoy their supreme wonders of happiness. Various *rākṣa* kings and spiritual gods, though invisible, are lurking to protect the kings, presidents, rulers, policy-makers, decision-makers and their relatives.



**Kuan Yin Statue on a Hand**

However, if kings, presidents, rulers, policy-makers and decision-makers are unable to stop their people from doing various kinds of non-virtuous deeds, then all the heavenly gods will leave them. If the heavenly gods see people in the human world are practising virtuous acts, praising one another pleasingly, acclaiming the merits of their kings, presidents, rulers, policy-makers and decision-makers, and also acknowledging them as their own sage saintly leaders, then the various heavenly and dragon gods will be in delight. They will cause nectar rains to fall, enabling the five kinds of grains and everything on earth to thrive in abundance, thus making people to be affluent in resources, while enjoying the happiness of their lives.

If people in the world can stay away from various kinds of wicked people and evil doings, and do good things so as to benefit the world in general, facilitating the worldly matters to be regulated and rationalized, then a wish-fulfilling phenomenon will certainly appear in the country land. The neighbouring countries will also come to pay their respect and allegiance. Both human and non-human beings will invariably praise them in great admirations.

However, if wicked people in this beautiful country land are developing a rebellious mind, be it just for an instant of a moment, their virtuous rewards will diminish automatically. They will immediately fall into, and be reborn

in, the Hell Realm after death. They will also be reborn in the Animals Realm, experiencing different kinds of painful tortures and experiences.

Why is it so, and what is the reason? It is because these people do not know the gratitude and grace due to their sage saintly leaders. They receive such karmic retributions as a result of their various evil rebellious actions. If there are people who can act with kind-heartedness, **respect and assist a benevolent leader, respecting him in the same way as for all the Buddhas**, then these people will gain security, stability, affluence and happiness in their present lives. All their wishes and requests will be accomplished without any untoward happenings. Why is it so, and what is the reason? It is because the sage saintly leaders of these nations have **received clean and pure precepts from the Buddhas** in their past lifetimes, such that they can always give people security, stability, affluence and happiness as leaders in the human world. On the basis of these causal conditions, the fruitions and karmic retributions of either “disobedience or obedience” so arise will produce the relevant effects as according to the different circumstances. It is because the gratitude and kindness of the sage saintly leaders are so immense and great.]

In the above text of the Sutra, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni clearly pointed out why the **“Gratitude to the King”** should be taken seriously, and that is also why all sentient beings should need to repay for it. What consequences will arise in relation to “the Law of Causes and Effects” if sentient beings do not make a requital? All these are due





to the fact that “any debt of gratitude must be repaid” without any excuse. If it is confronted by rebellions or treason in the pretense of other excuses, it will only lead to “evil fruitions to be borne by oneself and suffered by the massive population”.


Afterall, the governing of a nation is an extremely difficult task. Every move of a leader, his every single policy will affect the total well-being of all its people. Whether they are counted as blessings or curses depend on the ramifications of those various policies. Everyone must have omissions and/or inadequacy, even for a sage or saintly person. Therefore, the most important thing is the mentality of the leader. If a leader’s state of mind is really to achieve security, stability, affluence and happiness for his/her citizens in the implementation of various policies and education, and that he or she is not a mediocre but has a certain level of competence, then those people in this world as their citizens should lend him/her a helping hand. The purpose is to enable the nation to attain stability and prosperity, which is the responsibility that everybody should have. Because of this, accordingly, all the people can also enjoy the prosperity, stability, affluence and happiness. This is the effect of the “Collective Karma” of “shared fortune and misfortune” formed by the people’s concerted efforts, as well as through the blessings of the leaders.

Chasing back the origin, there also appeared some sage saintly leaders in the history of China who were praised and acclaimed by people all over the world. For example, the “Yao Shun Good Governance” in ancient China when both Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun were respectfully dubbed by the Confucian leaders as “(Inner) Sage - (External) Kings”. The Greek philosopher, Plato, was being called as the Man of Wisdom. He considered that a “philosopher-king” must be one of a philosophical nature, who is in possession of a high level of moral standards, in order that he might have a chance to be acclaimed as a sage saintly leader. Some of those foreign leaders who had been praised by people around the world as “philosopher-kings” were such great historical figures as Alexander the Great, King Ashoka, King Solomon, etc. These people are considered as manifest embodiments of the “perfect and noble personalities” in the history of mankind.



King Bimbisara and the Buddha





If those national leaders, who were renowned as “(Inner) Sage - (External) Kings” in the past, are to be re-assessed by **today’s standards**, they will most likely be **criticized severely**. Therefore, in illustrating the Natural “Law of Causes and Effects” in this context of the “Gratitude to the King”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had specifically pointed out the following **important points for consideration**:

1. **People with virtuous merits accumulated from their countless past lifetimes** -- the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had pointed out that the reason for their being able to become ruler of a country is the fact that they have accumulated abundant virtuous merits in their past lifetimes to enable them to possess these powers and status.
2. **Adoption of “virtuous ways of the Heavenly Realm” to educate and inspire the world** -- leaders of those countries would introduce a kind of **“moral education”** by using the “virtuous ways of the Heavenly Realm” so as to educate and inspire the world.
3. **Governance to flourish the homeland** – leaders of those countries have **good and effective ways and means to govern their nations**. The policies so implemented can change their countries from poor to wealthy, making them increasingly powerful, while giving people a peaceful and happy place to live.
4. **A “heart” for the nation and its people without favouritism or prejudice** -- they have a clear and impartial mind for both rewards and punishments, without any kind of favouritism towards any parties.

A national leader who is equipped with the above four kinds of merits can thus be called as a sage person. The citizens under his/her leadership can be said to have been **“granted and bestowed upon” by his gratitude and kindness**, so much so that they are able to enjoy the blessings of a peaceful and happy life. As these leaders are making use of their **own virtuous karmic retributions and capabilities** to bring joy and happiness to their countrymen, and thus the citizens **should assist** these leaders in their governance, **respect** the kindness given to them, and repay for the gratitude so acquired. These requital **mentality and actions** will make their leaders to be **even more willing** to exercise their governance capabilities to the fullest, and to implement policies with **much stronger power**.

On the contrary, if people fail to appreciate what their leaders have contributed, and even pin them down on their mistakes in wide coverage, such kind of a **paranoid** mentality and behaviour in only **“blindly seeing one’s success, while exaggerating others’ failure”** will make their leaders “retreat or shy away”, even though they **originally “intended” to offer their own virtuous karmic retributions and capabilities**. The abilities of such leaders will **either be undermined, or eroded**. People do not want to be governed too strictly, yet they would like to place their leaders on a high moral ground, and scrutinize them **more and more stringently** under a super magnifying glass.

Of course, this kind of an **unequal treatment** would tend to bear “cyclical” fruits, the results of which will have to be borne by **all people in the country**. Therefore, leaders or citizens alike, they **should treat each other** with a **rational and equitable** state of mind and behaviour. Where there is a debt of gratitude, it should be repaid and not to be taken for granted as an “entitlement”. The Lord Buddha Shakamuni called this as “the Gratitude to the King”. Even though some leaders may not meet 100% of the standards required of a “sage-king”, people should still repay them with the **right proportion** of “gratitude” on an **equal** basis, rather than obliterating all their kindness due to just “one single mistake”, or basing upon “our **conjecture** of their ill-intent”.

If the citizens are largely composed of those people who are “paranoid, arrogant, unreasonable, vexatious, overly demanding” with “ low moral standards and care only about one’s own interests”, then the turbulent forces so generated will drive the whole society into a “**inner-exhausting**” situation. Not only the quality of people’s life could not be enhanced and uplifted, it will even continue to decline. The emergence of this phenomenon is perhaps due to the fact that the leaders have not done well enough on the aspect of “**moral education**”. While we do not expect all the citizens to be wise people, but should at least be some rational, equal-minded and gratitude-indebted people with the basic ethical and moral standards.

Afterall, **governing a nation is an extremely difficult task**, especially in countries with large populations. If not done carefully, even some minor unrests can cause **bloodshed and family break-ups**. If rebellions happen, or manipulation of any hostile forces takes place, then destructions of families and the nation **may not be difficult**. Therefore, for the benefits of oneself, and also in the public’s interest, every individual citizens should repay “the Gratitude to the King” for enabling them to enjoy peace and prosperity. They must not revenge it reversely by triggering riots and disturbances, thus **putting** the safety of countless people **at stake**.

The pursuit of “ideal and justice” should best be done by taking **rational and peaceful** means in times of peace and prosperity. While doing so, one **should not forget** one’s responsibility to repay “the Gratitude to the King”. In turbulent years, “ideal and justice” are **even more rare** to be found. Therefore, one should not give up the whole forest just for a tree. It is desirable to use “**balanced** and sensible” ways to attain and enhance the happiness that we have now and would like to have in the future.

A society that is unable to progress forward, and may even be **forced to retrogress**, due to “incessant arguments “ can hardly materialize the existence of “ideal and justice”. All it can give to the people is a sense and feeling of a deafening “disorder”. In reality, one can hardly see where the success for “ideal and justice” would lie. Only those





countries and their people who have experienced previous wars and turmoil can come to **better understand and realize the preciousness** of a “peaceful and prosperous world”, and cherish it all the more simply because this **does not come easy**.

The **interconnections of this “Law of Causes and Effects”** is the truth of the “Gratitude to the King” as enlightened by the Lord Buddha Shakamuni. It can be further extended to leaders, or leading teams, of all “families, companies, groupings, villages, states, countries and the whole world”. All decision-makers are also applicable to the “Gratitude to the King” as expounded by the Lord Buddha Shakamuni. Any of those people who are being led should also repay the benefits so derived from their leaders’ good decision-making. **All these are not “entitlements”, but rather these are derived from the truth of the “Law of Causes and Effects”.**

The methods for the requital of the “Filial Gratitude to Parents”, as cited in the texts of the Sutra in the last two chapters, are of very high degree of difficulty! Together with the requital of the “Gratitude to the King”, will it form a kind of “attached mind” that will affect one’s Dharma practice on “Emptiness”? How does one practice this “Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude”? The five hundred elders had all said that “It is very difficult **(to practice)**!”, but then the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said that this is a must. So, **are there any other solutions?** What about the other six methods on one’s “Mind Training”?

.....(To be Continued)

#### (Notes:

1. The newly released book on “**The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (1)**” has already been published. The content includes the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” from Issues No. 1 to 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
2. The newly released book on “**The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (2) - Seven Methods of Strengthening One’s Mind to Counteract Adversities**” has already been published. The content includes the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” from Issues No. 11 to 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”.
3. The newly released book on “**The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice (3) - One of the Pivotal Points in Practising the Holy Dharma: The Mysteries and Usage of the Mantras and Sounds**” has already been published. The content includes the articles on “The Wisdom in Directing One’s Dharma Practice” from Issues No. 21 to 30 of the “Lake of Lotus”.)



# Synopsis of Each Chapter

## The Skills in the Setting-up of “Plans”

### Designated Elements & Conditions in Determining What to “Adopt and Abandon”

- (i) **Importance:** To what extent would the “plan” help in achieving the “objective”? To what extent would this “objective”, in which one is prepared to achieve, help in achieving the major objective”?.....(please refer to Issue 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (ii) **The Price to be Paid:** Life is short and limited. All the resources that you presently possess could be lost at any moment. One must clearly understand the characteristics of the “Combination of Resources” and its relations with Destiny in one’s own life before making any changes, to realize the price that one has to pay for the different “plans”, and then go through the processes of elimination and deployment in order to “adopt and abandon” in these various “plans”. In this way, this would enable the limited resources to become “ever-renewing, inexhaustible and of unusual value for money” within a limited framework of time and space..... (please refer to Issue 6 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (iii) **Strength and Weakness:** Every person has his/her own strengths, merits, skills, as well as his/her weaknesses and the Achilles’ heel (weakest point). In order to achieve success of any “objective” or of any “plan”, one must be very clear of one’s own strengths and weaknesses; and then through various skillful arrangements, try to complement and make use of one’s strengths and weaknesses in designing the contents and procedures of the “plans”. This is an “important strategy” in eliminating and deploying the “plans”, and thus should not be underestimated.....(please refer to Issue 7 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (iv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (1):** In drawing up any “plan”, one must take into account the “planning of time”. The “principles for the usages and wastages of time” must be clear, and have to be linked up with the effectiveness of the “plan”. Hence, time should be spent on those “plans” which are most effective and can bring the highest rate of return. One should prioritize one’s different “plans” according to the long or short durations of time used and their relative effectiveness. “Plans” that require one to put in a lot of time and effort, but with low rates of return and low effectiveness, should be scrapped. One should refine and improve one’s “plans” by making reference to the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”. This is a major direction in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one’s “plans”.....(please refer to Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (v) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2):** Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one’s lifetime, and if one’s own objective is either to be “liberated from the cycle of transmigration” (known as “Samsara” in Sanskrit), or to attain “full enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”) within this very life, then





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

- (vi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (3):** Does it mean that if one is unable to undergo “long-term retreat”, one would not be able to achieve the “objective” to become “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”? If you want to know the answer, please answer the following three questions first and to know about the “three essential factors” in the application of Buddhist teaching in our “Daily Living” ..... (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (vii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (4): Wrong “Planning of Time”:** It is no easy matter at all for one to be able to master the keys to success of “Dharma Practices” in one’s “daily living” in order to have achievements, as well as to be able to achieve the “objective” of becoming “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”. Even if one does possess the three best conditions (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”), it will still be unavoidable that one can fall prey and become lost again in this “tidal sea of sorrow in Samsara”, as one goes through this **undulated waves of ever-changing life cycle**. If one tries not to fall again, and instead wants to further consolidate upon one’s own foundation, one of the best methods is to **merge one’s own “Dharma practices” into one’s “daily living”** so as to ensure one’s mastering of the “Planning of Time”.

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

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



- (ix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (6): The Skilful Usages of the “Main Theme” and the “Sequences of Events”:** The “cardinal mentality” is the major key in deciding on all things, and so the “planning of one’s Dharma practices” in one’s “daily living” has to use the “cardinal mentality” as the “main theme” to link up the “static states of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic states of Dharma practices”, by connecting their “common points” so as to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time,” and thus opening and tidying up the disordered “sequences of events” in order to synergize the contradictions of these two and to make them to become complementary to each other, while using the “cardinal mentality” as the basis all through. This is, indeed, the “main points of planning” for one’s Dharma practices in “daily living”. Yet, how one focuses on the “cardinal mentality” and the “planning of time” would become the main key points for one’s “successes and/or failures”.....(please refer to the Issue 13 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (x) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (7): Flexibility in the Using of One’s “Mentality” for One’s Dharma Practice:** While practicing the Dharma during the undulated waves of “daily living”, one can hardly sustain one’s “meditational power” and the degree of the steadiness of one’s “Dharma practice” by relying solely on “Emptiness”. In order to be able to continuously enhance and elevate one’s Dharma practice in “daily living”, one must have to adopt “Emptiness” as the unchanging and everlasting “cardinal mentality”. One further needs to flexibly make use of the “three main essential points” of one’s Dharma practice in “daily living” so as to train one’s own “mind” in addressing the problems of one’s “daily living”, as well as to transform one’s “emotions and feelings” in becoming the “driving force for one’s Dharma practice”.....(please refer to the Issue 14 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (8): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (1):** In the undulated journey in the course of one’s lifetime, it is unavoidable that one would meet with many adversities. If you encounter these adversities and could not handle them properly, they would become the obstacles to all of your plans and objectives. Regardless of what “time and effectiveness” that you may have, they would be completely disturbed and delayed, and would hardly function properly. Thus, when one can skillfully adopt the strategy of getting through the obstacles by linking up the “Main Theme and the Sequences of Events”, and when one has set up the principles for choosing one’s “Cardinal Mentality” and also for the “Three Essential Factors” within one’s “mind”, one should at the same time follow the criteria for one’s “Dharma practices in times of adversities” as the procedures for handling the situations.....(please refer to the Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (9): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (2):** Among the criteria for “Dharma Practices in times of Adversities”, one should pay attention and adhere to the following procedures: 1) to alienate from one’s role; 2) to remain calm; 3) to analyze accurately; 4) to act within one’s own capacities – this can be regarded as the “time planning for one’s Dharma practice during adversities”; 5) to take advantage of the different circumstances; 6) to learn from one’s own experiences; and 7) to elevate one’s own awareness, with particular reference to 3) to analyze accurately.....(please refer to the Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (10): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (3):** In times of favorable circumstances, it would be easy for one to achieve success regardless of what one does. One would **naturally** be successful without having to wait for the right opportunities, neither does one have to make any planning. This is because this will be the time for **the arrival of the “achieved rewards”**. The good deeds that you have accumulated in the past are the best planning for the “achieved rewards.” However, in times of adversities, no matter what one does, one would have encountered many obstacles and have one’s head badly battered. If one simply goes along naturally, it would lead one to a dead end. This is because, in times of adversities, it is the time **for the coming of one’s retributions due to one’s past bad deeds**. If one does not remain calm, wait for the right opportunity, and plan appropriately, it would be difficult for one to get out from the plight. The question, then, is **when will be the best time** to get out from the plight? And what would be considered as the **appropriate planning**.....(please refer to the Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”)?
- (xiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (11): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (4) – Making use of the Circumstances:** The characteristics for being in adversities are that one would be **beset with difficulties and will be unable to cope with the situations**. If one has to make use of the circumstances of that particular situation and time so as to break through the obstacles is basically an **extremely difficult matter to achieve**. Since it is **all that difficult**, the conditions that one would have to consider in order to complement the whole situation would be particularly even more so. There is an old Chinese saying that “Hero makes the trend of his time, and the trend of the time makes its own Hero”. After all, ‘the trend of the time and the environment’ together is one of the major elements for one’s success and failure. Hence, it is also **a necessary element** for one to get out from the plight by making use of the circumstances to break away from adversities. If one is to make use of the circumstances, one would adopt one of the following situations: (1) to **quietly wait** for the favourable circumstances to arise; (2) to **make use of** the existing circumstances; and (3) to **build up** favourable circumstances.....(please refer to the Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (12): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities”(5) -- Learn One’s Lessons from Past Experiences:** Failure is not necessarily a miserable thing. It can only be said as a blueprint which reflects on a series of **merits and weaknesses**. If one can learn one’s lessons well from past experiences in finding out the “reasons for one’s failures, as well as the **personal behavioral formulae** that led to such failures”, **one’s “wisdom of self-enhancement”** will be elevated by applying proper remedies to revise these **extremely concealed** and improper formulae, this would help to bring about one’s success in the next occasion. During this process of “self-enhancement”, it would enable one to live more happily and to have a direction, to have more meanings and values, and to be more proactive. In this way, what one would regard as failures have, in fact, now been changed into successes, and have brought about the essential elements for one’s future successes. The “state of invincibility” is the most lonely and painful experience. Too many successes and for too long will only make one to lose one’s sense of direction, and to easily lose oneself in one’s own “ego”. As such, one **would not be able to find out and revise the poor formulae**, and oneself would thus be easily bogged down in the mire of having too much “self-pride” and strong “arrogance” within one’s own “ego”, never being able **to see the real world in its totality**. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be **an extremely big failure**.....(please refer to the Issue 19 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (13): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (6) – Enhancing One’s Awareness:** Many a times the formation of one’s mistakes and failures are due to the inadequacy of one’s own “awareness”. The biggest drawback was one’s own failure lied in not “being aware” of what and where had gone wrong in one’s own “behavioral formulae”. This would result in one’s repeating, or even expanding, of one’s mistakes and failures endlessly. Being faulty or carelessness for a short while is not the main cause for one’s mistakes and failures. **The main and real cause is the existence of deviations and defects in both the consciousness and the subconscious of one’s own “behavioral formulae”.** This would lead to a chain of wrong behaviors, which would form **an orbit which would lead to further failures, and that one would find it hard to depart from it.** Along with this orbit of failures, it would further extend to many more faults and carelessness, and the end result would be more and greater failures. Hence, to “enhance one’s awareness” is not only to elevate one’s attentiveness, such that the frequency of one’s making mistakes due to carelessness would be reduced, but the more important aspect is whether to have the ability for one’s “self-reflection”, for observing the minute details, and to carefully find out the deviations and defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae”.....(please refer to the Issue 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (14): Simplifying the Complexities, Finding the Keys** - Due to the fact that one’s life span is **temporary and impermanent**, and so when one design and draw up a plan for one’s own Dharma practice, one should need to include the “factor of time and effectiveness”, all the more, as **the primary important point for one’s consideration**. Apart from having the “right mindset and criteria” in handling periods of “adversities or prosperities” so that one would be able to “master the factor of time” more accurately and to have **an edge, what other principles that one should need to pay attention to?** No matter what kinds of the “planning of time” that one has, they are bound to have both strengths and weaknesses. It is unavoidable that there will be some faults. However, the appropriate “planning of time” should be able to reduce or lighten all kinds of faults and be able to speed up the process in the showing of “success”. **An appropriate “planning of time” must make use of the following principles in its design:** 1. **Linking up by the Main theme, and getting through the sequences of events** – target: daily living before one’s death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”); 2. **Simplifying the complexities, finding the keys** – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death; 3. **Differentiation on the order of importance, Proper handling of the interferences** –target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death.....(please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (15): Mastering of Time and Choice of Methods** – Irrespective of the objectives of one’s Dharma practice, one must choose the appropriate “methods of Dharma practice” that **correspond with one’s objectives**. The amount of **time spent** on these “methods of Dharma practice”, and the **effects that one can achieve** through them, are the **key and critical points** as to whether or not one can achieve the objectives, and so one should analyze them in more details. In order to have a quick and accurate way to analyze and measure the various “methods of Dharma practice”, one must first “bring out the chief points” on the “objectives” of the various practices, as well as the **effective elements** of the “methods of Dharma practice”, before one can correspondingly discuss and analyze the issues.....(please refer to Issue 22 of “Lake of Lotus”).





- (xix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (16): The Highest Objective that “Prayers” can Achieve** – On the side of effectiveness, even though they consist the element of one’s “mental strength”, but since “prayers” do not involve any practice on “Emptiness”, and so they are neither direct enough, nor have they included any programming for the practicing of “Emptiness” that could counter-act the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic exercise”. Hence, though prayers can produce some effects, the highest level that they can achieve would only be limited to the “materialization of requests for worldly desires”, or for the “rebirths in some virtuous realms”. One would **not be able to achieve the two objectives of: (1) liberation from the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence”; and (2) the attainment of “Complete Enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”).** Hence, “prayers” will not be able to become the major item of Dharma practice in Buddhism, and that **it can only be a supplementary method of Dharma practice.....**(please refer to Issue 23 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xx) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (17): The Mystery of the Blessings of the Sound in the Recitations of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names or Sutras”** – The practice method of using sound to recite “mantras, names of Holy Deities, and scriptures” is one of the practice methods that have been adopted by most religions and ceremonies in this secular world. Does it consist of other deeper meanings? What are some of the effects that will be produced from this kind of practice methods? What are the degrees of influence that this has upon one’s own “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that it can achieve? What is the length of time that it will take up in order to achieve the objective?.....(Please refer to Issue 24 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (18): How to Make Different Mantras to Produce Effects** – the effects and energies that are produced from the “resonance” of sound can make the “electrons” at the outer layer of the “atom” to move over to the other “atom” next to it, or else the two “atoms” can share the same “electrons”. This kind of mechanism can help make “atoms” to become bondings in forming “molecules”, or other types of “compounds”. Through this process, **different types of materials can then be connected, consolidated and formed.** Yet, what types of pronunciation of “sounds” could match such particular effects? .....(Please refer to Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (19): What is the meaning of having received the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras in order that merits would be arisen which are remarkable and vast, particularly in the enhancement of one’s own wisdom which would be very significant, and would not be lost in one’s numerous lifetimes?** – There are numerous mentions of the “Dharani Samadhi”, the “Dharani Seal Samadhi” and the “one hundred and eight kinds of “Samadhis” in the different “Buddhist Sutras”, and so what are they? These are referring to the **different “Mantras” within the hundred types of “Right Concentrations”,** and so what is the mysterious rationale behind them? Should “mantras” be translated? What are the merits that can be arisen from the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of “mantras”? .....(Please refer to Issue 26 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (20): How to Give Rise to the Wonderful Merits in “Pacifying/Averting Adversities” by Reciting the “Mantra Dharani”?** – There are many more conditions that need to be coordinated in order to give rise to the merits of “pacifying/averting adversities” by reciting the “Mantra Dharani”, as it would involve the “collective karma” of all those who are involved, that is, the “karmas” of each



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

- (xxiv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (21): The wonderful merits of the recitation of “Endurance Dharani”** – How to generate the merits of “**Endurance** Dharani”? “Endurance” has two meanings: one represents the “**Endorsement** Abler”, and the other represents a “**Decision**”. The “Endorsement Abler” means that “after the verification and endorsement, one has been confirmed to have such an attainment”. As for the “Decision”, it indicates that one has “surely and profoundly realized, and has thus affirmatively achieved a certain level of attainment, in a decisive and firm manner without any doubts”.....(please refer to the Issue 28 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (22): How to set up an all-rounded protection shield** - In the “**Sutra on the Holy Names of the Buddhas**”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has proclaimed the Holy Names of thousands of Buddhas. If counting the compressed abbreviations, such as “Namo to the eight hundred billions of those designated Buddhas of the Second Kalpa who are having the same names with the same Dharma states” and so on, then the Holy Names of the Buddhas being mentioned are actually infinite in numbers. Hence, if all sentient beings could follow exactly what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni has told us to recite and chant, then the causes of connections being sown with all the Buddhas could also be infinite. In the future, sentient beings could be taught by such a vast number of Buddhas, and could also receive sky-like protections from countless Buddhas and related protectors, such that it will definitely keep sentient beings away from all karmic obstacles, and certainly they will be able to practise peacefully without disasters, difficulties and hindrances, until they will finally attain Buddhahood. In other words, the recitation and chanting of the Buddhas’ Holy Names is a kind of Dharma practice with the nature of “praying, being blessed and protected”. Yet, it does take a longer period of time and is a bit indirect.....(please refer to the Issue No. 29 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (23): Is there any difference in reciting and chanting the “Buddhist Sutras” when one has already got the wisdom seeds in one’s unconscious** - “**Buddhist Sutras**”, as ancient books and records, actually stored the boundless wisdom of the Lord Buddha. By the using of words to show the Lord Buddha’s wisdom to the world, it also wishes to let all sentient beings to truly understand the kind of wisdom that was unveiled by those words, so as to know how to apply them. Unfortunately, in achieving such kinds of results are not easy things, except for those ripe sentient beings who have the past causes and merits, and they also should have the wisdom seeds within their unconscious. Thus, even though people have been trying to abandon the ancient words, and have changed them into modern terminologies, it is still unable to make this wish come true. Yet, are there alternative ways to make this wish come true? For those



who have already gotten the wisdom seeds in their unconscious and for those who do not, when reciting and chanting the **“Buddhist Sutras”**, would there be any difference between them?..... (please refer to the Issue No.30 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).

- (xxvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (23): What is the “evil spirit within one’s own mind”?** – Many people have mentioned that the practicing of the Buddhist Dharma is to overcome our own “mind”, that is, the “evil spirit within one’s own mind”. Actually, what has created this “evil spirit within one’s own mind”? In fact, this so-called “evil spirit within one’s own mind” is some kind of a bad inclination within oneself, which has been reacted upon and projected from the bad “karmic seeds” that had been sown in the “field of the eighth consciousness” in one’s endless past lives. In order to overcome this “evil spirit within one’s own mind”, many people will come to know that it will be very difficult to depend on others, but that one should “begin with one’s own mind”. However, if one has only very limited knowledge, with a weak capability to resist stress, then how could one “begin with one’s own mind”? ..... (please refer to the Issue No. 31 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).
- (xxviii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (24): How could one extend the life of a dying relative? How to use the four levels to help and save patients?** – When the signs of death of patients are shown and even unveiling 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. .... (please refer to the Issue No.32 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).
- (xxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (25) : How to directly elevate the functions and merits of one’s own mind?** - Sound is a vibration with frequency. If the airflow and muscles of one’s body are blown up to make the vocal cord vibrate, the sound so produced will have certain impact on the body, regardless of whether it has any meaning. This includes the impact on the spiritual level. Different degrees of sound would, of course, have different degrees of impact. Therefore, among the Buddhist practice methods, sound has been included as one of the important dimensions for its Dharma practices. What are the comprehensive merits of this kind of Dharma practice? ..... (please refer to the Issue No.33 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).
- (xxx) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (26): The skills of chanting need to be adjusted and changed in accordance with “the characteristics of one’s habitual tendencies, features of karma, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentration** - Whether the “resonant frequency” of a particular “Mantra, Buddha’s Holy Name, or the Sutra” is suitable for the reciting person, whether it matches the “the characteristics of habitual tendencies, features of karmas, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentrations” of the reciting person and so on is a major factor that influences the effects. If the reciting person understands his own “ characteristics of habitual tendencies, features of karmas, orientations of aspirations, degrees of mental concentrations” so well that he knows how to choose a “Mantra, Buddha’s Holy Name, or the Sutra” that is most suitable for himself to recite, then the skills of recitations will become the only major factor that influences the effects. Are there then differences in the skills for reciting the “Mantras, Buddhas’ Holy Names, or the Sutras”?..... ( please refer to the Issue No.34 of the **“Lake of Lotus”**).





- (xxxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (27): How to Use the “Sound of Mantra” to Transcend All Limitations of Dharma Practice** - “The Power of the Resonating Voice” is sufficient enough to make the long progress period of one’s Dharma practice to become a rapid achievement of goals. Why is it so? The most important key point for one’s real Holy Dharma practice is on one’s “mind training”. And the highest level of one’s “Mind” is to restore the state of **“Emptiness: Neither existence nor voidness”**. Then what is the “vibration frequency” that is closest to this state? A good mastery and application of this special “vibration frequency” is undoubtedly the “shortcut” for one to enter this state of condition. Therefore, the arising of human sounds, regardless of whether they come from the “conscious” level or from the “subconscious” level, will be extremely useful in one’s Dharma practice, if one knows how to use them.....(please refer to the Issue No.35 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (28): The interrelationships of the sounds of the human body with one’s Dharma practice and with that of the “Consciousness” and the “Subconscious”** - Other than for the use of talking, the sounds of human beings can also be used to express emotions, such as laughter, crying, moaning, sighs, cries of grief and even yawning etc. They all have the various functions to relieve our emotions, stress and tensions. Some of them are generated as the functions of one’s “conscious” level while others are generated as the function of one’s “unconscious” level. Therefore, the origins for giving rise to the sounds of human beings can be divided into those coming from the “conscious” level and those from the “unconscious” level. Can their interrelationships render assistance to one’s Dharma practice? ..... (please refer to the Issue No.36 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (29): The use of the “core basic sound”. Its usefulness to sentient beings in elevating their lives and in practising the Holy Dharma** - The “core basic sound” represents the pure and natural sound of its original nature of each individual sentient being. From the physical structure to the spiritual dimension, their inter-dependence and co-existence are inseparable from the relationships on the movements of the “molecules” and “bio-energy”. Thus, the “vibration frequency” so generated will be that kind of “frequency vibration” that controls and affects the physical and mental conditions of that particular sentient being. When this kind of “frequency of vibration” expands to become sounds, this can be used to elevate both the physical and spiritual states of that particular sentient being..... (please refer to the Issue No.37 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxix) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (30): Those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”**- Why “Visualization” is a method of Dharma practice that can mostly directly link to one’s “Nature of the Mind”? Where are the reasons and the evidences? In order to see the evidence, one should first look at what the “Buddhist’s Sutras” have to say. The **“Avatamsaka Sutra”** has mentioned: “Everything comes from the Mind”. This quote points out that the manifestation and emergence of all things are caused by the tractional forces of the “Mind”. In other words, the “Mind” is the source of everything. To catch all the thieves, one needs first to catch its chief. Therefore, in order to achieve success in one’s Dharma practice swiftly, not as slow as “ants crawling upwards from the ground”, one needs to deal with the “Mind”. In this regards, “Visualization” is a method of Dharma practice that can most directly link to one’s “Nature of the Mind”. Let us look at the following golden verses from the Buddhist Sutras that can provide us with guidelines (as pointers) towards the “Grand Boulevard of Golden Light”.....(please refer to the Issue No.38 of the “Lake of Lotus”).



- (xxxv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (31): The “Mahayana Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplations” is an important evidence for the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni’s preaching on “Vajrayana” practices** – In the **“Mahayana Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplations”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the respective methods of the “Mental Visualization” through the “Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana” Dharma practices. This Sutra can be said to be a clear and simple overview of the Dharma practices on “mental visualizations”. The fact that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us in one and the same Sutra on the “mental visualizations” through the “Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana” practices is sufficient enough to be a strong and important evidence to prove against the wrong accusations from both the “Hinayana and Mahayana” that “Vajrayana” practices were “not preached by the Lord Buddha”. It also testifies that the defamation from some of the “Hinayana and Mahayana” practitioners against the “Vajrayana” practices will only constitute an evil cause for their downfalls (to the “evil realms”) due to their “slandering the Lord Buddha’s teachings”.....(please refer to the Issue No.39 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxvi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (32): What are the methods of “Mental Visualization”?** – The previous two chapters have clearly described those who are able to “visualize the mind” could achieve complete liberation and swiftly attain “Buddhahood”, and this is also the important guideline in the **“Mahayan Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**. Then comes the question as to how to “visualize one’s mind”? Whether it will be fine by just “visualizing” oneself as he Buddha or the “diety”? What are the contents and procedures of one’s “Visualization”? In modern terminology, it is the question of how to proceed with the programming of one’s “visualization” in order to be most effective? There are countless and endless methods of “visualization”, and so which kinds of them are correct? To what levels of “visualization” do they belong? What kind of situations are they specifically for? How are their effectiveness being demonstrated? Are there any opposing effects, or side effects? A series of such questions are the “important points for consideration” in choosing one’s method of “mental visualization”. ..... (please refer to the Issue No.40 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xxxvii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (33): The “Training of Mind” From the Core and Foundational Basis of One’s “Awareness”** - In the **“Mahayan Sutra of Mind Ground Contemplation”**, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had enlightened us on the “Mental Visualization” method for the “Mind Ground Visualization on the Requit of the Four Kinds of Gratitude”. On the face of it, such kind of “Mental Visualization on the Requit of Gratitude” appears to be of a high degree of difficulty. Yet, in terms of meanings and principles, it is indeed extremely deep and far-reaching. In view of the high degree of difficulty, the five hundred elders who were present at that time in hearing the Lord Buddha’s preaching all said in unison that “It is very difficult (to practise)!” , but then the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said that this is a must. So are there any other solutions? Before further solutions are quoted, let us first look at how, apart from the “Filial Gratitude to Parents”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had preached on the other three of “the four kinds of Gratitude”, namely the “Gratitude to all Sentient Beings, Gratitude to the King, and Gratitude to the Three Jewels”, and see whether they are also equally difficult to be repaid?.. ..... (please refer to the Issue No.41 of the “Lake of Lotus”).





## The Essence of Teachings:

# Everything Comes from the Mind (14)

By **Vajra Master Pema Lhadren**  
Translated by Various Disciples

### Excerpt of Last Chapter

The “**Avatamsaka Sutra**” mentions that “everything comes from the mind”. So, in order to explain that “**everything comes from the mind**”, we have to talk about the importance of “**mental strength**”. Since the “cycle of karmic existence” composes of strong “tractional forces”, which would subject all of us to its bondages, to be drawn into, and under the control of, the tractional forces of the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”. So, the kind of force we called “**mental strength**” is the only kind of force that can counteract the “tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence”, and can thus help us to be released and be “liberated from reincarnations”.

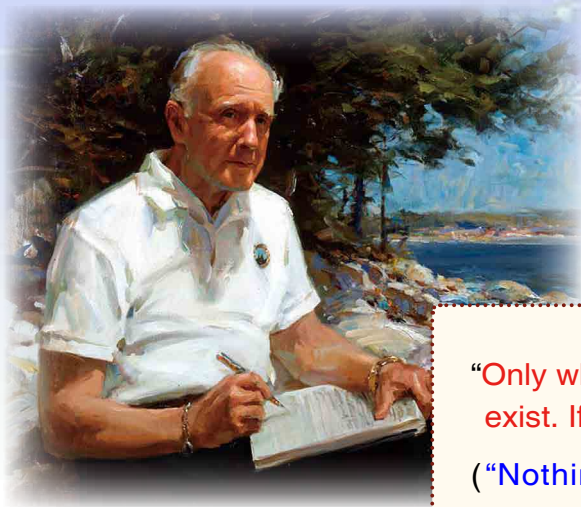
Since this kind of force is coming from the function of one's own “**mind**”, and that is why it is called the “**mental strength**”, and is also a sign of “**everything comes from the mind**”. Furthermore, the “tractional forces of the cycle of karmic existence” are, in fact, originated from the combinations and permutations of countless “**mental strengths**”, thus constructing a grand design and blueprint of “**everything comes from the mind**”, and also form the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”.

For what scientists to be recognized as the “Law of Cause and Effect”, the so-called “**Cause**” is one's “**Observation**”. The “energies” coming from one's “sight” and “mental strength” will bring about changes in the **observed** electron. This is a mutual “interactions of tractional forces”, and this is the “Cause”.

Then, what is the “**Effect**”? The “**thing**” that is being observed by you will **manifest itself in a certain shape**; or else the “thing” that is being observed by you, due to the energy that was added by one's “mental strength”, will change its original “speed”, “form”, and “direction”, and all these are the “Effects”. Thus, this is recognized by the scientists as the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”. (Please refer to the article on “**Everything Comes From the Mind**” in Issue 36 of the “**Lake of Lotus**”).



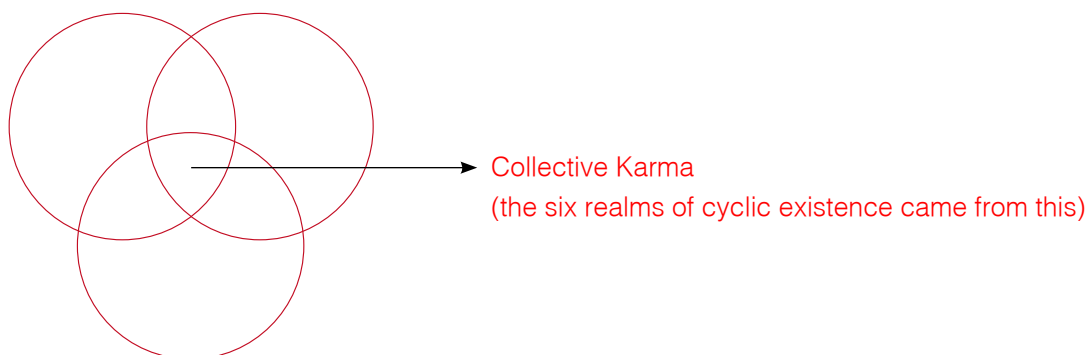




“Only when something is put under observation, it will then exist. If there is no observation, the matter will not exist”.  
(“Nothing exists until it is observed.” by **John A. Wheeler**)

## What is Meant by the "Collective Karma"?

First of all, please have a look at this interweaving diagram:



Here are three different sentient beings. From each of them, due to their “minds” and “karmas”, which thus led to forming their human bodies, and in Buddhist terminology, this is known as a “**karmic retribution**”. As their “karmas” are comparatively more or less of a similar nature, all of them have become human beings, and so they existed and lived together in the same space, or in the same country.

Like the evolutionary theory of biological species, human beings at first lived together as different groups of wild people, and gradually they organized and formed a country. Then, another group of people also organized and formed another country. When all these countries combined together, they form the world. Thus, they would mutually group together, come to influence each other, and be drawn to each other in various ways. As a result, they would tend to have similar “karmas” and “karmic retrubutions”. In this way, as according to the Buddhist teachings, this is known as the “**collective karma**”, which basically means that it is the kind of “karmas that are common to all”.

In this interweaving diagram, all beings have their own individual “karmas”, yet the common area of their overlapping condition is what is considered as the “collective karma”. Thus, if a certain group of people would always like to fight with or kill others, the “collective karma” of that particular country would be quite heavy. As a result, there will be many casualties in this country, simply because they always like to fight and kill, and would thus naturally have the “karmic retributions” of being killed or hurt. Take for another example, if the people of a certain country do not protect the environment, and would like to bring damages to Nature, they would have to bear the “karmic retributions” of the damaging, such as the consequences due to the damaged Ozone Layer in our atmosphere.

But, then, there is such kind of a person who, even though due to his/her rewards of some good “karmic retributions”, can become a human being in this world. Yet, due to his/her “bad karmas” with one’s mind full of greediness, hatred and ignorance, his/her mind has already been “twisted”. He is different from all the others, as his/her mind cannot co-exist with the “minds” of the others. For example, those persons with mental illness, due to their “karmic retributions”, they have a body and live in this human world, instead of living in the hell and be subject to all types of sufferings. However, their minds have been twisted because of their own “negative karmic forces” which were too strong. Hence, what they had seen in this world are very different from what others have seen. When other people are talking with each other, they thought that these people must have been discussing how to do harm upon them. For any sounds that they hear, they would think that others are gossiping behind their backs. Even when they look at the water, they would feel that these must be poisonous. Since their minds have been twisted so much that what they have seen are rather different from the common projections that the other people have. This kind of a hellish feeling in the “mind” is, indeed, very painful, despite the fact that their “karmic retributions” allowed them to have human bodies that lived in this world.

We can apply the same kind of logic upon the animals. The animals would also live in groups and communities, just like the ants in their own caves. It was because of this reason that there are the “six realms”, and their respective, yet different, “collective karmas”. For example, those sentient beings who have positive “karmic retributions” will be able to go to the “heavenly realm” (one of the three good realms). There are different types of heavens within the heavenly realm, just like the different countries in this planet Earth. People with different “karmic retributions” would form different kinds of sentient beings within different realms, all due to this “collective karma”.

..... (To Be Continued)



## Everything Comes from the Mind

### Synopsis of Each Chapter

#### Chapter 1 (in Issue 29)

The Emergence of Lives - Quantity	The Emergence of Lives – Forms
All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Buddhist Perspective	All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source - The Scientific Perspective

#### Chapter 2 (in Issue 30)

Earth Realm, Water Realm, Fire Realm, Wind Realm, Space Realm, Consciousness Realm	All Sentient Beings Are Coming From the Same Source – Different Interpretations Held by Buddhism & Science
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#### Chapter 3 (in Issue 31)

What is Meant by the “Cycle of Karmic Existence”?	The Three Key Points That Form the “Cycle of Karmic Existence”
The Cycle of Karmic Existence – From the Scientific Perspective	

#### Chapter 4 (in Issue 32)

The Cycle of Karmic Existence – From the Buddhist Perspective
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#### Chapter 5 (in Issue 33)

The Karma of Killing	The Mental Strength
Different Interpretations of the “Mind” by Buddhism and Other Religions	

#### Chapter 6 (in Issue 34)

What is the “Body of the Bardo”?	What is the Difference Between the “Body of the Bardo” and the “Ghosts”?
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#### Chapter 7 (in Issue 35)

The Key Points of “Everything Comes From the Mind” The Mind (Mental Strength)
--

#### Chapter 8 (in Issue 36)

The “Law of the Cause and Effect”	The Recognition of “The Law of Cause and Effect” by Scientists
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#### Chapter 9 (in Issue 37)

The Buddhist Explanation on “The Law of Cause and Effect”
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#### Chapter 10 (in Issue 38)

The Function of the “Mind”
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#### Chapter 11 (in Issue 39)

The Power of the “Mind”
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#### Chapter 12 (in Issue 40)

The Power of the “Mind” Upon the Mutual Causation of Matter and “Karma”
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#### Chapter 13 (in Issue 41)

The Inconceivable “Law of Karma”
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# EPILOGUE

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

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