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Lake of Lotus

Bimonthly

Issue 6 November 2006

*The Contemporary Mahasiddha: His
Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche*

*Don't Become the Slaves of "Fortune-
telling, Divinations and Predictions"*

*The Benefits of Building and
Circumambulating a Stupa*

*This Life's Combination of
Resources and Its Relations
with Destiny*

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The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophecies --- Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche (1)

by His Holiness' Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren



A Most Recent Photo of His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche(2006), Taken by His Daughter Tsemo Saraswati Lama

Namo Gurubhya!

We bow down at the Lotus Feet of our most beloved Lord of Refuge, the precious Wish-fulfilling Gem!

Palden Tsa'wai Lama Channo!

Glorious Root Guru, please pay heed to us, and bless us with your Body, Speech and Mind!

Introduction

Emaho !

How wonderful and marvelous! With such an exceptional and rare opportunity to hear this story!

His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, our most beloved Lord of Refuge, is definitely a Spiritual Master of the highest caliber, as well as a Mahasiddha of Tibetan Buddhism of today. As the **Guru of gurus**, endowed with the greatest qualities of "wisdom, compassion and power" and well-versed in both the theory and practice of the Buddhist Holy Dharma, His Holiness is being considered as the most realized Master of contemporary society! At the age of ninety-three in 2006, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche is the exemplary elder in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. His Holiness is peerless in



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche at the Age of 25



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche at His Youth

terms of his moral conduct, sentiment, scholarship, realization and seniority, and there is none other who can outshine him in all these aspects.

Many of his disciples had requested for His Holiness' permission in allowing them to write his life story, but each time they were refused.

The significance of His Holiness' life story lies in the fact that it shows us what is meant by genuine Dharma practice, the interplay of Dharma practice with everyday life, and how the Dharma is merged with one's own mind. Furthermore, it shows us the qualities and activities of a genuine Dharma practitioner by setting a real life example for us all: the really astonishing behaviours of His Holiness in his genuine transcendence of worldly fame, glory, wealth and position; his impeccable humility of heart and conducts; his most compassionate activities, in great depth and breadth, for benefiting all sentient beings; his strong temperament and tenacious will-power; his elegant wanderlust style of a vagabond recluse; his special view and understanding of the Dharma in an essential and precise nature; his unsurpassed excellent wisdom; his perseverant, enduring hardships as a hidden yogi, as well as his boundless wisdom and compassion in upholding the genuine Dharma.

All these activities and qualities will be able to benefit, teach, guide and warn the cluttered and



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche

H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche During Practice



obscured hearts and minds of countless sentient beings, pointing them to a clear and right direction of where the real Path of Liberation and Enlightenment lies. After requesting him for a very long time, His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche was most kind and compassionate in authorizing the two of us, instead of translating directly from his Tibetan biography, to relate his life story in such a way as to present a clear message as to "what to adopt and what to abandon", in order to erect a pure and clean style and character for the practicing of the "true Dharma".



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche at His Youth

A recluse in enduring hardships, with courage and perseverance,
His strong temperament and tenacious will-power will sweep away all those who led others astray,
The great fire of his wisdom will burn all the evils and obscurations,
His everlasting life story will lead the misguided ship to its final destination.

His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche's Birth Conditions

His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche was born in the female Water Ox Year (the 46th year) of the 15th Rabjung Cycle (1913), on the tenth day of the fifth lunar month, the birthday of Guru Rinpoche*. His Holiness was born in the valley named



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche

Nyak Adzi Ron, one of the four great valleys at the Zalmo Gang region of Amdo and Kham (eastern Tibet), where his father Pema Dondrup of the Mukpo Dong family and his mother Sonam Tso of the Wa-kyung family lived. Both of them had strong devotion, respect, and pure vision toward spiritual masters and



The Stone Wall at the Entrance of H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal



The Entrance of H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal

stable and solid, and he always sticks to his principles firmly on the ground. As for the prophecies about His Holiness himself, he never wants to talk about them. This might be fine in the old days when people could still have the wisdom and merits to differentiate between genuine and false teachers and Dharma, such that the people could still taste the nectars of the pure Holy Dharma.

However, as we are now in this Degenerate Age, there are those unfaithful ones who have impure intentions and thus make slanders of both His Holiness and of the Holy Dharma, in which case they will sow the bad seeds and will reap the "fruits of downfall" in the future. Then, there are those who falsify themselves, by lying that they are either manifestations or reincarnations of such and such masters, or Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, so that they can cheat on others for their own ulterior motives. In this case, they will eventually lead others astray and will lay down the "cause for the deterioration and decay of the Holy Dharma". In order to minimize such kinds of obstructions to both the Teacher and the Holy Dharma, we dare to publish here some of the great prophecies, made by the Great Masters of Tibet, on His Holiness.

Many past Holy Masters have praised this Great Master in trustworthy, adamant speech by writing down their prophecies about him. At the same time, there were also prophecies that had been recorded in the Tantras, and so this is totally different from those people who falsify themselves by making up their own stories. In order to sow the seed of faith and devotion for future liberation, as well as to fulfill the pure aspirations of those faithful ones, here is contained the exceptionally well-recognized prophecies by all Dharma practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, and thus hope that all the faithful ones will be able to taste its pure nectar!

the deities.

The next day after His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche was born, Ase Bigo Tulku Nyima Gyaltzen (the reincarnation of a great Indian spiritual master) went to the house of the Sha-se Tse-Ko family (His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche's family name), told the story of his "pure vision" about His Holiness on the day before, and then bestowed the crown of the name **Tro-gyal Dorje (Vajra King of Wrathfulness)** to the future Chadrak Rinpoche.

Difference Prophecies on His Holiness

His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche's style of propagating the Dharma has always been very strict,



The Pond of Holy Water Below H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal



The Temple of H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal





Inside the Temple of H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal



The Big Prayer Wheel next to the Temple of H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche's Retreat Centre at Yangleshod, Nepal

Yön-ru Chimey Dorje's Predictions of the Future states:

"The supreme manifestation of Padma's (Guru Rinpoche's) mind,
The child blessed by Vimalamitra,
Born in the Ox Year, by the name of **Vajra**,
Will spread the teachings of the Lineage of Practice."

The Great Treasure Revealer (Terchen) Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje (His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II) states:

"In particular, you, the magic dance of **Kharchu Sa (Palgyi Wangchuk)**,
Will vanquish the onslaught of wild, misleading views during the Degenerate Time,
And you will increase further the dominion of the Doctrine that fulfills our wishes.
In the radiant virtuous signs of spontaneous benefits for yourself and others,
You will remain in this composite form for one hundred years,
And fill the three worlds with the sound of profound and secret teachings."

His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II further wrote:

"Lineage Holder of Padma, Regent of the Guru who tames all beings,
Sublime Master and Lord of the Dharma,
Renunciate Sky Yogi, Protector of the Mandala,
To you, powerful **Tro-gyal Dorje (Vajra King of Wrathfulness)**, I supplicate!"

The Great Treasure Revealer (Terchen) **Düdük Dorje's Proclamation of the Complete Gathering of the Sacred Teachings' Enlightened Intention (Gongpa Yongdü)** states:

"The sublime manifestation of the great scholar Vimalamitra
Will appear at Kathok and be named **Buddha....**"

Another prophecy also mentioned:

"He now called Gyalwa Lodrö (Buddha's Victorious Wisdom)
Will later appear south of Kathok
As a wise person with the name **Buddha**:
Give this instruction to him!"



Yeshe Thaye was Offering a Long-life Mandala to H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche (2006 July)



H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche was Reading the "Lake of Lotus"

His Holiness **Dudjom Rinpoche II** again declared:

"Deathless Lord Padma Tötrenge Tsäl,
Please gaze and pay heed to your disciple
Kharchupa who
With good intentions will establish the noble
Stream of Practice,
A retreat center in your sacred Sadhana Place.
Grant your blessings to pacify any adversity
there may be,
And to fulfill his every wish!"

In giving his authorization, seal and prayers
of aspiration, the Great Treasure Revealer
(**Terchen**) **Dudjom Jigdrak Yeshe Dorje** again
wrote the following:

"King of Renunciates of the Definitive Meaning,
Regent of Awareness-Holders who manifested
to benefit all beings,
Master of Enlightened Activity, any connection
to you is meaningful:
All-embracing Lord, Vajra Master, please pay
heed to me!"

In the terma predictions of **Wangchen Gyepo Dorje**, it was mentioned:

"In the direction of Tsarong, **Sangye Dorje** will appear.
With a youthful manner, he will fulfill the wishes
of the Dharma King."

In the writings of the Vajra-Holder of Takpu
Lobsang Dönyö Dorje, entitled Jadrin Ngön
Dawa, we can find the following:

"In Tibet, the one known as **Buddha Vajra**,
Will, by the kindness of the flawless master,
Enjoy a deep Ocean of Nectar.
Whoever links with him will be benefited."

Again, in the Jadrin Ngön Dawa, we find these
lines:

"**Sangye Dorje**, meaningful to encounter,
A Lord of Yogis who engages in Secret Mantra,
Will impart the instructions on the profound
path to all fortunate beings."

Changchub Dorje, the Master of Nyag, wrote:

"**Sangye Dorje**, Vidyadhara Yogi,
With the sacred word, sign and statements,
together with the powers of your experience,
realization and awareness,
The time is right for your altruistic resolve to
nurture disciples,
So hoist the Victory Banner of Practice for the
Doctrine of the Early Translations.
The Vajra Command that you will surely guide
myriad beings
Is stamped with the seal that signifies the
Doctrine of Unchanging Secrets."

The Treasure Revealer of Yönrü, **Chimey Dorje**, prophesied:

"In the Sadhana Place of Yangleshöd,
The incarnation of **Kharchu** will establish a
practice center."

These and many other past Saints have used

their most reliable adamant speech in recording the place, time, teacher, entourage, birth year, and activities of this Great Master and Mahasiddha. For example, **Nyak-la Pema Dudul** in **The Treasure Transmission** had precisely predicted the birth-place of His Holiness in Adzi Rong. **Other predictions further mentioned that His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche is the combined manifestation of Vajrasattva (Dorje Sempa) and Lake-born Vajra (Tsokye Dorje), and that he is an Awareness-holder (Skt.:Vidyadhara, Tib.:Rigdzin).**

Every time when his disciples asked about his own prophecies, His Holiness would answer then in a straight, firm and absolute voice: **“I am just an ordinary sentient being, and there is nothing special about me. I just follow the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Without any cheating on my part, I stand firmly on the ground in practicing the Dharma and in helping all sentient beings. I wish that all sentient beings can let go the acts of self-deception and self-aggrandizement, so that they can really practice the Dharma in order to liberate themselves from cyclic existence and to help**



H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche with H.H. Chadrak Rinpoche in Nepal (1975)

other sentient beings. Otherwise, it will be too late when they are feeling remorseful!”

All these prophecies clearly show us that His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche is the manifestation of Guru Rinpoche’s mind. Yet, he is being reverend, not because of these prophecies, but because of his Great Deeds and Activities which clearly indicate that His Holiness has all the pure and great qualities of a Great Practitioner and of a Mahasiddha. Indeed, **his deeds have shown to the world that his mind is no different from that of Guru Rinpoche.** His Holiness himself never recognizes these prophecies, the deepest intention of which is to show to all the faithful practitioners that they should focus their main attention in taming their

own minds, in eliminating the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance, and to use all their efforts in a firm and persistent way to practice the Dharma in order to liberate themselves from the cyclic existence, and not to waste their precious time and energy on those non-relevant prophecies.

In the **Chronicles of Padma**, it was mentioned:

“Since the **Realized Master** teaches you many methods and key points of utmost profundity, For anyone who practices the ‘Unexcelled Secret Mantra’, The **Guru’s life story** is therefore taught to be supreme.”

Hence, **the origin and the basis** of one’s accomplishments in “Vajrayana” practices are all due to the strength of one’s own faith and fervent devotion that one has upon ones’ own “Vajra Master”. As mentioned by the Mahasiddha Tilopa: “If one wants to attain enlightenment within a single lifetime, one must enter into ‘Vajrayana’. Whether the ‘deep path of Vajrayana’ can have ‘realized attainments’ in one’s own mind will completely depend upon one’s faith and fervent devotion on ones’ own “Vajra Master”. In order for one to develop one’s faith and devotion upon ones’ own “Vajra Master”, one must have to realize the great ‘merits’ of ones’ own “Vajra Master”. In order to realize the great ‘merits’ of ones’ own “Vajra Master”, one must have to know and understand his ‘biography’ (namthar).”

Hence, this very short life story of our most beloved Crowning Jewel, though only records one in a million of all the Great Activities and Merits of His Holiness Chadrak Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, hopes to be both of an inspiration and of benefits to all those Dharma practitioners who dare to practice the “genuine Holy Dharma”!

(to be continued)

The brilliant brightness of the manifestation of Guru Rinpoche’s mind,
The magic dance of the wise in subduing the sorcerous evil spirits,
The dispelling of great obstacles through the activities of Vajrasattva, and
The unifying activities of the Lake-Born Vajra across the ten directions.



The Benefits of Building a Stupa, Offering Prostrations, Presenting Offerings, Circumambulating It and Making Aspirations

Written by
H.H. Chadrak Sangye
Dorje Rinpoche

Homage To The Three Jewels!

I will explain briefly the benefits of building a Sugata Stupa and the benefits for the faithful ones prostrating to it, presenting offerings and circumambulating it. Assembly of fortunate ones interested in the genuine scriptures that I have quoted here as witnesses, accept these with joy!

In the Karmavibhanga Sutra it is said:

The Buddha spoke to the young Brahmin Shuka: **There are eighteen benefits of building a Tathagata Stupa.** What are these eighteen?

1. One will be born as the child of a great leader
2. One will have a noble body
3. One will become beautiful and very attractive
4. One will have sharp sense faculties
5. One will be powerful and famous
6. One will have a great entourage of servants and helpers





7. One will become a leader of men
8. One will be a support to all
9. One will be renowned in the ten directions
10. One will be able to express oneself in words and verses extensively
11. One will receive offerings from men and gods
12. One will possess many riches
13. One will obtain the domain of a universal monarch
14. One will have long life
15. One's body will be like a collection of vajras
16. One's body will be endowed with the major marks and the minor signs (of a Buddha)
17. One will take rebirth in the three higher realms
18. One will swiftly attain complete nirvana

These eighteen points are the benefits of building a Tathagata Stupa.

In the Sutra called Casket of Secret Relics it is said:

The Bhagavan spoke: Vajrapani! If one writes this Dharma teaching and places it inside a Stupa, that



Stupa will become the quintessential vajra relic of all the Tathagatas. It will become a Stupa blessed with the secret Dharani essence of all Tathagatas. It will become a Stupa of ninety-nine Tathagatas, just as many as there are sesame seeds in a sesame pot. It will be blessed as a Stupa which contains the eyes and Ushnisha of all Tathagatas.

Whoever places images of the Buddha in a Stupa, that person will be blessed with the nature of the seven precious jewels of the Tathagata images. Whoever pays reverence and respect to this Stupa, will become non-returners and will eventually, completely and





perfectly, awoken to the unsurpassed and utterly perfect enlightenment.

Even if one offers only one prostration, or makes one single circumambulation, one will be completely freed from going to places like the Avici hell. One will never fall away from the (path to) unexcelled and completely perfect enlightenment. Also the area around this Stupa and images will be blessed by all Tathagatas.

In the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra it is said:

Walls are built from mud and bricks,
And a Stupa of the Jina (Victorious One) is made likewise.
Therefore, even if it is built from heaps of dust,
Whoever builds a Stupa for the sake of the Jina (Victorious One),
In remote places of suffering;
Even if it is made of a heap of sand
By children playing games,
(The builder) will reach enlightenment.

The benefit of presenting offerings (to a Stupa) are stated in the Sutra requested by Prasenajid:

If one white washes a Buddha Stupa,
One will have a long life in the worlds of gods and men.
One's body and mind will be free from sickness.
One will overcome all suffering,
One will attain permanent happiness and will be wealthy.



If one rings a bell in front of a Buddha Stupa,
One will have charismatic speech and great fame.
One will gain the pleasant voice of Brahma and remember one's previous lives.
Whoever among the scholars turns his mala with a devoted mind
In front of a Sugata Stupa,
Will be well presented with many precious golden malas,
Will attain various ornaments,
And will become the foremost among the meritorious and fortunate ones.



Whoever offers to a Stupa of the Jina (Victorious One) the sound of music,
Will gain perfect confidence in profundity and knowledge.
One will have a perfect physical form and a pure mind and speech.
One's speech will fill the world.





If people fix various beautiful banners
At an essential reliquary (Stupa), which is the source
of immaculate merit,
They themselves will receive offerings as they are
now an offering field for the three worlds.
If one fixes streamers at a Sugata Stupa,
One will become a glorious ruler of men, a powerful
ruler of gods,
And will experience great bliss.
One will attain the special streamer of complete
liberation.



If one cleans a Buddha Stupa,
One will become beautiful and attractive.
One will have a noble face and the complexion of a
lotus.
One will be completely free from the defects of
samsara.



Whoever cleans the dust around a Stupa
In the spring time with clean water,
Will be pleasantly fanned by ladies
Holding golden handled fans.



Concerning the benefits of prostrating and circumambulating a Stupa, it is said in the Avalokiteshvara Sutra:

If one pays respect kneeling before a Buddha Stupa,
 One will become a heroic and powerful world monarch.
 One will have an armor with golden emblems.
 One will become a powerful teacher and take delight in the Buddhas.

In the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra it is said:

Whoever joins their palms before a Stupa,
 Whether with two hands or just one;
 Whoever just one time bows their body,
 Or even briefly bends their head;
 Whoever prostrates or merely says "Buddha" with a distracted mind
 Whether once or several times
 Before places where relics are kept,
 That one will attain supreme enlightenment.

In the Caitya Pradakshina Ghata it is said:

The qualities of circumambulating a Stupa of the Protector of the World,
 Cannot be described properly
 With mere words.



These and other quotations from the sutras and tantras will generate confidence and vast joy.

I urge all those who aspire to happiness and fortune to use their human existence in a meaningful way. Endeavor to their best of your abilities, to gather the accumulations and purify the obscurations. With a noble Bodhicitta attitude prostrate, offer, circumambulate, make aspirations and so forth before these special supreme supports (Stupas), which grant great meaningful benefits through seeing, hearing and remembering.



This was written by the renunciant **Buddha Vajra**,

Who in this day and age of the five decadences

Gives the appearance of guiding beings

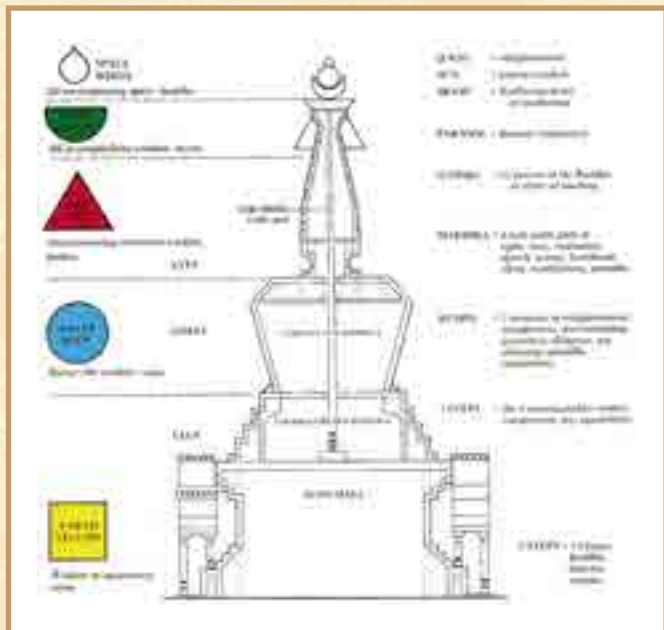
Through the representations of Buddha's Body, Speech and Mind.



Through this merit, may all beings attain the level which transcends the limitations of samsara and nirvana. By defeating the armies of the maras, may they hold the power of the great kingdom of Samantabhadra, may the two benefits spontaneously manifest and may auspiciousness and splendor blaze forth.

This was composed in the male-fire-horse year of the 16th sixty year cycle (1966), in the ninth lunar month on the 22nd day.

SARVA MANGALAM!





The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death : The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (6)

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

Omniscience and Flash Foreword

Dr. Raymond Moody, one of the pioneers in doing research and releasing publications on the near-death experiences (NDEs), after having amassed many more case studies and related experiences, have further introduced two essential elements into his later works. One of them is “omniscience” and the other one is “flash foreword”.

“Omniscience” refers to the sense of having “a thorough understanding of all kinds of knowledge without any exceptions”. “Flash foreword” refers to “a flashing glance of a scene of the future, and this scene later becomes a reality”. These two elements appeared frequently in the Buddhist scriptures from time to time. As NDE survivors have been through the state of the “Light of the Sambhogakaya”, and so their “intrinsic nature” had been restored to a certain level, resulting in their possession of great powers (please refer to the [articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death](#)

[Experiences”](#) in Issues 4 and 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”). As such, the aforesaid two types of powers can thus be manifested.

As for the forecast on the “future” made by the power so derived, would it definitely be “realized as facts”? In the article of last issue, there are few questions left to the readers for a session of “brainstorming” on their wisdom. Those questions were: **whether it is the “prophecy” that comprises the “future outcomes”, or whether it is the “future outcomes” that reflect the “prophecy”?** Does it mean that if one does not have any “prophecies”, then one does not have “future outcomes”? or visa versa? In fact, what is the “future”? And what is a “prophecy”? What about all sorts of “fortune-telling and divinations”? How valid are their authenticities?

Before we start the discussion, please refer to the following case:

Case 6:

The incident occurred back in 1988. Mr. C. J. Liao, a Taiwanese emigrant to USA, encountered a car accident. His head crashed onto the “rear mirror”, thus experiencing a severe pain, and had become unconscious for a few seconds. After awakening, he found difficulties in breathing. It took him a few minutes before his gradual return to normal breathing. He felt that his head was bleeding, but he could not locate the wound, and there was only some “thin fluid” running down from his two nostrils. He thought that there was no injury in him, and so he did not go to see the doctor, and just went home directly for rest. Consequentially, he stayed in bed **in coma for thirty six hours**. The following is his personal account:

“I heard my daughter was calling me. I had responded to her many times but seemingly she couldn’t hear me. All of a sudden, I found myself floating in the air above the bed, and saw my daughter shaking my legs. Being horrified, I recited the name of “Amitabha” once right away. At that very moment, I felt myself entering into some sort of a condensed and compressed space. Upon this, there was a flashing-back in front of me of the numerous footages on my whole life, just like the replay of a film. I felt as if being squeezed into a big bowl, or being placed on a fast moving track of a passage.

The scene suddenly paused at the scene of my father’s funeral service. I was only four at that time. After going through the passage, I drifted forward ceaselessly. At an instant, I found myself over the sky of Taiwan. All of a sudden, I was promptly thrown out by a very strong force. In the split of a second, I could see the whole earth, like a transparent crystal ball and could see through it to the other side of the globe.

Thereafter, **a ray of bright and twinkling light** came forward to embrace me. It was a kind of **soft yellow light filling me with tranquility and peace**. A **“sense of mission”** arose in me and I **realized the “meaning of life”**. From the “light” came a notion asking, “Do you want to go back?” I thought of my father passing away when I was four, which had left me feeling regrets throughout my



Guru Rinpoche

whole upbringing. My daughter is also four now, and since I cannot bear the fact that she would experience the same kind of regrets as I did before, and so I decided to go back. With the rising of this thought, I was revived to consciousness.

Later on, I came to realize that the accident had caused me an “intra-cranial bleeding”, and I was very close to death. According to the medical records, the mortal rate is as high as 95%. Even for the remaining 5% of those lucky ones who barely survive would have a 50% chance of suffering from symptoms of stroke. I was really lucky that I did not have any consequent effects thereafter. After surviving that “near-death experience” (NDE), I **knew very clearly and firmly** what I would do and should do in the future. Materialistic life becomes meaningless to me, and I have now decided to give up my lucrative business, which has been very successful, and return to Taiwan.

Within the next five years after my NDE, my “creative power” became very strong. My **“sixth sense” also became very accurate and precise**. At one time, I visited the studio of a singer. When I entered the room, I immediately smelt the smell of some burnt objects. It was three days afterwards that a fire broke out over there. Before the ‘9 · 11 Incident’, I also had a vision. The backdrop was the Twin Towers, and in front of them there was an aircraft similar to that of the Kamikaze (the Japanese suicidal aircraft squadron in WWII). I did not understand this scene all along, until the outbreak of the ‘9 · 11 Incident’”. (From the book “Life Renewal”, published in Taiwan in 2003.)

The Truth of “Predictions” and “Future”

The aforesaid case illustrated the fact that after his survival from the NDE, Mr. Liao had gained the “power of predictions” which was derived from the process of “flash foreword”. However, his “power of predictions” was not very strong, and he could only have certain “future visions” of some snap-shots, but not in a series of footages about events in the future, as in the case of movies. Furthermore, his “creative power” and “sixth sense” are only some kind of feelings and are not visions of imageries as such.

The powers that had been derived through the partial recovery of his “intrinsic nature”, during Mr. Liao’s NDE, slowly diminished upon his “regaining consciousness” and could not be maintained for long. If, after his “regaining consciousness”, Mr. Liao had been able to conduct some “Dharma practices” in order to train his “power of meditation” and “mental concentration”, then the effects would have been much more intense and that he would have been able to sustain these powers. In many NDE cases, similar “supernatural powers of sensation and knowledge”



Mandala, Japan

had been exhibited.

Concerning the “flash foreword” on the revelation of “future scenes”, a renowned scholar in researching the “near-death experiences”, Kenneth Ring, has provided several cases in his book “[Heading Toward OMEGA](#)”. Those cases were mostly about visions on the “footages of family life”, which would later turn out to be facts years afterwards. For instance, it was mentioned that a lady had survived her “near-death experience” back in 1959, and that it was during her NDE that she saw the scene of “herself preparing dinner in the kitchen, with her elder daughter helping out by her side, while her son was doing gardening in the yard. Her husband was moving around the house after taking a bath.” Consequentially, the scene materialized in 1981 and so it became a fact.



The story of Buddha Shakyamuni, Thailand

Another example was about a man who had his NDE back in 1941. In it, he saw “two children playing in front of a fireplace.” Twenty-seven years later, in the year of 1968, the scene became true. However, there were also examples to show that these were inaccurate. For example, a NDE survivor predicted that the earth would undergo a drastic change of catastrophe in the year of 1988, but then it did not happen.

Would “the future”, that had been predicted by those people who have this “capability”, **definitely** “come true”? The meaning of “the future” is the time span which is “still under hatching and is yet to come”. Hence, in this sense, the so-called “future outcome” is not necessarily true, and is only a kind of inferred “unfixed consequence” which could vary at any moment in time. The creation of a “prediction” comes



Buddha Shakyamuni, Thailand

from the fact that, when certain scenes are to be seen in the “**forms of projection**”, it seems to reveal that something is going to happen in “the future”. In order to **predict** the possible scenario of “the future”, as according to those scenes projected, and hence the name of a “prediction”.

Then, how and why do those scenes occur? Those “scenes” are formed in accordance with certain existing matters, in conjunction with certain environmental conditions, so as to “**project**” certain related scenes, as in the case of “mirages”. In other words, all the things that exist “at the present moment” are the **main “conditions”** in the structuring of the “future outcome”. If these “conditions” do not changed, and if they continue to proceed along the original locus, then the “future outcome” would become the “final outcome” upon its time of maturation. Hence, the initial “prediction” would now become a fact.

However, most people would have neglected **a most important point**, that is, the **notion of “impermanence”** as promulgated by the Buddhist teachings – **that there is nothing in this world that will never changed**. Before the appearance of the “final outcome”, any of the “conditions” that are structuring the “outcome” are in the process of changing. Depending upon the circumstances on the “conditions” at that time, the “scenes” so projected are **incessantly ever-changing** in accordance with the changes of the “conditions”, as if playing an “animated movie or cartoon”. In the end, the actual “scene”

that had finally played out could have been “totally different” from the early “prediction” of it initially.

The so-called “future outcome” is, in fact, only the “projection” of all the “conditions” that are incessantly accumulated throughout a “certain time-space continuum”. The so-called “prediction” is, in fact, a description of the “snap-shot of photos” taken of a particular moment from an “animated movie or cartoon” concerning a series of events. If the “present mode and locus” that have been accumulated by the various “conditions” do not change, then the deviation between the “prediction” and the “final outcome” would be very small. **These deviations may include the content, the structure, as well as the moment, of the “final outcome” that will take place.** On the contrary, if there are changes to the “present mode and locus”, which have been accumulated by the various “conditions”, then the deviation between the “prediction” and the “final outcome” could be quite substantial, in which case there might be a possibility that the “outcome” would not occur at all.



Buddha Amitabha

Don't become the Slaves of “Fortune-Telling, Divinations and Predictions”

Many people could not make a decision when coming across “the turning point of one’s life”, and so they will tend to “go for divinations, fortune-telling, or will seek for predictions from the Gypsy, or the using of the Tarot cards, or through crystal-ball-gazers in order to look into the future”. Such kind of actions will only mean that one will **put one’s own important decision of making choices in the hands of other “supernatural spirits”** and become their puppet. **This is meaningless and risky.** Instead, why can’t the people conduct a rational analysis by weighting all the odds, judging the possible outcomes of “cost-benefit analysis”, and then make a “**balanced decision**”? Why do they want to deceive themselves by saying that this must be either because of one’s own destiny, or because of the “play by God”? There are various kinds of “supernatural spirits” whose “abilities” are greatly limited. Furthermore, they have different propensities of either good or bad “personalities”. Thus, in putting one’s own “fate” in the hands of these “supernatural spirits”, who by themselves have no control of their

own fates, is like playing the game of the Russian roulette and is “doomed to die” **sooner or later.**

Even though some of those NDE survivors, who having gained the ability through partial recovery of their “intrinsic nature”, may seem to have the ability approximating that of the Buddha in foreseeing the “future”, yet their predictions are still governed by the “**Law of Cause and Effect**”, and thus would **not necessarily be accurate.** The answer given by Buddhism is the best answer, simply because it is the relationship between “Causes” and “Effects”. **Nobody is able to accurately predict the future,** and even if one possesses the great power of the “intrinsic nature”, one still **cannot make a perfectly accurate forecast.**

Even if you are able to use the method of “Induction”, and then try to assemble all the various “conditions” that are structuring the “future outcome” so as to make an inference, recognition and prediction of the “future”, but the fact is that before the “outcome” actually occurs, the “future outcome” would be changed due to the insertion of some other **changing “conditions”** of the future. That

is to say, **the “conditions” are the real creator of the “future outcome” and not the “predictions” of some deities or human beings.** Therefore, some of the “future” scenes that were experienced by some NDE survivors did not really come true. Indeed, the “Law of Cause and Effect” in Buddhism is a natural law, and so the principles that were described in the Buddhist teachings are, in fact, the principles of Nature, which are very scientific and not superstitious at all.

Just like the Case 5 in Issue No.5 of “Lake of Lotus”, Dr. Kirueda was indeed the key person responsible for the failure of her own marriage. Her own thinking pattern, value orientation and way of handling things directly affect the “present mode and locus” that have been accumulated by the various “conditions”. **If she wanted to rewrite the “prediction” (or the “script”) about her own “divorce”, she must have to start from “changing herself”.** If one does not understand the above-mentioned principles, and becomes “superstitious” about “predictions”, then one’s own “destiny” would lose its “initiative”, and then one will become a slave of “fortune-telling, divinations and predictions”.



Buddha Shakyamuni, Myanmar

Therefore, “predictions” are not equivalent to “future outcomes”, and there is no such a sign as “equal to” in between the two. The “future outcome” is not a product of “prediction”, and neither is “prediction” the creator of the “future outcome”. There is no **direct** relationship between the two at the very beginning. However, if one becomes so “superstitious” about “predictions”, and endeavors by all means to realize such kind of “predictions”, or to be psychologically “bogged down” by its effect, then “predictions” could become the **direct influence** in the **maneuvering** of the accumulated “conditions”.

Many people have misunderstood Buddhism and thought that it is a kind of “superstitious” belief. As a matter of fact, from the explanations on all the aforesaid matters, one can thus come to know that Buddhism is purely describing the principles of Nature, and as such, it is some kind of an “authentic



Buddha Shakyamuni

knowledge” about the world, and is even more fathomable and more thorough than the knowledge of “Sciences”. If one still upholds this misunderstanding towards Buddhism, it is simply because most of the people nowadays have taken all those “**legendary tales of folk norms, customs and traditions, superstitions without analysis and verification, as well as deceptive tricks of all kinds**” and have them muddled with the category of Buddhism, and so all these are, indeed, not the real and authentic “Buddhist teachings”.....

(To be continued)



Buddha Vairocana, Japan

SPARK OF WISDOM

Don't become the Slaves of "Fortune-Telling, Divinations and Predictions"

Many people could not make a decision when coming across “the turning point of one’s life”, and so they will tend to “go for divinations, fortune-telling, or will seek for predictions from the Gypsy, or the using of the Tarot cards, or through crystal-ball-gazers in order to look into the future”. Such kind of actions will only mean that one will **put one’s own important decision of making choices in the hands of other “supernatural spirits”** and become their puppet. **This is meaningless and risky.** Instead, why can’t the people conduct a rational analysis by weighting all the odds, judging the possible outcomes of “cost-benefit analysis”, and then make a “**balanced decision**”? Why do they want to deceive themselves by saying that this must be either because of one’s own destiny, or because of the “play by God”? There are various kinds of “supernatural spirits” whose “abilities” are greatly limited. Furthermore, they have different propensities of either good or bad “personalities”. Thus, in putting one’s own “fate” in the hands of these “supernatural spirits”, who by themselves have no control of their own fates, is like playing the game of the Russian roulette and is “doomed to die” **sooner or later.**



The Application of Wisdom

The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (6)

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

Excerpt of Last Issue

The Skills in the Setting-up of "Plans"

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

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

1. **Complementarity and the Enhancement of Effectiveness:** The links between "plans" should have

compatible, complementary and interdependent effects...

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

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

(i) **Importance:** To what extent would the "plan" help in achieving the "objective"? To what extent would this "objective", in which one is prepared to achieve, help in achieving the major objective"?

(ii) **The Price to be Paid:** Life is short and limited. All the resources that you presently possess could be lost at any moment. So, before you lose them, and when you still have the power to control them, how are you going to



Akasiagalubuha Bodhisattva

make use of them? Most people, in general, will tend to divide their present resources into two parts: one part is for the purpose of “value-adding”, while the other part is for the purpose of “enjoyment”.

Irrespective of what purposes they are for, whether they are for “value-adding” or for “enjoyment”, one has to pay a price for it before getting the desired outcomes. Have you ever thought of the fact that if your resources are not handled well, they can bring about opposite effects? The result could either be “value-decreasing” instead of “value-adding”, or to have “suffering” rather than “enjoyment”.

Take, for example, the case of “Dharma practices”, lots of people would request for good fortunes and blessings from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. When they are sick, they will ask for health; when they have problems, they would ask for solutions. Even if they do not have any misfortunes, they will still request for wealth and success in careers to be bestowed upon them. This is the most common way that people will tend to engage themselves in “Vajrayana” practices.

Indeed, only very few people would seriously consider the following questions: **Where do these blessings and fortunes come from? What kinds of changes would they bring to you through your requests? Do you really in need of those things that you are asking for?** No matter what you have asked for, there are only two possible outcomes: either success or failure. **If the outcome is successful, it implies that a price has to be paid for it.** On the other hand, if the outcome is a failure, it implies that one will have disappointment and frustration. Hence, in order to obviate the situation of either having to pay for a price which is not commensurate with what one gets back in return as what one had hoped for, or that the price paid is well beyond one’s own capacity, **then one has to thoroughly understand and assess the greatest possibility for “the price to be paid” when making those “plans”.**

Once you know about the price that you have to pay for, you must then seriously consider as to whether you still really need the desired outcomes or not? Do you still continue to pray for it? Whether the final outcome will be a happy ending or a sad one will be determined by the values of each individual. But, of course, the last thing that you want to see happened to yourself is to be in a situation when it will be “too late to regret”.



Mahamayuri



This Life's Combination of Resources and Its Relations with Destiny

According to the Law of Cause and Effect, which is recognized by both Science and Buddhism, all the “good and bad deeds” that have been accumulated throughout our numerous past lives act like a huge web/network of “tractions” which constitutes the “Combination of Destiny” for this very life. (Please refer to the VCD on “The Inconceivable Law of Cause and Effect”, as well as the book and CD on “The Freeing of Lives and Cause and Effects”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association).

This “Combination of Destiny” is extremely complicated and ever-changing. This is because the future “tractions” (as “effects”) of the past actions (as “causes”) could, at any time, become effective earlier than expected due to some particular reasons. At the same time, the present behaviours could also influence the ordering and its priority of the different components of this combination. What you are intending to do right now, and what you will want to do in the future, are all “uncertain elements” that could further influence the ordering and its priority of the different components of the combination. Hence, the “Combination of Destiny” for this very life comprises of elements which are ever-changing and unpredictable.

If we can simplify the picture on this “Combination of Destiny” for this very life, it would be easier for one to understand its complexity. Say, for example, the “combination of resources” for this life is equal to 100 marks, which is then sub-divided into 3 components: 40 marks for one’s life span, 30 marks for one’s wealth, and another 30 marks for one’s health. If you are not satisfied with this combination, or that you would like to make use of some of your resources to do something, you should keep cool and do some careful planning first before taking any further actions. Otherwise, you will end up in a position whereby it would be “too late to regret”.

Case 1

One of my Root Gurus, Ven. Guru Lau Yui-che (alias Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan), had used a regrettable incident,

which he had personally witnessed, as training materials to illustrate the above-mentioned points. The Dharma practices of “Vajrayana”, if used properly, can be an express shortcut for success. Conversely, if one’s mind is full of “greed, hatred and ignorance”, and always think of “only getting advantages without giving in return”, it would most probably lead to a sad ending.

The case in point happened in the city of Shanghai. There was a Tibetan lama (“Guru”) who had been very effective in the practice of the yidam Kurukulli. He was very fond of one of his disciples, who had been very diligent in his Dharma practices, and he would accede to the requests of this disciple. However, this Tibetan lama had held up the practice for Kurukulli, and had never transmitted it to anybody. Many of his disciples thought that the “Guru” was rather selfish and would only keep the most effective Dharma practices to himself.



Kurukulli

Finally, one day his most favorite disciple came to him and cried for help because his family was ruined due to its bankruptcy. He begged his “Guru” to transmit the practice method of Kurukulli to

him in order that he could get over this economic crisis. He had made many great aspirations, and promised that he would practice even more diligently, and would further help his “Guru” in the spreading of Buddhism in China.

The “Guru” had eventually yielded to the repeated request and begging by this beloved disciple, and so agreed to give him this special transmission. His disciple, after practicing this special practice for a rather short period of time, was able to pay off all his debts. It was just too quick and effective, and that the target was too easy to achieve. This effect had resulted in his giving rise to an unprecedented greed. After practicing for a further period of time, he asked for more and was, indeed, landed with an unexpected amount of money. He gave himself numerous reasons for having to wish for more wealth, as he would not want “to lose this good opportunity”. He continued to practice for a further short period, and again he was able to make another fortune. Unfortunately, he suddenly passed away on the same day he made his last fortune.



The “Guru”, having lost his most dear disciple, was extremely sad and felt guilty and regret for his own actions. He understood that this outcome was due to his **mistaken assessments on the “weaknesses of human beings”, “karma” and the “Combination of Destiny”** that had played out in the ending of his disciple’s life. Because of this incident, he had practiced confessions for the rest of his life, because he knew that it was his responsibility for this sad ending.

Where Did the Money Come From?

Where did the money come from? Did it come down from the yidam Kurukulli? Or, is it really possible to “get the rewards without having to pay for anything”? If that is the case, then all the people in this world would not need to work, but only to practice the yidam Kurukulli. If one dies suddenly, would anyone be willing to cease practicing this “wealth-creation” method, and instead spend some time to collect the corpse of the dead person?

There is no such thing in this world of “getting the rewards without having to work for them”, but there is only this “Law of Cause and Effect”. **No matter to whom you make your wishes, no matter what Dharma practices that you are doing, no matter for whom you make the wishes and for what reasons, you must, and have to, remember that you are now only crediting and over-drawing your “merits” in advance. In other words, you are now asking for a re-arrangement of your own “Combination of Destiny”.** Everything that you have asked for would not “fall from the sky” and are not “cheap items”, but they are instead coming from your own “limited resources”. The deities to whom you make your wishes, as well as the Dharma practices that you are doing, are only some of the “enabling forces” in helping you to re-arrange for your own “Combination of Destiny”, and in no way are they the “main characters”. **You, and yourself alone, are the “main character” who is in total control of your own “Combination of Destiny”.**

If you just know simple arithmetic, you can do some calculations. If the above disciple had made a wrong move in investment by using up all his 30 marks for wealth and was at the verge of bankruptcy, what other resources could be at his disposal? There would be at most the 30 marks for his health, but how much of that will still remain is something that we do not know. It was quite possible that there would be only 10 marks left, and so it was very likely that he had exhausted this resource when he made his first request and did his first round of practice. By the time when he made the second request and did the practice, he was probably using his last 40 marks for his life span, which would probably not having much to

be left behind, and so this could be used up in no time. If he did survive, whose merits would he be using when he practiced and made his request for the third time? Would it be possible that he might be using the merits of his own “Guru”? Wise Gurus should have thought about the “intricacy of the web/network of karma”, and that there would be no escapes for anyone from the “Law of Cause and Effect”. **One would only be qualified to become someone’s “Guru” after having thought through this very clearly.** The last thing to do would be to put oneself in a position whereby it would be “too late to regret” because of “wrong assessments and calculations”.

History Repeating Itself Again

Case Two

Unfortunately, the tragedies in human history that would repeat themselves over and over again are all due to the self-uncontrollable “greediness” of human nature, the “stupidity” of ignoring historical lessons of the past, as well as the “hatred” for refusing to accept sincere advices of goodwill. There was one case that I had personally witnessed for myself.



1000-armed Avalokiteshvara



A few years ago, one foreign merchant who, while doing business on real estates, had encountered an economic downturn in his far away country. The properties that he had built were not selling out and he fell short of cash flow. At that time, he was very down, and was just like an injured general who lost his way, but would very much hope to re-organize his troops in order that they could forge ahead again. Unfortunately, as he did not have any tactics to tackle with the problem, and neither had he found the way out, and so he was very depressed. He used to be very stubborn and would have faith only on himself, and would not believe in any religions. However, he had now changed his mind and said that he would “believe in anything as long as it could help him out”.

It was rather strange that no matter who talked to him about the Buddhist teachings, he would not listen to them in the past. Now feeling depressed, his aura of arrogance, confidence and unreasonableness seemed to have vanished in the air. Then, all of a sudden, there was some kind of a “sudden awakening” in him, and he began to become receptive to the Buddhist teachings, and particularly to the enabling force of “Vajrayana Buddhism”.

Thus, he was determined to practice the yidam Kurukulli, even though he was told about the story of the Tibetan Lama and his dear disciple, as well as the simplified formula of the “Combination of Destiny”, and was fore-warned that there was no such a thing as “getting rewards without having to pay for them”. He was also informed that if he were to practice Kurukulli in order to get over with his difficult situation, **the price that he would have to pay would be hard to assess, because no one person could clearly and accurately know about one’s own “Combination of Destiny”**. Just a slight miscalculation might lead to a situation whereby it would be “too late to regret”, and death might come at anytime. He was so desperate to be able to get over with his present difficult situation that he said: “if I could succeed in selling out all the properties under construction, even if it means that I have to die, I am willing to do that.”

Despite knowing all the possible consequences, he was still very persistent on his wish. He had the good

opportunity of receiving the initiation, transmission and practice methods for the yidam Kurukulli from an “Authentic Guru”, who had repeatedly warned him that in order to receive more blessings, **he had to accumulate more merits and to do more good deeds so as to ensure that the rate for accumulating merits should be faster than that for exhausting merits. Otherwise, danger would come very quickly**. He agreed to all those conditions and had completely followed the instructions of his “Guru” in the initial stage.

Half a year later, he had met with an unexpected opportunity which enabled him to sell all the properties on hand. His aura of arrogance, self-confidence and unreasonableness gradually re-emerged again. By this time, **the warnings by his “Guru” have now become “unnecessary troubles” to him**.



Red Tara

Unexpected Attacks

In fact, his wishes at that time were not only to sell out the properties on hand so as to get out from his distressful situation. As he had two other pieces of land not yet developed, he would like to ride on his present success and to build more properties so that he could make even bigger fortunes. His latest reasoning was: instead of believing in some intangible practices, it would be better to

rely upon one’s own ability. Since he had already got over with the difficult times, his previous promises to his “Guru” did not seem to matter any longer.

He, therefore, further built properties in the smaller piece of land and sold them. With the money gained from these properties, and together with those from the previous occasion, he totally invested all his resources into the larger piece of land. Unfortunately, before he could make a fortune from his new investment of this time, he had another unexpected attack which tied up all his resources. However, what really got him down this time was another **major attack of his life, which was already approaching gradually without his knowing it**.

Suddenly, he was found losing massive amount of blood in his excretions and had to be admitted into hospital for treatments. Physically, he had never been so weak



and frail that he seemed to be at the doorstep of death. Emotionally, he was down to the polar end of depression. He struggled hard for continued survival and yet felt extremely depressed for the outcome. He had several head-to-toe physical check-ups within half a year, before he could eventually find out the cause of his bleeding. For some unknown reasons, he had suffered from a very rare disease which caused ulcerations in his intestines, thus resulting in the seeping of blood. This kind of disease would normally incubate for more than one year, and the symptoms were constant diarrhea. As the severity of the diarrhea increased progressively, more bleeding occurred in the intestines, and thus finally led to massive bleeding. With modern medicine, the present medical treatment was to “use poisonous medications to attack the ulcers” in his intestines so as to stop the bleeding. However, the bleeding could recur at anytime. This could be regarded as an “incurable disease” with an unknown cause.

What Are the Reasons Behind All These?

The merits for each individual are limited, and this is particularly so for one’s merits of the present life which is even more limited in scope. In order to re-adjust and re-arrange the presently limited “Combination of Destiny” without taking the risk of bringing harms to oneself, there are only two possible alternatives in doing so:

1. To accumulate large amount of merits: if one does not want to “use up all your reserves”, or to have “wealthy but unhealthy body”, one has to take the initiative to practice a great many good deeds with a sincerity of heart, in order to accumulate lots of merits. In this way, it will help to tremendously increase the “totality” of resources, which can only add up to 100 marks.

2. The “rate for exhausting merits” must be slower than the “rate for the accumulation of merits”: in other words, if the wishes that one makes will exhaust a large amount of merits in order to achieve them, and that if the wishes come true so quickly, then the phenomenon of over-drawing or advancing the merits of either this life or of future lives would take place.

If one advances the merits for this life, one would become easily sick and will have a short life. To use one’s own health and life span in order to exchange for one’s wealth is a meaningless deal, because even though it might be successful, one would not have the heart and mind to enjoy it. If one advances the merits from one’s “future lives”, one would most probably lose the chance of reincarnating as “human beings” again in future lifetimes. Due to both its foolishness and the lack of merits, it would

make a wrong move in its investment, resulting in the very likely possibility of reincarnating as some kind of foolish animals when one dies.

For the Case 1, the main character died because of the facts that he did not have adequate merits but only boundless desires, while he was having too much success that came too quickly such that there was not enough time for him to accumulate the merits. As for the Case 2, although it took more time for him to succeed, the main character did not cherish the “critical period” that he had in order to accumulate large amount of merits. Upon his further success, not only did he not treasure both the success and the resources that “were not easy to come by”, in order to make use of them in accumulating more merits, but instead he became so much more greedy and asked for more in trying to satisfy his endless desires.

Because of the inadequacy of merits within his “Combination of Destiny”, he is gradually exhausting the resources for both his health and life span while in the process of accumulating more wealth. The constant seeping out of blood was already a sign for the “draining away of his merits”. The fact that he had an incurable disease reflects that he has already advanced his merits very substantially, and this would have adverse impacts upon the merits of his “future lives”.

One of the key points for the failures of the above-mentioned cases was the fact that the time for accumulation of merits was too short and not enough, while the rate for accumulation of merits was too slow. According to the teachings from numerous Buddhist scriptures and Tantras, the quickest ways to accumulate large amount of merits, in terms of the order of priority, are as follows: Priority one is to make many offerings to an “Authentic Guru” because he opens up your wisdom in the quickest and most direct way, and teaches you to practice “mental concentration”, “power of meditation” and the “teachings on liberation”. However, if you make offerings to a “fake guru”, it would quickly accumulate “demerits” and lead to your quick downfall. The second priority would



Brahmajyotis



be to help the spreading of Buddhism so as to thoroughly save the “wisdom lives” of others, and help to sow the seeds upon them for their future “liberations from the cycle of karmic existence (samsara)”. At the same time, it is also possible to open up one’s own “wisdom life” by having “lamp offerings” to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The **third priority** will be to save the lives of other people, to use medicines to help relieve their pains, to free the lives of other living creatures, and so on. **One would need to practice all these activities in large quantities in order for them to become effective.**

Criteria for the Transmission of the Holy Dharma

The above-mentioned cases have illustrated one important point and that is the reason why so many of the teachings of “Vajrayana Buddhism” have to be **kept highly confidential and must be strictly adhered to**. These teachings will only be transmitted to those disciples who are **most sincere, have strong faith and confidence in the Buddhist teachings, will strictly follow the instructions of their Guru, with self-cultivation and discipline, full of personal integrity, are able to control one’s own desires, with wisdom and compassion**, while those who do not have these qualities will be discarded.

Though there is the “Authentic Guru” who has all the proper lineages, with “realizations” and great compassion, and though the Dharma practices that has been transmitted are the most “correct and effective” ones, however if these practices were to be practiced by those “disciples who do not possess the above-mentioned characteristics”, there is always the danger that the “correct” Holy Dharma will still either be abused, or twisted, or distorted. Hence, **“the guidelines for transmitting the Dharma practices” must be strictly adhered to**, and this principle should not be disregarded due to one’s own family ties, or for friendship, or for wealth and power. Otherwise, one will feel regretful of one’s own decision at the end of the day.

The Wisdom in Saving Oneself

When people are in times of danger, most of them will believe in anything that might give them hopes of being saved, and will most readily agree to keep all the required promises. However, deep down inside, **they will only choose to believe in those things that will meet with their own “greed, hatred and ignorance”**. Just like the two main characters in the above two cases, **they only believed that the “Dharma practices” would bring them benefits, but they did not believe that these would bring harms to them if those “Dharma practices” were not handled properly.**



Maitreya

Hence, once they had succeeded in achieving their wishes, they would immediately break their “promises”. And so, the first thing that they would do was to further indulge themselves in their own desires, and tried to get more in return. They do not believe that what they

were doing at that time were, in fact, advancing their own merits. They always thought that they **“should not miss this golden opportunity”, or that “there was no harm in giving it a try of asking for more”, or that “if one does not take good care of oneself, one would be punished”**.

It was likely that even up to the day when they die, they still do not understand the simple truth that: **“the source that brought them the blessings was, indeed, the same source for their future misfortunes”; that “they would get hurt during their endless pursuits for their countless desires”; and that “if they only think of themselves, they would be punished”**.

If they are willing to believe that: **each individual will only had limited resources for this very life, that these resources were so much interconnected that only a slight adjustment to one of the elements would affect the whole combination, and that there is no exceptions to anyone**, then they would not do “all the things that would lead to their doom”. Hence, the true wisdom is that: **“we would be happy if we are content and not wanting for more”; that “we should not be greedy in asking for more resources which are limited”; and that “things can turn sour if going to extremes, and so we should cease asking for more when we already have reaped some gains”.....**

(to be continued)



Milarepa



Tilopa

The Essence of Teachings: Emptiness -- Neither Existence Nor Voidness (1)

By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye
Transcribed by To Sau-chu and Byron
K.K. Yiu
(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

General Introduction

It was more than 2,550 years ago that the Indian Prince Siddhartha tried to find out about the mysteries of the universe and of human existence. Thus, he tried out many different kinds of teachings that were existed in the noble land of India at that time. Unfortunately, he came to realize that all the teachings that he had practiced did not really led him through to the ultimate realization of the mysteries of the universe and of human existence. With all that, he came to the place called Bodhgaya and sat under the “Bodhi Tree” in what is now known as the “Vajra Seat”. There, he practiced again for 49 days, and it was at the break of dawn that he finally came to realize the mysteries of the universe and of human existence. Thereupon, he became fully enlightened and was thus known as the Lord Buddha – the fully enlightened being!

After his enlightenment, the Lord Buddha was hesitant to give any teachings, because of the simple fact that what he had realized was so profound and sophisticated that he thought that no body in this world would be able to understand and comprehend what he has to offer them. So, he hesitated for quite a while as to whether he wanted to teach them or not. It was only after quite sometime that the Lord Buddha finally decided to teach those who would want to know about the mysteries of the universe and of human existence as he did. With this noble intention to help others by showing them the way or path to enlightenment, the Lord Buddha preached his sermons for 49 years, until he entered into Mahaparinirvana at the age of 84 (while some would say that it was at the age of 80).

So, his teachings are now generally known as the Buddhist teachings, or the “Dharma” in Sanskrit. At this point, the reason why we want to introduce the Buddhist teachings is the simple fact that the Lord Buddha has shown us the way that we, as human beings, will be able to liberate ourselves from the “cycle of karmic existence”, which is called “Samsara” in Sanskrit, and to liberate other sentient beings as well.

The Differences Between Superstition and Truth

Before we will go into the details of what the Buddhist teachings are, there is often a big misunderstanding on Buddhism among modern man, which we will need to clarify first. Many people nowadays believe that the Buddhist teachings, as religious doctrines, are superstitious in nature and cannot stand up against scientific scrutiny, and thus they could not show the “truth”

or “reality” of the world. Now, whether this is true or not is something that I will try to explain in this session, in order to give you a better understanding that, in fact, this is a very big misinterpretation about Buddhism. **Buddhism is not a superstition at all, but, in fact, it is a truth in itself.** So, to what extent can this be proven to be so? Here, first of all, I will try to delineate some basic understanding of what are the fundamental differences between superstition and truth.

When we try to talk about superstition, we usually think that there is some kind of a faith in a certain belief system. However, this kind of faith or belief is false in the sense that somehow it cannot be proven to be true. Thus, the **first definition for superstition** is that when one puts in one’s total trust in this kind of faith or belief, one will be totally lost in it. In other words, you really don’t understand the reason why you believe in it, but you simply do so without questioning. This is because there is no knowledge, and no realization, of the truth behind this faith or belief, and simply because of the fact that you believe in this purely by blind faith, and that is why we call this a superstition.

On the other hand, truth usually can be represented by facts, which can in turn be proven to exist. It is in this sense that truth can stand up in terms of scientific scrutiny, and can also be proven to be the “true reality” of all things. Hence, the first definition of truth is that one can come to know and realize the very “truth” or “reality” behind a certain faith or belief. That is the **“true existence” of all things in this universe**, and is what we usually called as the **“reality” of the universe**. In this respect, with the actual understanding of the knowledge, and then the realization, of this truth, then we can call this as a probable faith of solid grounding, and not just purely by blind faith of some sort.

Next, the **second definition of superstition** is that the belief itself is not the truth at all. In other words, that it cannot stand up to scientific scrutiny and that there is not enough proof to its very existence. To such an extent, this belief is, or can be, considered as superstitious as there is no ground for its true existence.

On the other hand, the definition for truth is that it is real which can be proven to exist. In the case of the Buddhist teachings, the Lord Buddha himself has taught that there are the “ultimate truth” and the “relative truth”.

By definition, the **“ultimate truth” is that which is intrinsically true**

and universal in nature; whereas that which we call as “relative truth” maybe true only in certain specific space-time settings, and thus it is not intrinsically true and universal in nature. In other words, the “relative truth” is only true relatively speaking, and is in accordance with our own specific concepts of space and time. Hence, there is this kind of differentiation between the “absolute” standard as compared to the “relative” standard of what is considered to be the “truth”.

We human beings have very limited capabilities, in terms of our thinking patterns, thinking styles, our knowledge and wisdom. So, all the human constructs in this world are mainly coming from our own mental capacities, in terms of concepts, which are relative in nature. So, for example, when we say that someone is fat, we will have to make a judgment of another person to be thin in order to make the comparison as such. Similarly, if we define someone to be a tall person, we will then have to define another person to be a short person, in order to distinguish their difference as such. Hence, all these human constructs of concepts, and their resulting human thinking processes, exist only in their relative terms. They are neither absolute, nor ultimate, in nature when compared with the “truth”.

Let us now look at the **third definition of superstition**, that is, this belief is not a path that can lead us to genuine and thorough liberation of our human existence. Some belief systems or religions, for example, believe that if someone can do good in this very life, and if he/she can go into heaven after one’s death, then one can be sure to have ultimate salvation as a result. Conversely, if one cannot go to heaven after death, then there will be eternal damnation to hell. To many of these belief systems or religions, this belief is considered to be the truth.

However, this is not so according to the Buddhist teachings. The reason is simply because of the fact that heaven is only one of the realms in this “cycle of karmic existence” in the whole universe. Hence, this belief in the ultimate salvation in heaven is in itself not the ultimate path for one to gain genuine and thorough liberation from this cycle of karmic existence (“Samsara”), according to the Buddhist perspective. To such an extent, this kind of a belief is thus considered to be a superstition. On the other hand, Buddhism can actually reveal the path in helping us to gain a genuine and thorough liberation from this cyclic existence, and thus can ultimately lead us towards the truth of ultimate salvation (known as “Nirvana” in Sanskrit).

Now, the **fourth definition of superstition** is that the belief has no verification, and even if it does have verification, it is only partial in nature. So, for example, in human history, a lot of religions believed that the earth was flat and square in shape, and that the earth was the center of the universe. This had, indeed, been taught by churches in the West for a long time, which dated back to the Medieval times. Then it was only later that scientific discoveries have found out that, in fact, the earth is round, and that the earth is only revolving around the sun, which is the centre of the Galaxy (or the Milky Way). All of these beliefs, used to be thought of as truths, have now been found to be not true at all after careful scientific scrutiny. Hence, they just cannot stand up to scientific scrutiny, and so they either have no verification at all, or else some of their verifications are only partial in nature.

On the other hand, the truths that are represented in the Buddhist

teachings have plenty of verifications. Furthermore, at least most of the Buddhist teachings can stand up against scientific scrutiny, if not all at this present moment. In fact, a lot of times, even what science cannot explain at this point in time have already been shown to be true by the Buddhist teachings all along. Hence, to this extent, this proof of verification is itself a stronghold of what truth can be revealed to us by the Buddhist teachings.

Finally, the **fifth definition of superstition** is that the belief has a lot of flaws that can be disputed. The example that we have just mentioned about the earth as being flat and square in shape, and as being the center of the universe was a flaw that could not stand up against scientific scrutiny. Similarly, the argument that the existence of a creator God is still subject to scientific debates, and it is still a controversy in many ways.

Whereas there was no such kind of shortcoming for being attacked, as in the case of the Buddhist path and its teachings. In other words, the Buddhist teachings are so encompassing and perfect from all aspects and from all standpoints, that they cannot be refuted or disputed, even from the scientific point of view. To that extent, we believe that the Lord Buddha himself has tried to reveal to us the truth of the universe and of human existence by what he had realized for himself more than 2,550 years ago. In fact, he had just told us of his realizations about the truth of human existence and of the universe.

After getting some general clarifications, we can now clearly differentiate the differences between superstition and truth, and thus set the scene upon which we can now turn to the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

View of the Cosmology: Infinite Uni- (or Multi-) verses

Now, first of all, let us have a look at the view of the universe. How would a Buddhist talk about his/her view of the universe, as compared to that of a scientist? According to the Buddhist teachings of the Dharma, the quantity of the universe is infinite, countless and boundless. In other words, we just cannot count the numbers of universes that exist out there. We just cannot count them! In one of the sastras, entitled the “Discourse on Faith in the Mahayana”, by the Bodhisattva Asvaghosa, it mentions “boundless space, boundless world and countless sentient beings”. Indeed, this is the idea on the quantity of the universes that the Buddhist Dharma has taught us.

Then, how will science look at the quantity of the universe? Some scientists believe that there is only one single universe that ever existed, while there are other scientists who believe that there are multiple universes that have existed. In other words, some scientists do believe that there are multi-universes; and among these scientists, only a very few would believe that there are infinite universes that have existed. Among these very few, there was a French mathematician, a physicist and a religious philosopher called Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) in the 17th Century who said that: “the universe basically is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, while its circumference is nowhere to be found”. So it is with such kind of condition that Pascal would believe that this so-called universe is really infinite in nature... (To be continued)



EPILOGUE

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

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

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