

The Ultimate Nature of Reality with Geshe Tenzin Zopa

Retreat on the Vajra Cutter Sutra

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Introductory Session – 15/03/2024

This is the first session of this two days of retreat on the essence of the Dharma: the wisdom of emptiness, the wisdom realizing or the wisdom understanding the ultimate nature of all phenomena, of the self and all phenomena. A retreat to go back to our true nature, our true being, which is the wisdom being, which is the Buddha being, the Buddha, the pre-existent Buddha. Both the ultimate aspect, as well as the conventional aspect, through the tools of the altruistic path and altruistic conducive conditions, the altruistic path of wisdom, through learning what is the ultimate nature of self and phenomena.

Then, through logical, practical, experiential experiences based on analytical observation, you start to at least have a taste of the conceptual understanding or conceptual realization of the true nature of self and phenomena. And on the basis of that, a deeper level of contemplation, a deeper level of exercising, a deeper level of mind, both our perceptions and our mind, to be able to know that ultimate nature directly, by the non-conceptual quality of mind, which is also can be understood as the meditative state of mind, together with conducive altruistic conditions, obtained by gathering as much as possible meritorious virtues, by cultivating, by observing the method aspect of altruistic practice, through your body, speech, and mind engaging with nature, engaging with living existence, in living sentient beings and entire living existence, through the cultivation of love, compassion, Bodhicitta, and the practice of the 6 paramitas, such as practice of generosity, practice of morality, practice of patience, joyous effort, concentration.

Then, gathering merits of wisdom, by engaging in discourses on wisdom treatise, such as the Diamond Cutter Sutra, through reading, listening, being in the environment of discussions on the discourse, receiving the blessing of transmissions, such as oral transmissions, transmissions of the blessings, the positive energy. By individually, like myself, yourself, living on the path in the practice of Diamond Cutter Sutra, whether by doing once a while recitation, or even just by hearing the name “Diamond Cutter Sutra”, or hearing the name “emptiness”, or Dharma.

Then, there is also a practice of writing down the Diamond Cutter Sutra, copying, best with golden ink, silver ink, then otherwise any kind of ink, writing down, then memorizing the Sutra, whether you understand or not, just simply repeating the recitations. Then, generating faith towards the Sutra, and towards the teachings, towards the contents, the meaning, the emptiness. Then venerating the Diamond Cutter Sutra, even just one letter, no question about the whole text, and that content, you place it on your crown, or you place it on a respected place, like an altar.

Then, making 7 Limb practices, such as making offerings, making the 8 offerings: the first water as a symbolism of drinking the nectar, then, the second water serves to purify. When you offer these 7 offerings or 8 offerings to Buddha, the first one is the moment you meet the Buddha. That is why you offer a welcome drink. The second one allow the Buddha to settle, in many cases even before entering the actual hall where you are going to host the Buddha, to wash Buddha’s feet, the enlightened being’s feet. Then you offer flowers, incense, light, perfume, food and music. In a similar way, you can offer these 8 offerings to the Diamond Cutter Sutra. It can be just one letter. The offerings emphasize the merits.

It represents an unbelievable accumulation of merits, because every single letter contains the essence of the Dharma: the emptiness which has the power to cause us to purify the root cause of Samsara, the root cause of all the suffering, the ignorance. Even one letter has the power to gather the conducive conditions to realize the direct antidote, which is the only antidote that has the ability to overcome that ignorance. No

other Dharma, no other practice, has the ability to overcome the ignorance, the root cause of Samsara, except the wisdom realizing ultimate nature, the emptiness.

So then, gathering the merit of wisdom, by making 8 Offerings, the eight Royal Offerings, such as Precious Horse, Precious Elephant, Precious Queen, Precious King, you know etc... at a conventional level is performed to honor their preciousness. You make the offerings either in visualization or to paintings of the object of veneration, statues, etc... It can be just a single water ball offering or many water ball offering on the altar, many light offering, many flowers offering. Then the offering of your own body, speech and mind, in veneration or in the service of The Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Diamond Cutter Sutra has many embodiments. The Dharmakaya, the body of the Buddha, is the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The embodiment of the omniscient wisdom is another embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra. Buddha's Sambhogakaya is the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra. Buddha's Nirmanakaya, the Vajra body, is the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra, etc. The wisdom realizing emptiness of all the past, present, future Buddhas, Arhats, Aryas's beings and the Gurus, is the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra. Even oneself, in future time, because of collecting all these merits, and the path towards realizing the wisdom emptiness; that resultant wisdom is the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra. Therefore, you offer your body, in the service of actualizing all this resultant benefit of Diamond Cutter Sutra, which is the wisdom body of your future Buddha, by venerating the causal stage of Diamond Cutter Sutra, and the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra; by venerating the 3 Vajra bodies of the Buddhas, the Arhats and Aryas Bodhisattvas, the wisdom realizing emptiness, as well as all the wisdom that manifests into the letters, into scriptures like the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Then venerating the Prajnaparamita, this one specific deity which is also embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra. That deity which exemplifies the Heart Sutra. The powerful mantra of the Heart Sutra, TADYATHĀ GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE BODHI SVĀHĀ, as well as the syllable "A" are other embodiment of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The 25,000, verses of the Wisdom Sutra are the embodiment of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The 8,000 verses of the Wisdom Sutra are the embodiment of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The 100,000 verses of the Wisdom Sutra also embody the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

There are so many teachings that Buddha taught throughout his life. The lineage can be traced for infinite eons of lifetimes throughout the past Buddhas; and even before, through the historical four Buddhas, the Buddha of the previous fortunate era, the Buddha of the light. They are numberless Buddhas who existed in the past during countless eons of time. Their wisdom realizing ultimate nature is the embodiment of Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Therefore, physically, you can venerate, making prostrations, holding it on your crown, treasuring, keeping the Sutra with you, or keeping the Sutra in your homes. Then, offer your speech to actualize the benefit of generation of merits through recitations, memorization. Then, mentally, you try to understand the teaching, contemplate, meditate on it. You can also engage in purification practice taking Diamond Cutter Sutra as an object of reliance, the object of antidote for the 4 opponent powers to purify any form of negativity. If you have the Sutra, or the Prajnaparamita deity, you can take them as object of a powerful reliance. Then, whatever negativity that you wish to purify, you actualize the second opponent power, the power of regret, which is the powerful acknowledging of the negative as a negative. Then thirdly, you do prostration to the Diamond Cutter Sutra, try to recite the Diamond Cutter Sutra, try to understand the Diamond Cutter Sutra, try to write the Diamond Cutter Sutra, or try to have many texts and you honor them. Then, in the presence of the Diamond Cutter Sutra, you make a commitment: never to commit again such negative karma in future times. It is one of the very powerful practices to purify our karma.

Therefore, this retreat is for us a way to gather extensive merits of methods and merits of wisdom, through all these different ways mentioned before. Then rejoice to study Diamond Cutter Sutra, to engage in any form of those practices, rejoice in your own extensive merits because you met the Diamond Cutter Sutra. It is not easy. It is not easy to have interest, to learn Diamond Cutter Sutra. First, just to hear the name is

extremely, extremely rare. Therefore, to find a place to study, to read, is even rarer, compared to any other precious thing that exists in the world.

And then even when you have the text, on top of that to have the interest to want to learn from it, it is so rare. You may have the text and you put on the altar and that is it. You know, just forgotten. You may be reading many other texts but not Diamond Cutter Sutra. You may be doing many other sadhanas, but not Diamond Cutter Sutra. It happens because it requires unbelievable merits.

Then, even when you get to study, to understand it is unbelievably difficult. It is so hard to understand. In fact, the entire 84,000 teachings that Buddha revealed while turning the wheels of Dharma, are all preliminary teachings, or conditional teachings to make us understand Diamond Cutter Sutra. All different form of accumulations of merits serves as a preliminary practice. There are so many practices, so many Yogas, in Sutra and Tantra, to make us realize or make us understand Diamond Cutter Sutra. It is not easy. It is so hard. I am surprised that here we are more than a dozen of people. I would have expected nobody.

If we do some other course, there would be much more interest. It is not easy with Diamond Cutter Sutra. Because of being very precious, it requires tremendous merits. Therefore, you must acknowledge it and rejoice. Then after you get the exposure, there are many different wisdom sutras, so try to explore more, try to expand your learning. And then, there you start to enjoy the benefit. By rejoicing, you accumulate so many merits so easily, so rejoice on the others practicing too. Then you make a supplication for these rare teachings and Sutras on the wisdom of emptiness, especially the Diamond Cutter Sutra, to remain long time, to remain until all sentient beings are liberated. Because without them, there is no antidote to overcome the root cause of Samsara. So may all sentient beings be free from suffering.

Then, there is the practice of the 7 Limbs practice: requesting those individuals who practice Diamond Cutter Sutra to live a long life, to have all the conducive conditions to practice. For those Gurus, those teachers who reveal the teaching on Diamond Cutter Sutra to always have conducive conditions to do so. And then you dedicate the merits in emptiness, with the 3 spheres of emptiness: the practitioner, the merits you accumulate, the purpose of actualizing those merits, all to be understood in the lack of inherent existence.

So, all these are ways to accumulate a great number of conducive conditions: the merits of method and the merits of wisdom, for those who have not actualized the path yet to quickly actualize the path, for those who are already in the path to progress on the path swiftly and actualize the state of full enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

When you make offerings during your time here, or those of you online wherever you are, when you go out and you see flowers, trees, basically everything, offer it to the Dharmakaya, the Buddha's holy body. Then since you have a text, you remember the text and you are making offering to it. You can visualize that during these 2 days of retreat.

Hopefully during those 2 days, we will be able to go through it, word by word, with a brief illustration of its meaning. I think it will be very meaningful. And that itself (I think is one of the meanings of being in this retreat) will consecrate, your own body, speech and mind while you are here.

Then during the break, you can do some analytical meditation on emptiness. Basically, the meditations are divided into 2 types. One is the analytical meditation, and the other one is the absorption meditation. The teachings emphasize the analytical meditation on emptiness to do it as a dream-like, illusion-like meditation on emptiness. So, whenever your consciousness or whenever your perception communicates with its object, for example the eye consciousness perceiving physical objects, the ear consciousness hearing sounds, the taste consciousness tasting food, drink, etc. Then any feelings, any thoughts that come in our mind, virtuous, non-virtuous, neutral states of mind... With the help of mindfulness and introspection we interpret the entire communication between our mind and its object as an Illusion-like or dream-like, as expressed in Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Exercising our mind to learn and to understand its ultimate reality by overcoming the false perception, by overcoming the hallucination, or by overcoming the dualistic mind, that alone is a contemplation on Diamond Cutter Sutra. You are already receiving the benefit of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. You are receiving the benefit of emptiness each time you do that. It brings down the strength of ignorance, of the false view, and its reaction, which are the delusions. It brings the impact of reducing the power of the delusions in our continuum, and at the same time, it brings protection from committing any form of the karmic imprints left by ignorance.

There is only one way out to get rid of the ignorance. It is by habituating our mind in wisdom, habituating our mind with the opposite, complete contradictory. The mind that understands its activities or its action in relation to its object. Up to now, whenever our mind, whether with the primary mind or the sensory mind, perceives its object, it perceives it in a dualistic way. It perceives in inherent existence. It perceives in the manner of true existing and true existent phenomena.

So therefore, in Buddhist philosophy, the statement is the ordinary beings, the entire ordinary beings' minds are false mind: the moment the perception relates to its object, it does not perceive the truth. It perceives falsely. It perceives in a false way, and that false way is perceiving dualistically, or perceiving falsely an inherent nature, or a substantial nature of the phenomena, of the object. So, whenever we open our eyes, when we see any physical form, we do not see the truth, we see a false object, even though the object is not false. And what is that false object? The substantial existent object or true existent object.

But is there any true existent object out there? No, there is no true existent object out there. But because of this subject being false, you actualize a false object. Therefore, the moment you start correcting the subject, meaning the mind, and design it to see correctly what you perceive, you will perceive correctly the object. You will perceive the truth. So, it is not about going out there to fix something in the object. It is very much about fixing within ourselves, within our mind, our perception. And the way to fix that is to bring the wisdom way, to educate our mind to perceive the wisdom way, through education, to be able to perceive correctly. Through education we manage to see the truth.

And the education is what the Diamond Cutter Sutra teaches: things exist but at the same time do not exist. Things exist, meaning exist interdependently, conditionally, in dependence on imputation of the mind. But do not exist at the same time: it means do not exist the way how ordinary beings, how our own ordinary perceptions perceive them. They do not exist that way. Or they do not exist substantially: they do not exist dualistically from the object site. And even the subject itself, the mind, also does not exist dualistically from the object site. The mind perceiving the ultimate nature of the mind itself, the wisdom realizing emptiness of the object, also sees lack of the dualist existence of that mind, of that wisdom. In reality, there is not even a single phenomenon that exists dualistically, that exists substantially or inherently.

So here comes the innate ignorance. As long as we do not realize emptiness, the innate ignorance is innately there, as long as our mind is there. And that innate ignorance came into existence the very first time we came into existence. And that is the whole reason why we experience Samsara for countless number of eons. Because of that innate ignorance, we experience all those problems due to delusions, like anger, attachment. It is obvious. Attachment brings so many troubles to us. Anger brings so many troubles to us. Ego brings so many troubles to us. It is obvious to notice that even with our ordinary mind. But how many troubles the innate ignorance actually brings in our life, we are very ignorant about it. So that is the main thing and that is why there are many Dharma teachings out there.

As mentioned before, among the 84.000 Dharma teachings out there, 99.9% of those Dharmas hardly touch, hardly address the innate ignorance, or the antidote to innate ignorance. The Diamond Cutter Sutra or the emptiness is the only teaching that directly addresses the innate ignorance. Otherwise, even when we talk about Bodhicitta, there is almost no relationship with the innate ignorance. Even when you talk about Tantra, in a similar way, you cannot see a direct relationship with the innate ignorance. It goes in a similar way with any form of Sutra.

The moment you emphasize about emptiness, even the moment you read one stanza of Diamond Cutter Sutra, you are directly addressing the root problem, which is the innate ignorance; and directly are presented the direct antidote to that innate ignorance. So, because of that, this is the essence of the Dharma. This is the most powerful, unbelievable, unbelievably essential Dharma, if we wish to actualize enlightenment.

So maybe we can do some preliminary prayers to create meritorious conducive conditions for us to have a meaningful retreat and receive the most beneficial impact of this meeting with the Diamond Cutter Sutra. We will start with the Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha. When you recite it, feel the presence of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Remember his kindness. During this period and the era of the 1,000 fortunate Buddhas, the fourth Buddha, the historical Shakyamuni Buddha, because of so many lifetimes repeatedly making immeasurable aspirations to descend or to perform his enlightened deeds in this southern world, make him possible to be able to reveal this teaching that all the past Buddhas have treasured.

No matter how secret it was, he has the courage to reveal it. There are many stories about Shakyamuni Buddha's descent. One of them explains that the 1,000 fortunate Buddhas had a meeting during the time of the five degenerated period, which is our time, since Buddha came 2,600 years ago, up to now and for some more 100 years coming time. Among all the Buddhas, they discussed who would go to show the path for the benefit of the sentient beings. All the other 99.9% of the Buddha's refused, even though all are enlightened, all carry Bodhicitta and are completely dedicated, their enlightenment is for the service of all sentient beings. But during this degenerated period, none of them agreed, because it is too hard to tame us. All that because of the 5 degenerated times, the degeneration of the period, the time itself, the degeneration of the persons, even the delusions compared to other time, have become more stubborn.

There are a great number of overwhelming distractions: distractions of excitement, distractions of laziness, dullness. Shakyamuni Buddha, during many eons of lifetimes, every life he was cultivating the bodhisattvas' path. He made the prayer that when even all the Buddhas would give up on the sentient beings, he would go and help them. "I will go and liberate them". So many lifetimes repeatedly accumulating the same aspiration. He made a connection with us. Then he chose to descend in the Nirmanakaya form of Gautama Buddha who was born as Siddhartha. And not only that, but it is also said that within the 1,000 fortunate Buddhas, only 3 or 2 Buddhas will reveal the complete aspect of the Dharma, Sutra and Tantra. So, from the 1,000 fortunate, the current Shakyamuni Buddha I think was the last one. Then the coming Buddha, Buddha Maitreya, will reveal it, some says like Lama Tsongkhapa in the 12 deeds. Otherwise, most of the Buddhas will reveal only partial teachings.

Then, in the world we know, there are so many religions that came into existence, unbelievably beneficial. All religion has its own great benefits. But only Shakyamuni Buddha revealed the teaching on emptiness. All different religions revealed teachings on altruism, altruistic attitude, great compassion, compassion, love etc... Some revealed a wisdom of selflessness of a person, but not of phenomena. Shakyamuni Buddha revealed the emptiness of all.

So, the great Lama Tsongkhapa has composed a Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha about him revealing the teaching on emptiness or teaching on dependent arising. That illustrates how Shakyamuni Buddha is the supreme teacher among all the teachers, because of revealing the teaching on Diamond Cutter Sutra. So, when we recite this prayer Salutation to Shakyamuni Buddha, for us it is good to reflect on that. To feel how fortunate we are, so thankful and feel an immense gratitude. And that also will create meritorious causes for us to make closer the karmic connection to us with Shakyamuni Buddha and his teaching. In that way, it helps us to get a greater benefit out of the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Then after that, we will recite the Heart Sutra. Heart Sutra is one of the wisdom Sutra, like Diamond Cutter Sutra. Again, reciting it helps to clear obstacles, seen and unseen obstacles, especially the karmic obscurations. Even in our mundane life, whatever inconvenience we can experience, traditionally, we recite the Heart Sutra to help ourselves and, to help others. So, we can dedicate that for yourself, for your family

members, to the world going through so many troubles. So, we can dedicate and reach out all the numberless sentient beings, all the humanity, through these practices.

After that, there is a prayer called Lion-Faced Dakini Prayer. That is especially helpful to overcome any kind of inconveniences that individuals experience due to others' wrong imputations, calling wrong names, curses and all. Even without acknowledging it sometimes, when we are in front of someone and that someone just did not like it, just did not like your present, and the person expressed that in her heart, or verbally, that also creates a karma. That creates a collective karma between that person and you. So, you also have that karmic share. It can be an obstacle to one's wish in life.

And, in many cases, due to past actions, people always find fault in you, and people fight with you. It also happens. Then there are a lot of negative words, negative thoughts. This also can be a huge obstacle, you know, to our mundane life and for our spiritual life. So, the Lion-Faced Dakini practice is regarded as very powerful to purify such kind of karma, especially, if we dedicate this practice for the world peace. There are so many conflicts happening, between countries, wars. People becoming so impatient. It is so easy to get into a fight. So, this is a protection for us. This practice helps us not to be part of such karma. And when you dedicate the practice for others, then, it can be a contribution to the world peace. So even one person doing that is wonderful, so how wonderful if more people do that. It would be a great contribution to the world like that.

So then after that. I will recite refuge and Bodhicitta. Some of you, may already have refuge practice. Then you can refresh them. Refuge serves as a basis to all the higher precepts. Based on the teachings, when you strengthen the refuge and refresh it, then there is a basis to refresh and strengthen the Bodhisattva precepts, and then the tantric precepts, broken Samayas, and individual liberation precepts and vows, like the monastic vows, even the 5 lay vows.

Then, Bodhicitta motivation. We set this motivation for the rest of our existence, particularly this year, this month, this week, this day, this particular session, to be most beneficial for the numberless sentient beings' temporary happiness up to the ultimate happiness of enlightenment. "For that purpose, I am going to engage into this retreat". So that way, even when you go to sleep, you do not think about anything. You are accumulating altruistic merits, and directly sharing the benefit of these merits with the rest of the numberless sentient beings. Because of the altruistic intention, even your sleep, or just simply walking around, basically just every single moment of your existence, becomes a beneficial cause and condition for numberless sentient beings' happiness. And that benefit lasts until the entire numberless sentient beings actualize full enlightenment. It really sounds like unbelievable, isn't it? But the fact is that I think Buddha has no reason to lie to us by saying that, isn't it?

And all the bodhisattvas have expressed that. Then, as a follower of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, we practice this. The initial way for us to engage in such practices is to have faith, to have the conviction in the teachings, in the advice, in the words of Shakyamuni Buddha and of Bodhisattvas like Shantideva. Bodhisattva Shantideva and Bodhisattva Nagarjuna emphasized the benefits of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings. Even in Diamond Cutter Sutra, there is a section of teachings about the profound aspect of the Dharma, which is the method aspect of the path.

So, the mind is the creator. In another way, the mind is the creator of all existence. You become like the mind architect. Instead of creating small, and drawing small architecture, from the very beginning, be a very ambitious mental architect to build the immeasurable mental ambitions, such as the altruistic way, the Bodhicitta way. Infuse everything you do with Bodhicitta.

Then, no need to worry about wasting our time. No worries. Immediately, you can have the impact if you sincerely express a Bodhicitta motivation. Your heart right there opens. Your heart becomes sort of spacious, as in the words of the teachings of Shantideva. Even if you wish to clear away just one person's headache, it accumulates immeasurable merits. It brings immeasurable causes of your own happiness. No

question of if you wish to work for the benefits of everlasting happiness of numberless sentient beings. Essentially, it means you wish to dedicate your time to alleviate numberless sentient beings from the entire ocean of suffering and its causes and abide them in the state of temporary happiness all the way up to the ultimate happiness of enlightenment. Then, Shantideva says no need to question about it.

How much merit we are going to accumulate. There are not just flowery words. It is not like brainwashing words. This is real. If you repeat a few times, then you can really feel, right here, like all the congestion that cracks, all the chains, all the tightness just releases. Like that, you see? And you come to have a sense of confidence that I am ready to die. If I were to die now, I have no regrets. I fulfilled my life. So full of meaning. When you express Bodhicitta from your heart, even if it is a creational one, can you imagine how amazing if it is a natural one. Even just a creational one gives you the best protection, the best confidence in the joyous aspect of your life.

The moment you express Bodhicitta, the entire worries just stop right there. Even the worry of the fear of death stops right there. Even the worry about when am I going to become Buddha also stops right there. There are many serious practitioners they worry so much. "When am I going to become Buddha? I am still not becoming a Buddha after practicing 40 years, 30 years, 20 years...even after meeting Diamond Cutter Sutra, still not becoming a Buddha. I already read it a hundred times, how is it possible?" All these worries will be completely stopped. And you literally arrive to the real taste, the real destination of the Enlightenment.

Why Bodhisattvas aspire to become Buddha? Why individual like yourself aspire to become Buddha? It is to be in the service of sentient beings, isn't it? And right here, your heart is completely shared with the rest of the numberless sentient beings. And what can be greater service than that, and after you become Buddha also that is the job. That is what you aspire to do and you already doing now. Isn't it? And so that is why, Bodhisattvas, the very rooted one, the Arya Bodhisattvas, whose Bodhicitta will never degenerate. They in fact, make prayers of aspirations to remain in Samsara. They do not aspire to become Buddha.

All those Bodhisattvas, they in fact, every day, pray, they aspire to be born in the lowest Hell Realms to benefit in the worst place, because they already gain the confidence of Bodhicitta. And the purpose is to really be in the service of sentient beings. And they do not see any difference. You know, why I need to wait to become a Buddha to benefit sentient beings, you see, that is all like that.

So, then after that I will recite 2 more prayers to create auspiciousness. I am an uncooked potato. But if I let people eat uncooked potato, you will surely get diarrhea. Therefore, either the uncooked potato must be cooked, or I must serve something else, that which can be eaten raw. So that is the reason we invoke the lineage of the teachings through Praise to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha to consecrate yourself. Then after that the second praise to invoke the lineage Gurus. Then, whatever understanding you will get, you will receive all the benefits you are supposed to receive by the power of the blessing that is channeled to you through the lineage Gurus, and the Buddhas. This is what I mean that the potato needs to be cooked, so you will not get diarrhea.

Then there is also the mandala offering. I mean all of you are here are senior practitioners, you may witness during the teachings the offering of the mandala. The base symbolizes the universe; then the 5 kinds of hips: the center one symbolizes Mount Meru. Then the 4 corners symbolize the four continents. Or, the central one is the Guru, then the front one is the Yidam, then the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, Protectors.

Then comes the offering of the statue. They represent the most precious holy body. The most precious holy speech is represented by the Dharma text. The most precious holy mind is represented by the stupa. To venerate or to show the preciousness of the Dharma, there is a short ceremony to present this to the person who is revealing the Dharma, by the individual who represents everyone who is requesting the teaching. So, that creates auspicious meritorious conditions for the Dharma to be effective in the sense that: firstly,

the Dharma is regarded as sacred. The Dharma knowledge in comparison to our conventional knowledge is sacred, it means very precious. So, you cannot simply reveal it, if there are no ripened meritorious conditions in the listener, and especially, the teaching on emptiness, because there is even a danger of misunderstanding. There is even an incident that happened during Buddha's time. Some individuals even instead of realizing the wisdom, they realized false view. They fall into Nihilism, into the nothingness.

So, all these ceremonies are to create auspiciousness. First to be able to obtain the Dharma, to receive the Dharma. When we go to Dharma discourses, you go to receive the Dharma, not other knowledge. Environmentally, from the teacher side and from the student side, to be able to perform the Dharma discourse, it is very sacred. It is not easy to happen. If you want to have a beer party, there is no need to offer mandala offering, Wine party? no need to offer mandala offering. But if you want to have a Dharma party, then all these things must happen. Otherwise. It is very difficult.

Even if the teacher reveals the Dharma, the student will not hear. Or even if the student is ready to hear the Dharma, the teacher will reveal it worldly: the teacher will reveal worldly methods, worldly examples, worldly wisdom, worldly knowledge. It happens. Then even if the Dharma discourse happens, that discourse is so hard to become a path. It just stays in your head, staying in our notes, in the notebook, in our memory but it never becomes a path. It never really becomes the wisdom or the method aspect of our spiritual practice. In many case the wisdom even boosts the ego. The method becomes a method to misuse the Dharma. There are many incidents like that.

This kind of practices also helps to create meritorious causes and conditions to have no obstacle on the path. First the teaching has to happen. Then the teaching has to become a path. Then, when you are engaging in the path until you succeed in getting the result, you should not encounter obstacles. There are so many individual practitioners in life, they encounter all sorts of obstacles. Some, they even meet the best Dharma, the best qualified teacher, but then, they are unable to sustain, they give up halfway. Many are like that. They start to find Samsara is more attractive. Many like that.

Some, they have obstacles of being unable to progress. They are stuck in their learning and their practice. They meet with the Buddha's teaching on meditation, practice on meditation. But somehow, they never progress or never reach to do a meditation on emptiness. They do meditation to just relax, like going to the spa, "spa like meditation". Some are totally spaced out. Many are like that. The initial motivation is not that they want to get liberated. They found meditation, and after that, they feel so good, wonderful. Breathe in, breathe out. That's it. They will stop for the rest of their life. It also happens like that.

Some, they even renounce, they become Sangha. They are also ready to give up. It also becomes like that. Some may even encounter the altruistic Dharma. They take the altruistic precepts. They even give up Bodhicitta, it happens. Some they meet the Tantra. They receive precepts. They even give up. Many obstacles can come. For some new people they find it very strange. There are a lot of things to do, but it is good to know what is happening.

Then, there are some: they meet with the path, and they have no obstacles, but still, it is very hard to get the most perfected result. Even, many Arhats - Arhats means who have already realized emptiness, already purified delusions, already gone free from Samsara – but then, during eons, they are stuck in Nirvana peace, completely spaced out there. And that from the altruistic Dharma point of view, that is also an obstacle. Even after achieving such a great spiritual capability, how can they possibly be spaced out, just happy with themselves and you do not want to think about anybody else. That is quite drastic, isn't it? That can be quite a disaster in one way.

So, that is why from the Mahayanist point of view, from the altruistic teaching point of view, Nirvana peace also is a negation, even though it is perfected Dharma. Nirvana is perfected Dharma; it is a great cessation. It is a great path. But that also, you know, in the category of negation, it must be purified. Until one achieves

the state of full enlightenment, which is the most perfected state of liberation, the obstacles still can come in our way, at any moment.

Time is over. Usually, the actual teaching starts after the prayers. So, for auspiciousness I will just give a brief explanation of the meaning of the mantra of the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

TADYATHĀ GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE BODHI SVĀHĀ

Tadyatha: can be understood as “Buddha's those who have gone beyond”. It is all the Buddhas of the past and the present.

Om: There are three letters that come together: OM HA HUNG

Om symbolizes the practitioners: the 3 bases of our body, speech and mind. It also symbolizes our resultants body, speech and mind, achieved through the practice of the path and the resultant Buddha's body, speech and mind. So, the syllable Om represents that.

Gate Gate: there is a first Gate, another Gate, then Paragate, then Paramasagate, Bodhi Soha.

It represents the 5 paths. The first is called the path of accumulation. The second is called the path of preparation. The path of accumulation is where the practitioner accomplishes the first countless eons of merits of the 3 countless eons of merits you need to achieve Buddhahood. When you actualize for the first time the spontaneous arising of Bodhicitta, you actualize the first moment of the path of accumulation. Then, the path of accumulation has 3 different stages. Once you achieved the path of accumulation, you have the ability to even manifest your body into about 100 different manifestations, and able to travel to different Buddha's Realms to receive teachings. Then, very much, you are directly tutored by many Buddhas. So very much, there is no room for individuals to accumulate negative karma. You only accumulate virtue, not only any kind of virtue, but the perfected virtue, the virtue of altruism. Due to that, within that first path, you are able to accumulate the first great countless eons of merits. Then, due to this reason, they are called the path of accumulation.

Then, the second gate is referring to the path of preparation. So why called path of preparation? There are different stages to perfect the path. The first level is called the heat, the second one is called the peak, like the mountain peak. Then the third one is called the patience. Then fourth one is called the supreme dharma. Within the path of preparation, individual practitioners mainly focus on the meditation on emptiness, with the conditional causes of huge number of merits, you have just accomplished during the path of merits. During the path of preparation, you are meditating on emptiness, and your practice conceptually prepares your mind to awaken in non-conceptual realization on emptiness. In another words, you are prepared to be able to perceive emptiness directly, free from conceptual obstacles. That is why it is called path of preparation.

Then third one: Paragate refers to the path of seeing. You see for the first time the ultimate reality without any fabrication by the conceptual mind. You are able to see ultimate reality directly and that wisdom, the wisdom of realizing emptiness, directly. The first moment of the path of seeing, the first moment of realizing emptiness directly and the first moment of becoming Arya Bodhisattva is simultaneous, at the same time.

Parasamgate: it is the path of meditation. Normally, like myself, you must have heard about the 5 paths and the 10 Bhumis. The 10 Bhumis are divided between the path of seeing and within the path of meditation. Between these 2 paths, the 10 Bhumis are actualized. These 2 periods of the path, path of seeing and path of meditation, are the Arya Bodhisattva path. So, Parasamgate refers to the path of meditation. Within the path of meditation, by the time you achieve the first moment of the 8th Bhumi, you purify all the delusional obscurations. All the delusions will be purified. So, if that individual is travelling directly through the Mahayanist path, then when you reach the first moment of the 8th Bhumi, you purified all the delusions.

Then from the 8th Bhumi onward, until the 10th Bhumi the main negation is the obstacle to omniscience, which is called the obstacle to knowledge, or it is also called obstacle to omniscience: obstacle to become Buddha. So, the moment the most subtle aspect of the obscuration to knowledge is purified, you become a Buddha.

Then Bodhi Soha: it refers to the path of no more learning, which is the state of Buddhahood.

Okay, thank you. Let's stop here and good night.

Guided meditation – 16/03/2024

Good morning. Good night. Some of them must be from Australia, I think.

Yesterday, I briefly guided through the preliminary aspect of the practices including how to set a motivation and how to relate to those prayers that we normally conduct before the teachings. So please, try to take these as a meditation, and guidance, not just chanting the words but take them as a meditational guide.

[Prayers]

For the recitation of the Snow-Lion-Faced Dakini mantra, if you are using a mala, you can roll out the beads outward. The rest of the other mantras, we count in like this, mainly for counting the number as well as visualization. And it signifies accumulating or receiving blessings in relation to the deity. But for the Lion-Faced Dakini mantra, which is more dedicated for dispelling the hindrances, when you count out, it represents a purification. So, you can visualize any form of hindrances. It is to dispel hindrances. It is not necessary to count one mantra equal one bead. You can roll out, maybe as quick as possible. Good.

Take a moment to reflect on the preciousness of our life which equipped with all the endowments and freedoms, to fulfill our spiritual aspirations, which is the central meaning of life, the reason of it, the spiritual benefit. It goes beyond this lifetime. Contrary to any form of worldly aspiration, which benefit is just within this one very lifetime. We are having the opportunities and freedoms to practice the altruistic Dharma, altruistic wisdom and altruistic attitude, like Bodhicitta, emptiness; then, complete path, complete Dharma, Sutra and Tantra, especially having all the conducive conditions and freedoms to observe the practice in very intense practice, in fully dedicated manner, and by observing those precepts, such as the individual liberation precepts, refuge precepts, lay vows precepts; then even for some, the ordination precepts; then Bodhisattva vows, Tantric vows.

To have the freedom to practice them even for one moment, and have the conducive conditions to practice them, the benefit is so immense, inexpressible, unimaginable. The benefits carry out even for future lifetime and the benefit also contributes to all the past lifetimes, even how great number of negativities we may have committed from beginningless lifetimes. And there were times when we even committed heinous crimes. There were times where uninterruptedly, eons of lifetimes, we remain in the lower realms and committed intense negative karma. Sometimes we may be born as an animal, that which only sustains in a living hunting other animals.

So even how heavy karma we have committed in the past, the spiritual meaning that we live in now has the power to purify all of them, even from the root, and secure our future lifetimes to abide in the higher rebirths, and even give the opportunity to actualize the state of full enlightenment within this very lifetime, in this very cushion like that. Whatever difficulty that may come in our way in our day-to-day life, whatever kind of history that you may have before today, in your life, everything becomes so minor. Nothing really needs to be concerned about. We are equipped with the perfect antidote now and as I mentioned before, even if we committed heinous crime in the past lifetime, we have the ability to purify it.

Then, in this life whatever history one may have, whatever negativity one may have performed, for sure we have not performed heinous crime. Those negativities are so easy to be purified. The antidote is within

us: the Dharma, that spiritual life. Therefore, we need to come to a point that we are not allowing ourselves to be overshadowed by those things that are bothering us in our day-to-day life, by any form of negative accumulations that happened in the past; rather one's awareness should be filled with a sense of gratitude, a sense of appreciation, a sense of rejoice.

That way, we can think how we are able to live our remaining life filled of happiness, to be able to really have the capability to live a peaceful and happy life. Even while we are still carrying these samsaric aggregates, we can still be so happy with the reasoning that there is not such point, not much benefit in expecting happiness from these samsaric aggregates, from any samsaric phenomena, in relation to our physical body, our senses, in relation to a material object... We in fact already have quite a lot of experiences of disappointment with samsaric objects. We tried all sort of sensual experiments to experience excitement, to experience happiness. We used our eye senses to always chase after beautiful objects. And the purpose is hoping that it will bring a lot of happiness. And most of us have seen almost everything, nothing much left, to see and it did not really fulfill our real aspiration to have a lasting happiness.

Then in relation to this body, the whole life, we try to serve this body, secure this body. In fact, we spent majority of our time to serve this body, this samsaric physical aggregate. So many years we dedicate at school. The ultimate goal is to get a good job. Isn't it? I think very much the school system is mainly to go and learn to do some job, where you can earn money to have a shelter for this body, to have good clothes for this body, to have good food to sustain this body, etc...But somehow, you know, the school education, the job that we do, nothing is really able to bring sustainable happiness.

So, we are still looking for happiness externally, looking for sustainable happiness in relation to samsaric phenomena. We should focus rather on actualizing sustainable happiness, fulfilling the actual meaning of life, which is taking the essence of the Dharma. And we are in that position. So, it is something we should feel very fortunate to have. Secondly, the reality of life, even the opportunity and the freedom we have for the Dharma, lies in the nature of impermanence. There are so many obstacles out there, so many distractions, and our mind is more habituated to distraction than concentration.

Then most of our past lifetimes, we have been habituating our minds with delusions. So, it is so easy for the conditions to ripen, to result in negative emotions. Therefore, the life itself lies in impermanence. There is no guarantee at all. Who will die first? The younger one or the older one? The sick or the healthy one? It is so obvious out there. So therefore, really, we should take the essence of the Dharma right now, at this very moment. This present time is the time that we can get in the Dharma, that I have time to practice Dharma. Isn't it?

Then, life does not end just within this circle of lifetime. Life continues. The living continues and it is a continuation of consciousness. There is no end to that continuation to be living here. There are 2 possibilities for that continuation to arise. The one is in samsaric existence, another one is in the state of liberation. Therefore, the journey right after this very life circle, only Dharma, nothing else, is able to assist us with its continuation, including the Bardo, including at the time of death, in the intermediate state, the future life. Only Dharma can help us, and that is so true. Therefore, I should make a firm conviction to dedicate my life only in practicing Dharma.

When we talk about only practicing Dharma, it does not mean that you have to give up your family responsibility and job responsibilities. It does not mean you have to dedicate your entire time in the cave or in the jungle. It is very much to have the wisdom and attitude to take every aspect of life onto the path: any sort of experiences, good or bad, suffering of happiness, negative emotion or positive emotions, day or night. Everything that you engage with your body, speech, mind is to be taken onto the path. It means

to be able to interpret either with an altruistic attitude, or with an altruistic wisdom, such as the practice of Tonglen, the practice of taking and giving.

Whenever good things come in one's way, if you translate that to the Tonglen practice, dedicating all that goodness for the well-being of the rest of the numberless sentient beings, that is what it means to translate into altruistic attitude, to translate that experience into Bodhicitta, and that is the Bodhisattva's way of life. This is how Bodhisattva live their life fulfilling altruistic meaning.

And if any bad things come in one's way, you take the opportunity to take the entire numberless sentient beings' misfortune onto that, you know, taking onto the self-grasping ignorant, and self-cherishing attitude. So that is what they mean; whatever experiences that come in one's way to interpret them as illusion alike, dreamlike; in another way, interpret them with the understanding of their impermanent nature, to overcome the permanent grasping, which is one of the hardest shields, hardest grasping in relation to the grasping ignorant.

The inherent grasping ignorant has many characteristics to make up that ignorant, like self-grasping ignorant, the self-grasping ignorant in relation to phenomena. There are many layers of its characteristics. And one of the hardest ones is the permanent grasping. So, whenever we relate to our experiences in our day-to-day life, try to be mindful to interpret or understand as the impermanent nature that is directly the antidote to crash, to smash the permanent grasping shield. And that already brings the impact of destroying the ignorant grasping. And that is what it means living on the path in altruistic wisdom.

Then there is a grasping of pure to the impure object: such as you know, this samsaric aggregate, this physical aggregate, and this samsaric environment, which is a product of your own samsaric mind. We have this grasping of pure, in the sense substantially pure. Not talking about the tantric practice of pure view, where you need to view the impure body as pure, this impure environment as pure. This is the deity Yoga. But here, when it is in relation to emptiness practice, it is not about that. We have this grasping of pure, pure in substantial existence from its own side. And that is the one that we need to purify.

The substantial purity, in existence is on the physical own side. Then because of having that ignorance, we have a grasping to hold onto it, unable to detach from the base of all identity such as the physical aggregate. And that ignorance serves as a basis for attachment. That also serves as a basis for aversion. That serves as a basis for ego. That serves as a basis for all the rest of the delusions like jealousy, etc. Then all the karmic accumulations are based on that ignorance. Therefore, understanding the impure as pure. For example, this physical corpse: conventionally, it has its impure existence. It impurely exists, even though it is lacking substantial pure existence on its own side.

Then thirdly, whatever experience comes in one's way, we must interpret them as selfless, free from existing from its own side, free from substantially existing or inherently existence.

Then there is also grasping to suffering as happiness, the pervasive compounded existence as pleasurable. Therefore, we have this discriminative awareness of certain things as beautiful, that you long for achieving them. In fact, those are samsaric products. The product of impure mind, false expectations, but we do not realize that.

About all the sensual pleasures: we have this expectation or grasping of joy, happiness. In reality, all the essential pleasures that we experience are in fact the suffering of change. And more than that, it is real samsara. It is real, the compounded suffering. So again, not realizing suffering as suffering. It contributes to the thickness of the ignorance. To the impure you grasp as pure. To the suffering, you grasp as happiness. To the selfless you grasp as self. To the impermanent you grasp as permanent.

In order to know the ultimate reality, even to the samsaric phenomena, or samsaric existence, we need to overcome these 4 different kinds of ignorance or different kinds of false views.

So, I think this morning also I did not really go where I had planned to go. When I came here, I thought to first immediately start with a breathing meditation. But it did not happen, now there is only 15 minutes left. So, I will continue to talk. You can do the meditation in your own free times, the 9 rounds of breathing meditation, which is beneficial to practice daily. This breathing exercise is very beneficial to calm our mind, to bring the stillness in our mind. And that will have an impact to actualize the clarity of our mind. It is very powerful and with quite an immediate effect, even to calm our overwhelming emotions, in particular, negative emotions or distractions.

So, the first 9 rounds of breathing meditation. You do not even have to be aware; you just simply breathe in and out, knowing that you are breathing in and out. But here the first one is very, very essential to immediately like with boiling water, to pour one bit of cold water, and calm down.

You can do that with the mudra which is introduced in the 6 yoga of Naropa practice. There is a place on the ring finger, the base here like that. You just place like this the thumb, then after that you make a fist like that. The first round of breathing, you scrub your laps with your fists, from the knee all the way up to the center of the chest here, which is the center of the heart chakra here. Then you push out like that quite in an intense way.

So of course, when you do that, the moment you place the fists on your knees there, you structure your sitting position, on a chair or crossed-legs, whichever way you are sitting.

Then you push back like this. So that will stretch your spine with determination. Then you put your arm like this. Then you pull the arm. Then you block your nostril (nail against the nostril).

Then you breathe in. When you breathe in, breathe as lengthy as possible that helps to activate the entire body system, entire nervous system, especially the subtle wind energy. That will impact your wind flow, the wind system, then that will impact your mind. Then you block the right nostril. Then breathe out lengthy. So then again, breathe in. Breathe out 3 times. Then you will conclude the first round of 3 of the 9 rounds of breathing. So, you conclude like this, you release your arms.

Then again, place onto your knees your fists for the second round, scrub, then the opposite arm. Again, breathe in, breathe out slowly. So here just to show you, so that later you can do it by yourself. Then once is done, then again release slowly, gradually, you release the fist like this, all the 5 fingers try to stretch as well. Then when you breathe in, and when you hold, as long as you are holding the breathing, then you breathe out, you release gradually along with the breathing. And you stretch as much as you can. Release the breathing. So, you do 3 times in out, in out, in out. So that is the first round.

You can do it anywhere, anytime, especially when experiencing some mental disturbances, when a sudden situation arises that brings stress to yourself. Then to calm your mind, you can do this meditation instead of getting disturbed, rather you can find a bit of quiet place: it can be under a tree, it can be at home, wherever at the office, in the corner...you can do it anywhere. So, this is regarded very beneficial.

So that is very much like preliminary meditation in order to do another round of breathing meditation, if you are doing a certain dedicated practice, like Shamata meditation. Then the concentration is one of the main elements that you need. Then for that, you get into another round of 9 rounds meditation. This time you place your single pointed mindfulness on the breathing: either on the rhythm of breathing or being aware of the breathing. You made a little sound like. So, are you aware of this sound?

So then try to stay fully concentrated on that first 9 rounds. Again, you can also do the same mudra, or you can do without.

Then the third step is to use these 9 rounds of breathing to purify different delusions like the 3 poisons, attachment, aversion, ignorance. So, the first 3 rounds you dedicate to purify attachment. Second 3 rounds, you dedicate to purify aversion. Third round, you dedicate to purify ignorance.

And you can also dedicate for any other emotion. So, it can be ego, it can be jealousy, or it can be different form of sicknesses, it can be different form of obstacles, like spirits harm, past karmic harm or cosmic energy harms, etc...

So, it is good to know the cause or the condition that is bringing that particular obstacle in your life, so that when you do the visualization during this meditation, it can be helpful to release what needs to be overcome. You can visualize from the wheel of life and the representation of the 3 poisons: for attachment, it is a phoenix bird, for aversion a snake, for ignorance, a pig. This drawing was done by Buddha himself. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, before the first turning of the wheel with the four noble truth, during the period of the 49 days resided in the jungle after achieving enlightenment, because no one wanted to listen to Dharma, so he went into a strict retreat. At that time, he already had in mind the idea of this teachings on the twelve links. Eventually, he himself did the drawing of the wheel of life. Later, after he engaged with the disciples, which is right after the first turning the wheel of Dharma, he was requested to teach to one of the princes of the king, so he sent it as a message, as a letter.

So, when you breathe in, it is also beneficial to know the antidote to different delusions. This is why we learn Dharma. It is to learn about the different characteristics of the delusions, karma, our problems, learn the antidote to that, the definitions, the characteristics of the antidote.

About attachment to the human body, in the Lam-Rim, you will find the meditation on the skeleton of the person, or the dead corpse of the person. etc. When you breathe in, you bring in the energy of the antidote. Then when you breathe out, you breathe out the attachment in the form of a phoenix, throwing it out from your system. There are like numberless small phoenix rushing out and you purify them beyond reachable, beyond return.

As for anger, then it is patience. Anger is more a heat element. You visualize the energy of anger in the form of heat. You can visualize something calmer, smoothing like a light, it could be like a blue or goldish light, completely wide and this warm light is more smoothing. But then understand that is the antidote to the anger. You breathe in, then it is transmitted to all your system of your past, present, emotions, the mind where are stored the karmic imprints and conditions. So, it is very much like you go and like collect them, you know. It is like a vacuum; you go and suck them like that. Then, when you breathe out, you breath out like a snake, a poisonous things coming out. Then you purify them beyond return.

Then ignorance and the wisdom realizing emptiness. Then when you breathe out it is with a form of a pig. The wisdom realizing emptiness of the self and phenomena act as a direct antidote to all the delusions. So, if you have some understanding on emptiness, then whatever light form or energy that you visualize breathing in, you understand it carries the wisdom realizing the ultimate truth. That is the most effective.

Then, different form of sickness: if it is a spirit harm, then you visualize it in the form of a black scorpion, a poisonous black scorpion. Then again, you use the antidote of emptiness, the wisdom of emptiness. You purify when you breathe out like a poisonous scorpion. Then if it is a harm of poisons, black magic, different negative substances, curse and charm, etc. Also, if the problem is due to the imbalance of the elements in your body due to Naga harm, like certain sickness as cancer, any part of physical sickness you are experiencing, then again, you can meditate on emptiness. When you breathe in, if you know the specific disease, and what are the specific medicine, especially if it is herbal medicine, natural medicine, you can visualize them.

Ultimately, the best is you visualize Medicine Buddha, Medicine Buddha arura plant, arura flower, arura medicine plant. You visualize them not like kind of tangible, like normal object, but in the nature of wisdom. You can visualize in the form of light but with the form, picture of the flower. And understand as a medicine, so in the form of pills, in a form of plant, you know, just absorbing into you. And fill the entire system...or Medicine Buddha's begging bowl filled with the immortal nectar, the medicine nectar, the medicine which has the ability to cure any form of disease. You visualize it overflowing from Medicine Buddha's begging bowl and entering in through your breathing visualized as a truck, or a threat, a pipe, the nectar follows the threat and there is a drip, the water goes there like that.

It goes into your whole system and not only to your whole body, but also reaches all your different aspect of mind, including the karmic imprints to purify them from the root, the cause of all these sicknesses. When you breathe out, in the form of blood and pus coming out, carried out, beyond return, together with its causes, karma and delusions. So, you can also visualize like that. Very helpful for the healing. Then, whatever you are experiencing problems or sicknesses due to past lifetimes karmic imprints, many past lifetimes or a combination of karmic imprints, then it can be a black shoot, dark smoke coming out and of course, the antidote is the wisdom of emptiness. You can also visualize Medicine Buddha and the thing that is purified in the form of black shoot.

So, this breathing meditation, can be used for that. Like stated in the teachings in Lama Chopa, which comes from the Mahayanist Sutra, in the Lam-Rim section, the Tonglen practice, you are using the tools of the breathing: when you breathe out, you send the benefits to all sentient being through the breathing. Then you breathe in, you take in all the misfortunes of others, on the self-grasping attitude. This applies in a similar way to the breathing meditation that I have just mentioned, all different practices like that.

So, then after that, you go into any form of dedicated meditation you wish to do, whether you want to do Shamata meditation, whether you want to do emptiness meditation. For this retreat, our focus is on emptiness. So now, after this, not only you know your mind is calm, but also you did the other 9 rounds of meditation to clear the obstacles of delusions and karma and diseases, which is so helpful.

Then now, you divide the main meditation on emptiness into two different kinds of sessions: one is the post meditation session, the other one is meditation session. The rest of the time of your activities throughout the day, and including at night, whatever activity: activities of any movement, activities of sleep, activities like eating, drinking, etc. Everything you categorize in the post meditation session. And during this post meditation session, you engage in analytical meditation on emptiness, which is dreamlike or illusion-alike, mirage-like, star-like.

At the end of the Diamond Cutter Sutra, there is a verse, that is the essence of Diamond Cutter Sutra. That verse is your teaching. If you understand that, you understood Diamond Cutter Sutra. Viewing all your experiences as dream-alike, as illusion-alike. It exists but does not exist. It exists interdependently but does not exist inherently, it does not exist substantially. Like a star, a flashlight. It is the wisdom of impermanence like a lightning, impermanent, to directly act as the antidote to the permanent grasping. But you see, in day-to-day life, when certain challenge comes in your way, instead of immediately making immediate judgment, make it huge, as if it was an unmanageable problem, normally when any problem comes, even this little headache comes, we have this first judgment that could be the biggest pain compared to all the pains that exist in the whole universe. This is our first judgment.

Let's say a car break down, the first judgment is, this is the worst thing that has ever happened in the whole universe. "I am going through the worst crisis compared to the whole universe" that is the first judgment. Certain sickness comes in your way, same thing, as if you are the only one going through a sickness, as if you were having an incurable sickness, that kind of fear, the kind of confusion arises, you see.

So rather immediately, apply the post meditation practice of analytical meditation and emptiness and start by seeing that obstacle in the nature of impermanence. It is momentarily arriving and by the nature of impermanence, it will go away, even you tie them, even you wish that this problem remains with you forever, it will not stay, it will go away. So, it is so helpful. This is like the best protection, before the doctor comes, before the car ranger comes, you already have your own inner protection that has already arrived.

Then, always give one moment of investigation or analysis before you make immediate judgment, whatever you see: "I see like this, but it is not necessarily that this exists the way how I receive it". The moment you give one moment of pause to analyze it, you are already not believing the ignorance, immediately you are being rebellious to your ignorance. Up to now, it is as if you are the most obedient, most dedicated servant to ignorance, and to the rest of the delusions like anger, attachment, you are one of the heart disciples, we have been the heart disciple to attachment, heart disciple to anger, and heart disciple to ignorance. The guru devotion to ignorance is like the best, intact.

We have been like that, you see. So, that is not beneficial. We need to be rebellious to ignorance. We have to be very bad student to ignorance, the worst student to ignorance, the worse student to attachment, and the initial start is during the post meditation. I already show the manner of not trusting the ignorance, not trusting the hallucination or superstitiousness. And the way to do that is making it a habit to analyze, making it a habit to help oneself, the things or event does not exist the way how it appears to you. That itself is a meditation on emptiness. And that is the way that eventually you will realize conceptual realization of emptiness. Then gradually that will lead to direct realizations on emptiness.

So, then they during the meditation, which is the absorption meditation, the central object of absorption meditation on emptiness is the emptiness of your mind: the emptiness of the wisdom realizing emptiness of self and phenomena. It is not the wisdom realizing emptiness of phenomena, not the wisdom realizing emptiness of person. The center, the ultimate object of absorption meditation, that is the final meditation, that is the most extended meditation object, that is the wisdom realizing the emptiness of the wisdom that is realizing emptiness of the phenomena and self.

So, in order to arrive there, first you need to do analytical meditation on realizing the emptiness of the self. The second step is realizing emptiness of phenomena started with the form aggregates and the rest of the phenomena. Then you have to come to our third position which is the wisdom realizing emptiness of the self and phenomena, also lacking inherent existence, through the process of similar process of analytical meditation.

When you do analytical meditation, there are 4 points to be noted. The first one is to know the object of negation: what you are trying to prove. You are trying to prove the false grasping and the false object of the grasping as a false. You know the object of ignorance is a false object. The object of inherent grasping is the false object. So, the self and the phenomena which is the object of the self-grasping attitude, self-grasping ignorant is false. Both subject and object are false. The purpose of analytical meditation is to discover the false as a false, both in the object and in the subject. Therefore, the first point is recognizing the negation, to recognize what has to be negated.

You are not going to negate legitimate existence of the self, the legitimate existence of the object of knowing. You are not going to negate legitimate wisdom, the legitimately existent wisdom or interdependently existing wisdom or interdependent existing object. You are going to negate the false subject which is the ignorance and the delusions, and the superstitious mind, the dualistic mind. You are going to negate the object that is established by the ignorance, which is perceived to be inherently existing object, the inherently or substantially existence of self and phenomena that has to be negated.

So, first, it is to learn what is the negation: the grasping inherent existence negation, grasping of substantial existence negation, grasping of true existence negation, grasping of dualistic existence negation, grasping of permanently existence negation, grasping of independent existence, grasping of autonomically existence negation. These are the negation presented by all Buddhist philosophical schools. All the negation presented by the first school, Vaibashika school, Sautantrika school, Cittamatra school, Madhyamaka Svatantrika school, Madhyamaka Prasangika school. All those negations are to be negated.

All those negations are to be learned first. What are they? What are their characteristics? And you need to disprove that on the object. You also need to disprove its false existent reality on the subject. That is the first thing. The way to disprove where to negate that negation is through investigation. Now you need to establish the base where you are going to do the observation, isn't it?

The second point is you investigate within, and without: investigation within the person and in others. You need to find whether there is a substantial or inherent existence in the self or in the phenomena.

That is the only platform where you can investigate. There is no third kind of phenomena out there. Isn't it?

Then, the third and fourth point are whether if the true existence, substantial existence exists, then it has to exist within: within the aggregates or without the aggregates.

If it exists within the aggregates, then it has to exist whether one with one aggregate or whether all of the aggregates, one with the mental aggregate, all of the mental aggregate. That means the I has to be either one of the physical aggregates which means I has to be the form, I has to be the mental aggregates, or I has to be the feeling aggregate, or I has to be the compositional factor aggregate. So, if you do that, then there will be four I. Then even within the physical form you must investigate, you have to do analytical meditation. Do I exist? You know, from crown to toe, and you go to investigate, until you are fully convinced. You even need to investigate one by one cell, whether I is that cell or not. Even to the mental factor whether I is that mental factor or not, whether the mind has a virtuous mind, negative mind, neutral mind. Am I the neutral mind? Am I the virtuous mind? Am I the negative mind? All possible one, three? you know, negative, positive is total opposite, isn't it? How can it be one?

Then, in the positive mind they are limitless momentary of the past, limitless momentary to come in the future. You know, just the moment of snapping a finger, it has 64 moments in there. So, in that 64 moments you are going to find 64 moments of me is there. How is it possible? there is one philosophy which mentioned about over 300 moments within one snapping. So, 300 different minds in that single moment time. So, you will be numberless. That logically does not make sense, isn't it?

So, when we talk about analytical meditation, it is quite easy to do. The only thing is we do not do. It is almost like going into a jungle, especially now it is the wildflower season, I love it. One of my best times is to get into the wild jungle, especially the flowers or different plants. When I am in Australia, I do that and you can forget your food, drink, and there is a danger that you may lost yourself completely, you may not know how to come back, that is the danger. Otherwise, everything is so unique. It becomes so detailed, every single base is different, unique. On that uniqueness, whether am I that uniqueness or not? You can check, you know, I mean you go and check every single flower. Am I this flower? Am I that flower? It sounds like bit crazy, but this is it. So, you also do the same investigation inside you, into your mind. When you do that, there is no room for ignorant grasping to fully occupy you, fully concur you. The ignorance is always kind of pushed away. It is a great purification and a great meditation, and it is very exciting.

We do a lot of travelling to see new places, do a lot of excursions and sometimes we pay a lot of money, but we can just dive into our own body, cell for many weeks. You can enjoy that. And then to the mind, that helps to make us know well about our own legitimate base, where our identity is developed, and also,

we will know definitely, better about the true I, the legitimate existent I. That also help us to know better about karma, better about interconnectedness.

So, when you come out from the absorption meditation, after the analytical process, you will come to a point “oh I see. That’s it. I truly do not exist at all”. And even in the mini micro substance, it does not exist at all, it does not exist in time, in direction. It is simply an imputation of the mind. It simply exists merely in name, like Nagarjuna made a statement: “I and phenomena exist merely in name”.

You know, nothing more than that “merely in name”. It does not even require one tiny substantial base. The Svatantrika Madhyamika school asserts without a substantial base, you cannot establish legitimate existent I or phenomena, either from the subject or the object, there need to be something, a uniqueness, in order to define you are different from the rest. But for Prasangika Madhyamika, Nagarjuna: “No, the real legitimate or interdependent base is the mind. Even that mind which is imputing the identity of self does not exist substantially”. From there comes “everything exists but at the same time completely do not exist”.

So, this is important in order for us to go through the text to understand that, because in the text, there will be a lot of iterations saying things like Buddha exists, but right after, Buddha does not exist. So, what it means, it exists merely in name or exists interdependently. And that is the truthful existence. And that is the truthful existence. And that truthful existence itself proves the complete lack of substantial existence. That is why we do not exist. They say in a first moment for example, Buddha is there, but then second moment Buddha is not there. The Buddha got all this, you know, 32 major marks and 80 minor marks and then they say Buddha do not have at all.

So, once we get that, when you go through the text, you know exactly what it means. So, in another word, you have to know the definition of emptiness. In the Heart Sutra, “form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form is not other than emptiness, emptiness, not other than form”. And that is the definition of emptiness, in the outline of the Heart Sutra. So that must be applied in all knowledge. See? Form is emptiness. And form is empty. Form is empty of inherent existence or substantial existence, form is empty, emptiness is form. Lacking substantial existence is the form. There is no form other than lacking inherent existence, lacking inherent existent is form. Form is empty, and emptiness form is not other than emptiness. So, you cannot find a form other than lacking inherent existence. So anyway, same thing. So, we stop here. Thank you.

First Session – 16/03/2024

Welcome back to the session and without any further distraction, I need to focus on the text. So before going to the text, I thought to read this, the benefits of the Diamond Cutter Sutra by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

The Diamond Cutter Sutra is unbelievable.

Here, you think about Rinpoche, imagine he is saying this. There will be an intense expression that directly hits your heart and purify you.

It is one of the most profitable practices because the root of all the sufferings, yours and others is the ignorance holding the I as truly existent. Even though it is empty of that, and the ignorance holding the aggregates are truly existent, even though they are empty of that, the only antidote to cut that, to get rid of that and through which we achieve liberation, the total cessation of the causes of suffering, delusion and karma, is the wisdom realizing emptiness. This is the subject of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. Emptiness. So, each time you read it, it leaves such a positive imprint. Without taking much time, without much difficulty, it is easy to actualize wisdom. You also create a lot of

merits. So it helps to actualize Bodhicitta quickly, together with all the realizations. That is the business. That is the deal with the Diamond Cutter Sutra. You create so much merits for whatever you wish. You help others and you achieve all your wishes easily. If you recite the Diamond Cutter Sutra many times, of course, there is no more worry about death at all. Good bye fear of death, fear of Lower Realms. Almost you can say the Diamond Cutter Sutra a day, good bye Lower Realms. They are saying in the West, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”.

With the Diamond Cutter Sutra, you can say “Good bye doctor”, also you can say goodbye to self-grasping which has cheated you and totally control you from beginningless rebirths and made you suffer countless times. Also reading it, it is an incredible way to collect extensive merits, if you read, listen to or hear about the Diamond Cutter Sutra with faith, your mind collects a mind-blowing amount of merits. It is incredible. It makes you laugh.

Now you think of Rinpoche, he would say the “wow” not just one time, he would say many “wow wow wow”. And Rinpoche might be laughing. Can you imagine? Look at Rinpoche there [showing a picture of Rinpoche] sitting right here.

By having heard the Diamond Cutter Sutra and not giving up your faith

...the trust, the ability, that what Diamond Cutter Sutra carries, the submission of your existence, of your entire life under complete protection of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. That is the faith. Reading, writing, venerating that, as explained on the first session, yesterday, last night. And having even the texts, the Diamond Cutter Sutra text and engaging in this course, that is how we take refuge in Diamond Cutter Sutra. That is the sign of having faith in Diamond Cutter Sutra. That is not giving up your faith in Diamond Cutter Sutra.

As I mentioned this morning, we divide our 24 hours, every 24 hours, the rest of our life into two meditation sessions: post-meditation session, meditation session. During post-meditation session also, we do meditation on emptiness, post-meditation session is post-meditation from absorption meditation, but still meditation because we are doing analytical meditation.

So, the greatest meaning of life that we can live in that way, it is the greatest purification, the greatest way to accumulate merits, the quickest way to cut the root of Samsara, the quickest way to be free from the contaminated aggregates, the good way to determine our future life in the state of liberation, no more suffering, no more control of delusions and karma.

Merely from that you collect incredible amount of merits, merely even not giving up faith in Diamond Cutter Sutra. Merely from that you collect incredible amount of merits. It is far greater than, for example, giving your body in an act of charity to sentient beings in the morning for the number of times equal to the sand grains of the river Ganges. Let me just say this is not the river Ganges in India. It refers to the Pacific Ocean, and the sand grains are not what we usually think of. They are very tiny atoms. One of the seven types of subtle atoms. Then again, at noon you make charity of your body to sentient beings, that many times. Then in the evening again, you make charity of your body to sentient beings, that many times. For the numbers of subtle atoms of sand grain in the Pacific Ocean. You do every day for eons. The merit from even one day practicing that much charity to sentient beings that alone 3 times a day for many years is immense. Even giving just one body to sentient beings is incredible and the benefits are equally wonderful. Even if you practice charity like that every day for many eons. It collects a small amount of merits compared to hearing the Diamond Cutter Sutra. And not giving up faith in Diamond Cutter Sutra. That means if you keep it, read it, if you keep the text with you, or read it, memorize it, and study its meaning. Then you collect far greater merits. Reading the Diamond Cutter Sutra is powerful source of purifications of all previous negative karma collected since beginningless rebirth. This is in addition to the merits you collect by just reading it or just by keeping it with you.

Unbelievable, isn't it? Even when you go through the text itself, Buddha himself mentioned like that.

The most important thing is that each time you read it, it plants a seed and imprint to realize emptiness, one of the hardest realizations to achieve the direct realization on emptiness. It requires a great great amount of collection of merits,

...Specially to realize altruistic wisdom. You know just the common wisdom realizing emptiness directly. That is so hard, but to realize it by the altruistic mind realizing direct realization on emptiness, that is extremely hard. For that you need a great support of great amount of merits. Yesterday we discussed how it happens after you accomplish the tree countless eons of merits, when you accomplish the first countless eons of merits, when you start to engage into accumulating the second countless eons of merits then, only you are able to realize direct realization on emptiness, the altruistic wisdom, direct realization, the wisdom that realizing emptiness in an altruistic manner. It is also that much difficult.

So whenever you relate to the Diamond Cutter Sutra, it helps to make you quicker realize emptiness. If you do not realize within this life, in case, then you can realize it more quickly in future lives. Then by developing this wisdom, you achieve the wisdom of great insight unified with Shamata, the special insight.

Here again, it is the special insight in the Mahayanist path, it is unlikely special insight in the Hinayana path or the path that leading to self-liberation, the Hearers path, the Solitary Realizers path. For this special insight, besides having the best serviceable mind, which is called Shamata, and beside the best wisdom, which is the wisdom realizing emptiness, you need a third element which is the Bodhicitta, the merit that which is conditioned by practicing Bodhicitta to make up the special insight wisdom of Bodhisattvas Aryas. Again, you need to accumulate huge amount of merits, until you achieve that.

Without the special insight, no way we can overcome the obstructions, especially if you are traveling directly through the Mahayanist path, the Bodhisattvas 5 paths and 10 Bhumis. Without special insight, there is no capability even for the wisdom, or even for the Shamata mind, even if you achieve 9 levels, you will not be able to eradicate the stage of defilements. So, you cannot progress on the path along the 10 Bhumis. You need special insight. And that special insight is that third element you accumulate during post meditation.

Now in relation to our day-to-day practice that I just suggested before: during the post meditation while doing analytical meditation, you are living a life engaging in the practice of the five first Paramitas, such as practice of generosity, practice of morality, practice of joyful effort, practice of patience, practice of concentration. They are the method aspect of the path, which are powerful tools to accumulate merits. When you engage in the practice of generosity, you integrate the analytical meditation on emptiness: the person who makes the charity, the charity itself, and the receiver, all have to be understood in the nature of lack of inherent existence. You do the charity off course with a Bodhicitta motivation, but that Bodhicitta motivation is adorned with an emptiness understanding. You do the charity totally free of miserliness, the grasping of miserliness, seeing its lack of substantial existence, you make the charity. And you make the charity without any expectation from the object side because the object side is also there is no substantial existence from its own side. Then also the charity of the object to be given away without expectations, since there is not even one single substance that you can earn or you can hold onto as mine because the giver, yourself, and the thing that you are giving both lack of substantial existence for you to grasp as mine.

In that manner, even in the motivation, there is Bodhicitta adorned with emptiness, after you give, you dedicate into emptiness, which it the 3 spheres of emptiness, adorned with the quality of the 3 spheres of emptiness, then you do dedication. And by doing that, you achieve the benefit of emptiness, the analytical meditation on emptiness, as well as you accumulate great stores of merits. And that is what a Bodhisattva does during post-meditation, and we, as followers of the Bodhisattvas path, this is how we should practice even while we are training.

So due to that, whenever they get the opportunity to do absorption meditation, that absorption meditation wisdom, the meditating mind becomes a special insight mind, the mind of special insight which has the quality of the sharpest wisdom, also has the quality of the single-pointed mind, the concentration mind, plus all the conducive conditions indirectly holding its strength which is the merits.

You can meditate on emptiness unified with Shamata and are able to experience rapturous ecstasy of the body and mind

When you engage in the practice of special insight in the quality practice of special insight, then the practitioner enjoys the practice, both body and mind, experience great relaxation, great pliancy. Whatever quality of pliancy that you achieve from Shamata, will be experienced by the absorption mind, the absorption person's body. You can live days and nights in meditation like Lama Zopa Rinpoche himself. Rinpoche never goes to sleep, and this is not just because I heard it from people, I got opportunity to serve him, like 24 hours, for 3 years and my duty was night duty, night shift. Venerable Roger was day shift. My duty was night shift. It started right after dinner was finished until the next morning breakfast. And after that of course, I for sure needed to sleep.

When I came for the first time to the monastery, the senior monks said our guru does not sleep. I did not believe. For that little 9 years old boy, it was impossible. I was living in the living area where our Lama stays. Later, they build a new story, Rinpoche's room is on top of the previous place. In the center of the living area of Lama Khensur Rinpoche, Lama Lhundrup, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Yeshe, then Geshe Lama Konchog, there is an empty space like this. So later, Rinpoche build a wooden house on top of it. In that wooden house, next to Rinpoche's bed, there is one glassed door, half-glass. Rinpoche usually likes a lot of light in his room, because there are so many holy objects, he wishes to offer light 24 hours. So, he never really closes the window, the curtain.

So, I climbed up and I used to peep from there: is he really not sleeping? So off course, I need to go to bed, so I must organize my time to go and peep. So today, maybe 11 to 12 o'clock, then tomorrow maybe 12 to 1 o'clock. Then after like that. So, Rinpoche always writing or sleeping, or sitting like this. Even after weeks of checking throughout the time, then I thought maybe there are some people who sleep like this, who do not sleep like you, laying down, maybe he is sleeping like this. But I tried to hear snoring, but because of the closed window, I cannot hear. So then, quietly, I went in from the main door and just sit, just from the corner. Then he says: "Tenzin Zopa sit down". Closed eyes like that. I was like almost making no sound. And then "sit down". After "sit down" and talking, he went into his own meditation. So, I wanted to leave. But he is not sleeping. Or maybe he went to sleep again. The moment I was about to leave, he said "sit down".

Rinpoche is really living in meditation. There is not even the slightest sign of tiredness, tired because of the whole day teaching, seeing people, then, composing teachings, readings, and pujas. One after another. Not even the slightest signs of being tired, because he is someone who achieved Shamata. When you achieve Shamata, you overcome sleep, you overcome tiredness. Then you are completely in the highest state of joy, you can feel, and you can see through his presence, there is not even one moment like he is upset, he looks sad, he is always like burst in laughter, full of compassion, kindness, generosity. It is unbelievable. Completely selfless.

He is really living fully in the awareness of the wisdom of emptiness. And the heart completely filled with altruism. There is no discrimination: I should only pray to my students, but not the others, not like that. Or only pray to human beings, not the animals, not like that. Help the human beings, not the animals, not like that. Only help big animal but not the small, not like that. Any being comes in your way, including the spirits, including formless beings, Rinpoche never misses performing offerings, then water, the offerings in the morning. So, these are directly helping pretas beings, helping Hell beings, which are invisible to our ordinary mind, ordinary eye, we hardly remember. So, it is every single day like that. This is a real practitioner there.

Then there was one time, we went to Lawudo, one whole week, we did a Nyung-nay retreat with the Tsomo nuns. When Rinpoche is part of the retreat, it goes like 24 hours. Then after that, we need to come back. We need to return. There is a long story, so just to make it short. In the evening, we departed from Lawudo, from his cave. Then there is some mist, a bit of rain like that. Of course we will lead him to the road, but then after a few steps, he is saying he wants to lead the road. The thing is that we walk like "who cares", no mindfulness at all about the insects on the road. But Rinpoche is definitely concerned about that. So, the moment he leads the road every single moment he stopped, every single step he stopped. So then whenever there is an ant crawling, he does like this and spend 10-15 minutes, half an hour, whatever, until the ant goes, recites all the mantras. Then there is a frog, so then he chases the frog to bless.

From Lawudo to Namche Bazaar, it took a whole night. We arrived at Namche Bazaar at 3 o'clock, can you imagine? Then there is a holy object like a stupa, little stupas, stones carved with mantras. For the benefits of sentient beings, he does prostrations, the floor is wet, muddy, he does prostrations. Once he goes around, he would go nonstop like that, until we stop him to go. And find animals like dead insects, he collects them to go around holy objects. He would not leave out even one single sentient being, one single insect, how tiny it is, he will make sure full-time for them. Then when we arrive, wherever the place, whenever there is the opportunity, he does this offering practice which is for the invisible beings, he keeps them at heart.

Then there is no sign of tiredness, and he is full of joy, full of selfless, full of dedication, in the service of other sentient beings without any discrimination. This is the Bodhisattva way of living. And this is enlightened beings' activities. Such a living Buddha and Bodhisattva in the Guru. For us who are inspired by the Bodhisattvas path, these are open book teachings. We try to live our lives in our very best, even though there are a lot of distractions.

Then through this you are able to achieve the direct perception of emptiness that eliminates the defilements and disturbing thoughts. First by eliminating the intellectual obscuring thoughts.

The ignorance has two types of ignorance. The obscuring ignorance is the ignorance that is built in our system intellectually or by the influence of philosophy, philosophical assertion, influence of conventional knowledge and ideas, such as believing, asserting or grasping self as permanent, self-nature as permanent, self-nature as independent existence, or autonomically existence. These are the intellectual ignorant, intellectually or obscuring ignorance. It is infused by superstitious thoughts, and the belief and knowledge that is infused to us. So many regard that is the root of the Samsara and actually it is not. The root of Samsara is the innate ignorant, not the intellectual or obscuring ignorance. The innate ignorance is the root of Samsara.

So innate ignorant exists from the very first time we came into existence. The moment innate ignorant is present, Samsara is present, and for that no need of any external kind of influence. It is just inborn together with us. So therefore, our ordinary perceptions, our ordinary mind is called Samsaric mind, because of that innate ignorance. Even while we are performing virtue, if we are not aware of the definition of emptiness, emptiness reality of self and phenomena, we are in fact engaging the mind with others' mind with its object in the manner of ignorance and that is when we commit karma. So, even while accumulating virtue, we are accumulating karma to come back to Samsara. That is how serious it is, how it is an emergency to realize emptiness, how serious it is to really live 24 hours in meditation of emptiness. Otherwise, even while accumulating Dharma, we are accumulating causes of Samsara. That is very serious, and that is due to the innate ignorant.

The moment I open my eyes, I see you, seeing in the ignorant manner, and that is the heaviest karma, that is the most stubborn negative karma, negative action that leaves imprints, called the negative imprints. And that is the seed to sprout all the rest of delusions like attachment, aversion, etc... including of the conceptually infused ignorance or the intellectual infused ignorance. And then the rest of the 6 different types of delusions, the 22 secondary delusions, 84.000 different types of sub secondary delusions and they

are numberless delusions. Even when we close our eyes, as long as there is an awareness it is in the manner of ignorance. That is quite a disaster. That is very serious, isn't it? Therefore, if we truly want to be free from Samsara, karma and delusions, if you truly want to actualize liberation, then we cannot forget about living every present moment in the meditation on emptiness, either analytical or absorption. There is no choice, we have to live within those 2 practices, otherwise unknowingly committing karma to come back to Samsaric existence.

So that is why sometimes, we discuss about Dharma more about superficial, like halfway, not really getting to the point. And that is why, even after meeting so much Dharma, still we come back to Samsara. That is what happens. If that mistake happens while we have the complete freedom, complete environment of Dharma, then in other circumstances, I think it will be very hard. Therefore, because of this innate ignorant, even with the numberless Buddhas out there, still there is numberless sentient beings who are still in Samsara. And that is not because of Buddha did not put effort enough, Buddha is working 24 hours. But then we are the one that are rejecting his effort. It is very much in that manner.

So even when the teachings are revealed, we just want to know the surface of them. Even when we want to practice, we want to do retreat, we want to do this, we want to do that, it is like never touching really the foundation, never really doing practice full-time even though we dedicate one month in retreat, maybe 98% is still under the guidance of ignorance. It is very serious, very scary. So that is why, the moment we open the eyes, we have to interpret with the language of emptiness. It appears to exist, but it does not exist the way how it appears. You have to guide yourself, the moment the thought arises, even virtues thoughts, even Bodhicitta arises. It appears like that, but it does not exist the way how it appears. Even Bodhicitta, even emptiness wisdom arises, we have to analyze. We have to remember the definition of ultimate reality. It appears like that, but they do not exist how it appears.

So that conversation has to be always running there. The moment that conversation is not there, ignorance is the one guiding us. And we are perceiving, we are apprehending as ignorance wants us to apprehend. So, a great degree of mindfulness is required. Sometimes, you can collect around that size of stones. Put on your table. Then, if possible, 2 different kinds of colors or shapes. Then each time you analyze, you put one stone here. Whenever you realize you did not analyze, you put another stone there. Then at the end of the day, you count. Or at the end of each hour, you count or each event you count. Sometimes we have to do with a quite drastic way, otherwise again, it just disappears like that you know.

While doing this [changing the batteries of Geshela's microphone], did anybody analyze? Did anybody manage to analyze? When Roms came this way, did you manage to analyze?

Then through this you are able to achieve the direct perceptions of emptiness that eliminates defilements and the disturbing thought. First by eliminating the intellectual all obscuring thoughts, and then the simultaneous born one, so that is the innate ignorant. That is how you achieve liberation by eliminating completely, including the imprint.

Innate ignorance is also called the obscuration to omniscience. Intellectual ignorance is obscuration to Nirvana. The intellectual obscuration thoughts which are the delusions, that is the main obstacle to be purified in order to achieve the Nirvana peace. In order to achieve full enlightenment, you need to overcome the obscuration to omniscience, or obstacles to the knowledge which is referring to the innate ignorance. It is also called the imprint of all the rest or the delusional thought or the potential of all the delusional thoughts, the innate ignorance.

So that is how you achieve liberation by eliminating completely including the imprint and the seed. Then with Bodhicitta the direct perception of wisdom eliminates even the subtle defilements and you achieve the omniscient mind. With this you are able to do perfect work for sentient beings. You are able to bring perfect work for sentient beings.

Once you achieve omniscience, then you will have many skillful means. You definitely can do much more effective work, more work, greater work than what we can do before we get enlightenment. Even though yesterday I said we do not need to rush to become a Buddha as long as you are performing the Bodhicitta deeds of Bodhicitta, you are almost like Buddha, in one way it is almost like Buddha, that is what many Bodhisattvas also aspire, instead of aspiring to become Buddha, to live among sentient beings to benefit. But then again you must aspire to become Buddha. That is still the best way to be equipped with all these skillful means to benefit sentient beings.

You are able to bring all the sentient beings to enlightenment. This is the goal of our life to bring sentient beings to enlightenment. When that happens, when we are able to do that, we have achieved our goal, you see.

I think even at least like for our family. For some family, maybe you may have many practitioners. But for many families, you are maybe the only one who is seriously dedicated in practice, pursuing liberation, enlightenment. And it is quite sure that you will be enlightened faster than the rest of your family members. And you might be the one that is responsible to liberate all your family members to the state of enlightenment. So, the quicker you are enlightened, the quicker you can liberate the rest of your family members. So at least we start from there. Then the rest of the other sentient beings maybe. Then Rinpoche said, this is his advice to perform many recitations:

You can do some of your recitation in the form of retreat. That other time, when you are working, then you can recite it 1, 2 or 3 times every day. Then again do some recitations in the form of retreat 2, 3, 7 days a month or a few months. When you recited in the form of retreat, do half an hour or 1 hour of Lam-Rim meditation you combine with a Lam-Rim meditation.

You can take the Foundation of all good qualities before you recite the Diamond Cutter Sutra, the short Lam Rim. You do a glimpse meditation within less than 1, 2 minutes. You are able to leave an imprint of the whole complete path every session. Then every day you choose one verse, maybe today Guru devotion, after you have done that, then recite Diamond Cutter Sutra. And then tomorrow, you meditate on precious human rebirth. After leading a glimpse meditation, imprint of the whole path through glimpse meditation, focus on one subject like that, then recite Diamond Cutter Sutra. So, Rinpoche says:

This is just an idea. The amount of time is up to you. It is not fixed. If you can combine it with the Lam Rim meditation, that would be extremely good.

There is one nun in Tsum Valley at Rachen nunnery, she passed away I think 1 or 2 years later after Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche leads this nunnery. Before that the nunnery is Drugpa Kagyu Nunnery. So later this Master offered the nunnery to Lama Zopa Rinpoche; after Rinpoche took the project, he sent me, with the Kopan manager, and another Lama who accepted the project, to do the hand overing and everything that was required. We wanted first to improve their living conditions, their accommodations. And there is one nun, one of the senior nuns, for many years, she almost never opened her room, her door. She also does not have family member, or something like that. So, there is no visitor for her. The nuns there, they are life-long retreaters, so they have their own huts, and not really kind of disturb each other, unless you call for help. But once a while, some nuns, they knew that particular nun had no visitors, no family visitors. So, they put many few pieces of potatoes for her to eat, either thrown from up there or just hang at the door or something, she quietly took it, I do not know. The rest of the nuns also they do not have many things to eat.

So, when we were there, we requested her to see her room. In fact, it was not so good idea from our side. One way we wanted to improve her living conditions, but in other way, we were intruding into her retreat, which she has been so strict. I think she became a nun at the age of 7-9 years old and by then she was already I think 80- 90 years old. But somehow, she knew we were coming, she opened the door, which she usually does not do. I think there is some kind of clairvoyance. And when we went in, she has nothing in

her room, nothing. There is a fireplace, but of course you do not even have a firewood to make fire but there is a fireplace. There is a sign but nothing. Just some ashes. Then this side, there is no proper bed, there is a rock, small like stones then on top there is like a woolen-made carpet, in the Himalayas, they make that one. As if she would have use this for 50-60 years. That is a lot of very thin little hair off that carpet like that. That's it.

No doubt she is doing Chülen practice, taking the essence maybe from the air or whatever because there is nothing. And she has been living like that year after year for so many years like that. And she also does not have many texts, nothing, but she had one text: one prayer book. We saw that is opened there like dirt, and the papers are all worn-out. But it is there. So, it just happened to us that was her daily prayer book. She showed aspect of being so shy, but so much compassion, so shy. And we were thanking her for doing retreat, asking her if she had any wish that we can fulfill, saying we will do something about that accommodation, but she said "nothing. Nothing. I am nobody. I do not know anything. I only do this". The whole life she is been doing this and this is the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The long version. There are many versions. There is a long very thick version.

She says she only know how to read the Diamond Cutter Sutra and she says she does not know Dharma; she does not know anything. She just does this "may all sentient beings' suffering ripens upon me". If there is a little merit I accumulate through the recitation of this Sutra, may it ripen upon all sentient beings, for the sentient beings no need to suffer, unbelievable. So, I think she is the one who really knows what Dharma is, and she is the one I think who is really living it full time in practice, even completely renounced the basic external conditions like at least a soft cushion and something to eat. Unbelievable. And from the nuns' community, they regard she is a bit rebellious.

The thing is in that nunnery, almost a hundred years ago the previous Drugpa Rinpoche, the founder established the nuns must do Tara Puja, Cittamani Tara, the 4 mandalas offering Puja every day. That is one of the commitments. So, in the Gompa, even the retreaters they have to come together, but she always misses, she does not come. They found she is a bit naughty. And she is poor, obviously. Mostly everybody is very humble. There is nothing much there. She is the poorest. But then when she passed away, after 1-2 years later, her body shrinks, this is called the rainbow body, isn't it? Sometimes totally disappears. Her body shrinks. She is quite a tall lady; she is thin but tall lady. She shrinks to around this much size (gesture = size of a forearm).

There, they are serious retreaters and many of the other nuns they receive a lot of profound teachings, so they understand, and they are great tantric Vajrayogini practitioners. Many of them they have done 3 years of great retreat. And they are living all their lives in retreat. And this is the place where most of the nuns have done 2000 sets of Nyung-nay retreats and one of the first nuns of this nunnery, even more senior, she has completed 3000 sets of Nyung-nay. Maybe she is the only one who achieved that. Unbelievable, maybe she even done much more than that number. And some more in this Drugpa Kagyu tradition, one Nyung-nay requires 4 days, usually, one complete session is 7 sessions, one set is 7 sessions, it is like 2 full days isn't? And for this Lama's tradition, it requires 4 days, 2 days of fasting. And she completed 3000 sets. It is unbelievable. And most of the senior nuns have like completed 1000 sets, 2000 sets, and one of the other commitments, any monks and nuns come to this monastery and nunnery institution, 100 sets is a commitment, and 3 years of Vajrayogini great retreat is another commitment.

So, when she passed away, she amazed everybody. When we cremated her body, it was filled with rainbows, so that is why when she passed away everybody was not believing what they were seeing. So, all life, the only thing she did is reading the Diamond Cutter Sutra. She must be always in meditation on emptiness. The physical text is just Diamond Cutter Sutra. And she said she does not know any other text except this Sutra. And the practice, she says she does it to ripen all other sentient beings' suffering onto her. Unbelievable isn't? And dedicate from 7 years old until 80-90 years old, in such a harsh place.

So, these are like great example. Then in the Himalayas, I think in Tibet sure, but in my village and maybe most of the Himalayas and some of the Lamas, most of the Lamas, I guess, especially in remote places, when they first train little girls and boys, after they teach alphabet, how to read, they use the Diamond Cutter Sutra to practice the spelling, reading of the Tibetan, then after that the fluent reading, the whole words reading, using Diamond Cutter Sutra text.

So, my late teacher, Geshe Lama Konchog, after teaching the alphabet, during quite some years train me to spell the words on Diamond Cutter Sutra. Then after that reading fast to practice Diamond Cutter Sutra. So, if there is anybody who wants to study Tibetan? Good idea, you use Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Any questions? Then I will read a little bit from the text.

The Vajra Cutter Sutra. They are few different names. I think in Sanskrit, they did not really use the exact name Vajra. They used Diamond. Then in the Tibetan translation, sometimes they use Diamond Cutter Sutra. There are many texts, Dorje is called Vajra...but the meaning is the same. Vajra is referring to something indestructible. Then Diamond is regarded as a similar meaning or in another way it is the most precious mineral, or most precious Dharma. Another meaning is the one of the most powerful antidotes to negate the most powerful negation, the ignorance. Because of that, the sharpness, the accuracy of application of antidote, the wisdom realizing emptiness to the ignorance is the most powerful tool, like the diamond. Only a diamond can cut a diamond, like that. In the past, now the technology can do all sorts of things.

In Tibetan translation, in the language of India Ārya Vajracchedikā Nāma Prajñāpāramitā Mahāyāna Sūtra. Traditionally, any translation in Tibetan, to authenticate the lineage of the teachings, that really comes from Buddha, they put the Sanskrit language first. And also, pronouncing in Sanskrit language is regarding of high cast, the language of the Gods or language of the Buddha. So, it is also regarded as a blessing. Then In Tibetan: 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rdo rje gcod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. So, in English: The Exalted Mahāyāna Sūtra on the Wisdom Gone Beyond called The Vajra Cutter. Some texts they use the Wisdom gone beyond, some Vajra Cutter Sutra, Diamond Cutter Sutra, like that. So, the Exalted Mahayana Sutra you can also understand as the heart teaching of the Mahayana Sutra, or the heart treasure of all the ones gone beyond of the past, present Buddhas, which is the teaching on emptiness.

The Sutra, the tip of the teachings are very much divided into 3 categories: the Sutric, the Vinaya, the Abhidharma, or Sutra Tantra in the 2 categories. So, this Sutra is regarded as a common part from the 2 vehicles of the teachings of the Sutra and Tantra, and Tantra is regarded as uncommon.

I prostrate to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas

This is also the tradition of Nalanda Masters. Whenever they compiled any teaching, they first make salutations to their object of merits or Refuge. The Tibetan follows that. Another purpose is by making salutations to the object of merits, it helps to clear obstacles to the compiling of the teachings. This teaching is not composed by Tibetan Masters or Indian Panditas. This Diamond Cutter Sutra is the direct teaching of the Buddha revealed through discussion between Subhuti and the Buddha, similar like the Heart Sutra, revealed between the conversation of Shariputra and Bodhisattva Chenrezig himself, Shariputra and Buddha himself participated at the end for a short period of time and Buddha consecrated, blessed Shariputra and Chenrezig to have a conversation exactly to fulfill the intention the Buddha wished to reveal, the teaching on emptiness in the Heart Sutra.

So similar here, Subhuti was consecrated, blessed by Buddha. He has the right caution to present to Buddha, so Buddha has all the means to reveal this teaching. Later, during the Buddhist council that happened after Buddha passed away, they compiled this teaching. So, the first line, the prostration to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas they put that in order to clear obstacle to the compiling.

Usually, it illustrates the main theme of the teaching. You know even from the initial line of veneration, of prostration, you will understand whether this teaching main subject is about Vinaya, or about Abhidharma, or about wisdom, or about Tantra. You can determine just from that line. So, “the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas” here show that the main teaching is the main path of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, which is the altruistic Dharma on Bodhicitta and emptiness. The Sutra can be explained in many ways: first each word, the word meaning; then after meaning of the sentence; then the meaning of the verses, meaning of the chapter; and then the meaning of the whole text, in many different sequences.

So here, we call the *she lung*, it is more like reading the root text, brief highlighting of the meaning, of the overall, not word by word. If word by word, it will take long time. So, we do that to fulfill the purpose of achieving the *she lung*, in another way, the transmission of a commentary: so more like transmitting the words, little explanations.

Thus did I hear at one time.

“Thus did I hear”, like in the Heart Sutra. In all the Sutras you may find like Golden Light Sutra, etc... all the hundreds of Sutras. This Sutra is compiled by retrieving the memorial notes, not the written notes of those who were in the Buddhist council after Buddha passed away like those of like Shariputra. Among his students, the students who encounter Buddha in life, most of them already achieved great level of Samadhi, so they memorized. They validated those teachings through whatever they remember based on 6 different kinds of characteristics to validate this Sutra as valid: the first one is the requirement of interest, then the requirement of belief, requirement of hearing, requirement of time, requirement of house, requirement of place and the requirement of the audience. There are 6 different kinds, or that can be summarized into validate the teacher, validate the right time, validate the place, validate the right teaching, validate the listeners, the audience. Whenever we hear “thus did I hear”, it is about that.

The teaching has to be Buddha’s teaching, has to be beneficial if respectfully requested. So that is why in order to reveal this time the Diamond Cutter Sutra, without Subhuti asking Buddha to answer, there is no interdependent meritorious conditions for Buddha to talk about this teaching. In one way, there is no spontaneous kind of ripened disciples for the Buddha to say please teach about emptiness. Even in the Heart Sutra, it is a similar case. But these teachings needed to be revealed. So, Buddha consecrated someone, in this case Subhuti. That is why Subhuti is water flooding the questions, the questions are coming out one after another, that is how these wisdom teachings are revealed.

So, first one, the valid teacher, the belief, the valid listener, the area, the time must be right. Dharma teachings are not like any other teachings. You reveal when the times are auspicious, then there is a greater benefit. The time has to be right, the auspicious time. Then there has to be an auspicious host for the teachings. For example, a person like me, there is no way I can sit higher than you, it is so embarrassing. As a person, this is a disaster. I will lose many merits. I should be putting everyone on the throne, and I should be sitting down there and bowing and that is my benefit as a person. But when it comes to Dharma, honoring Dharma, then the host has to really set all this, in order to actualize the credit, the auspicious of the host. That is why Buddha easily can use a humble umbrella, Buddha would be so happy, but it has to make it beautiful to cover him even if there is no sun.

Then when Buddha was teaching, revealing this, similar with the Heart Sutra, when you go to Rajgir, on this rock, there was not even have a proper throne. All the fully ordained Sanghas, who wear the 2 sets of Dharma robes, they piled up their robes to make up a throne. Then Buddha was requested to sit to reveal the Dharma, mainly because of the preciousness of the Dharma and there the teachings directly hit the heart of the listeners.

Then the place has to be right. So here also mentioned that particular place. There has to be a lot of signs, occurrence of signs that again it is auspicious, such as for the revealing the Wisdom Sutra, the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. The vulture could be an emanation or protector or Dakini, or Daka. When

Shakyamuni Buddha was roaming around Bodhgaya place, then the vulture came and suddenly snatched his Dharma robe. And Buddha went after where the vulture flew. And the vulture released the Dharma robe on the way of the current vulture peak. And this is the auspicious place for him to reveal the second turning of the wheel of Dharma.

Then the audience, at least within the audience one has to be someone who sincerely receive the Dharma for the purpose of the Dharma, which is for liberation, nothing worldly concerned.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavān was dwelling at Śhrāvastī, in the grove of Prince Jeta, in the garden of Anāthapiṇḍada, together with a great Sangha of bhikṣhus of 1,250 bhikṣhus and a great many bodhisattva mahāsattvas.

Shravasti is one of the places that Buddha spent most of his time, especially after he renounced from home, he spent most of the summer retreat. The king who run the kingdom below Rajgir, is one of the great devotees to Buddha. He also moved from Shravasti to Rajgir. So “Bhikshus” here refers to fully ordained sangha. Buddha himself was a fully ordained Sangha which adorned with 253 vows. And he has many followers who have this foundation of very pure ethics. Then great many Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas. Bodhisattvas here referring to those who achieved Bodhicitta, but who are still residing in the path of accumulation, path of preparation; Mahasattvas referring here to the Arya Bodhisattvas.

Then, in the morning, having put on the lower and upper Dharma robes and carried the begging bowl, the Bhagavān entered the great city of Śhrāvastī to request alms

This is very much the daily routine.

Then, having gone to the great city of Śhrāvastī to request alms, the Bhagavān afterwards enjoyed the alms food, and having performed the activity of food,

When the Sanghas receive meal or food offerings, they need to make dedication for the benefactors. In fact, Buddha designed a special purpose for his followers through the practice of begging. It is not because Buddha is poor. Its sole purpose is for those who do not have time to observe Vinaya precepts or to practice Dharma due to family responsibilities, job... to accumulate extensive merits easily just simply by making offerings to those who hold precepts, especially individual liberation precepts, like Buddha himself and his disciples, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Novices Sanghas, ordained Sanghas, preordination Sanghas, all of them. It is solely dedicated to those lay practitioners who do not have the opportunity to accumulate merits because of that, and that is very important to know.

During that time, Buddha’s father was one of the richest kings in India, one of the most powerful kings in India. And even when Siddharta left the kingdom, though King Suddhodana was at first a bit disappointed, after he achieved enlightenment, he changed his mind, and he offered his son back to his kingdom anytime, and to take anything he would need. But then Buddha refused. He did the same with all the kings who offered him lands or properties, including the one just mentioned, the king who moved from Shravasti to Rajgir who offered his entire kingdom to Buddha to use it for him and his monks to stay, saying he would fund the food.

Buddha said our lives are dedicated as objects for anybody to accumulate merits, not just the riches or the Kings, anybody. While begging, the Buddha instructed the monks to go one day to one house, the day after another. So, they go to everybody’s house, whether they have things to give or not, they just present themselves. Some they give a little bit, others have nothing to give, in the same way, they rejoice. And Buddha still make a supplication dedication prayer for the family. Then they move to another house.

In today’s time, especially in the West, it is not easy for the Sanghas. In the Western culture, you have to earn by yourself, it is not of someone’s business, whether you are Sanghas or not, it happens like that.

But in the Eastern culture, like Tibet, the Himalayas, India, Nepal, and even in Chinese community, there is a great practice of supporting the Sangha, offering meals, offering accommodations. The Sanghas are very much like nomads, wandering. They should not be actually staying in one permanent place, so they should not get attached. They should not have many possessions, many things, like today's time saying, "live in suitcases". Ready to move on. But in order to do that, you need a community. Those who understand the value of Sanghas, then you host them, you feed them. Of course, the Sanghas themselves in exchange have to behave, to practice seriously. Otherwise, you are just carrying the name of Sangha and behave worse than the people who do a lot of wrong things. Even among the lay people, there are great practitioners. But they do not have time to practice the Vinaya vows.

The Vinaya vows hold a lot of rules. The Vinaya discipline is related to a lot of physical observations. The Bodhisattvas precepts are harder to follow. The individual liberation precepts hold a lot of physical restrictions. You have to be very gentle, peaceful. The gestures are so peaceful, so harmonious with everything, the nature, the people, so forgiving, so understanding, so cheerful. You do not look crazy, always so cheerful. So, for the lay people, their presence itself is a blessing, an inspiration, they get inspired. And the first thing they rejoice, rejoicing in the merits of someone preserving higher vows. Without practicing, only by rejoicing the person achieve one of ten of the merits, if I remember correctly. If not 50%, but one of ten for sure, isn't it? The sangha has also so much responsibility in exchange. The Buddha designed that. He did not say the Sangha community does business and earn a survival; some believe that we need to do business. And it is not like that.

since he had given up alms of later food,

Later food means do not eat after lunch. Not like me. [Laughs]. I not only not giving up eating after lunch but eat many foods. This is something which is actually is not right. But we have a lot of excuses for that. We need to do rigorous studies. We live in a cold climate. We have health conditions so to sustain the body and the practice, we eat after lunch for the benefit of all beings.

...put away the begging bowl and upper robe. He washed his feet, sat upon the prepared cushion, and having assumed the cross-legged posture, straightened the body upright and placed mindfulness in front. Then, many bhikṣhus approached to the place where the Bhagavān was and, having reached there, bowing their heads to the Bhagavān's feet, circumambulated three times and sat to one side.

So, this up to this part is the preliminary of preparation, collecting all the auspiciousness to reveal the teaching from the teacher side.

Now the second is the chapter where Subhuti starts to request and by then Subhuti is already blessed.

Also at that time, the venerable Subhūti, joining that very assembly, sat down. Then, the venerable Subhūti arose from the seat, placed the upper robe over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, bowed, joining the palms, toward the Bhagavān, and said this to the Bhagavān:

So, you may not see that in the Tibetan monastery communities. But if you go to Thailand, Sri Lanka, then the gesture of the Thai monks when they do prayers, when they greet the teacher, that is the exact manner we should follow.

"Bhagavān, the extent to which the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Enlightened Buddha has benefited the bodhisattva mahāsattvas with highest benefit, the extent to which the Tathāgata has entrusted the bodhisattva mahāsattvas with highest entrustment – Bhagavān, it is astonishing; Sugata, it is astonishing. Bhagavān, how should one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle abide, how practice, how control the mind?"

This is the first question that he presented.

Second Session – 16/03/2024

We will do some reading. It is on page 6. We stopped at the very important question presented by Subhuti:

Bhagavān, how should one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle abide, how practice, how control the mind?

From here onward for quite a few pages, it is very much focused on the teachings on the great vehicle, the teaching on the Bodhisattvayana path, the Mahayanic teaching.

That was said, and the Bhagavān said to the venerable Subhūti, "Subhūti, well said, well said. Subhūti, it is so; it is so. The Tathāgata has benefited the bodhisattva mahāsattvas with the highest benefit. The Tathāgata has entrusted the bodhisattva mahāsattvas with the highest Entrustment.

Buddha entrusted those practitioners for him to reveal the most profound extensive path which is the altruistic path. If you do not have a courageous selfless heart like the Bodhisattvas, then the altruistic Dharma has no meaning. In fact, it may even bring a heart attack, when you hear about giving up completely the concerns of one's own well-being to dedicate the entirety of your energy in the service of others' well-being; especially for sentient beings who have from many lifetimes' habituation in self-cherishing attitude. This teaching is so profound, so extensive, not many people are able to take it. Because of those great courageous, great-hearted sentient beings out there, such as the Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas, especially Aryas Bodhisattvas, he revealed those altruistic attitudes and altruistic wisdom teachings on that.

Subhūti, therefore, listen and properly retain it in mind, and I will explain to you how one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should abide, how practice, how control the mind."

Having replied, "Bhagavān, so be it," the venerable Subhūti listened in accordance with the Bhagavān, and the Bhagavān said this: "Subhūti, here, one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should generate the mind [of enlightenment] thinking this: 'As many as are included in the category of sentient being – born from egg, born from the womb, born from heat and moisture, born miraculously; with form, without form,

These are the birth within the 6 realms of cyclic existence, by the force of karma and delusions. There are many different ways to actualize the existence with many different births: born from eggs, born from wombs, etc...miraculous births, moisture births, etc...So he is talking about all the sentient beings of the 6 realms to be the objects to carry out one's purpose of practice, which is to liberate the sentient beings from being born in the 6 realms by the force of karma and delusions. Basically, the teaching on altruism is to end the birth in 6 realms, the way to bring about the total liberation from Samsara.

Once birth happened, then aging, sickness, all this package comes with it. So, if you want to liberate the sentient beings then you have to stop the birth by stopping its causes, which are the karma and delusions; to stop that you have to stop the root cause, which is the ignorance. And to stop that, we have to apply the antidote, which is the wisdom of emptiness, which is Diamond Cutter Sutra, the Vajra mind.

with discrimination, without discrimination, without discrimination but not without [subtle] discrimination – the realm of sentient beings, as many as are designated by imputation as sentient beings, all those I shall cause to pass completely beyond sorrow into the realm of nirvana without remainder of the aggregates.

Because the ignorance brought different forms of discriminative minds, such as discriminative emotions, such as attachment to the loved ones, aversion to the enemy, then totally neglecting the rest of the sentient beings; you have to overcome the discriminative mind and have to embrace the rest of the numberless sentient beings in one attitude, which is an equal concern in the ultimate well-beings of any form of beings, whether near or far, everyone. That can only be done by overcoming the discriminative emotions. In order to overcome that, you have to overcome the ignorance. That way, you are able to liberate them from the entire samsaric contaminated aggregates; in another words, the liberation from the remainder of the aggregates, the third form of suffering, the pervasive compounded suffering.

Although limitless sentient beings have thus been caused to pass completely beyond sorrow, no sentient being whatsoever has been caused to pass completely beyond sorrow.

From the very beginning, the sentient beings are not born with suffering. The living beings' innate nature is not suffering. The sufferings came as a conditional production. It is not an innate suffering. The true nature is not the suffering. It is in fact the freedom from suffering. The nature, the Buddha nature, the Buddha being is free of limitations.

Why is that? Subhūti, because if a bodhisattva engages in discriminating a sentient being, he is not to be called a 'bodhisattva.' Why is that? Subhūti, if anyone engages in discriminating a sentient being, or engages in discriminating a living being, or engages in discriminating a person, they are not to be called a 'bodhisattva.'

As long as you are carrying those 3 partial attitudes, the discriminating emotions, then you are not qualified to be a Bodhisattvas. A Bodhisattva is someone who is free from the 3 partial attitudes, with the heart of equanimity to all sentient beings with a sincere love and compassion.

Before this, the text was establishing the definition of a Bodhisattva, the definition of the core Mahayanist path. Now from here onward, it is focusing on the practice of the Mahayanist path, the practical practice of the Bodhisattvas which is the practice of the 6 perfections.

Further, Subhūti, a bodhisattva gives a gift without abiding in a thing; gives a gift without abiding in any phenomenon whatsoever. A gift should be given not abiding in visual form; a gift should be given not abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomenon either.

The importance of the definition of generosity reminds us that it is not about passing a material object to someone. That does not define charity or a gift. The main characteristic of generosity is the heart of letting go, the heart of how to free your heart from miserliness through that gift you are giving to others. When you have the heart of letting go of miserliness, with a complete full dedication without any expectation in relation to that gift, that becomes a real practice of gift, charity or generosity. Such a practice of generosity has the ability to result into Buddhahood. With such a practice you will be free from the stains of any limitations, of worldly concerns, any limitations infused by ignorance.

"Given not abiding in visual form...". The main value is not the object. The main value is the heart. In Tibetan, the definition of Jinpa, generosity, is very clear. There is nothing to do with the object: Tonwa means giving, you say free of miserliness or the mind of the heart of giving which is free from miserliness. It is called Tonwasingpa.

Subhūti, without abiding in discriminating anything whatsoever as any sign, thus does a bodhisattva give a gift.

Free from any sign of expectations, free from anything to benefit self-concern, any sign of grasping onto the object. When you have a sincere wholehearted release of the miserliness, of releasing any form of grasping in relation to the gift that you are giving to the others, that can be interpreted as carrying the value of releasing from the grasping of inherent grasping of true existence. Even that is possible when you are genuinely totally overcoming the miserliness, without even the slightest form of false. When that false is release, the false of the rest of the grasping ignorance could be released like that.

Why is that? Subhūti, because the heap of merit of that bodhisattva who gives a gift without abiding, Subhūti, is not easy to take the measure of

This section is mainly focused on generosity, and you can relate to the rest of the Paramitas practice. Once you get the idea with generosity, then you can relate to the rest of the other practices. A gift which is free from the stain or the mark of the sign of grasping enables you to earn immeasurable merits.

In practical practice, it is not about the amount that you give. Yes, giving food is very important if someone is hungry. If someone needs medicine, give medicine, physical medicine is very important. If someone lacks protection, give protection. If someone is really in a bad mood, then just giving a very kind word, or a genuine sense of light face, a smiling face is very important.

But most important is the heart, the heart concerned with the well-being of the others. And if you have clairvoyance, then you know exactly individually what is going on, who is going through any kind of struggles. You can stay in the cave; you can lock up in your room and you can still manage all the perfect practices to reach out everybody. Many of the Mahasiddhas who reside in caves, in the jungle, like the 80 great Mahasiddhas, like the great Kadampa Masters, they do that, like Geshe Langri Tangpa who composed the eight verses trial. His nickname was black face. For him to come in person, it would not be actually pleasant to look at him because he is so moody, looks so down.

But the thing is, he lived in deep concern of the well-being of the sentient beings, and he sees the intense control of ignorance and the suffering of the sentient beings go through, in particularly the pervasive compounded suffering, which people are not even aware of. The suffering of change they also do not realize it. They just focus on clearing away the suffering of pain. So, uninterruptedly, not even for even a moment, he has this concern for all sentient beings. That is why he does not have time to smile or just relax. Because he is so intense, so stressed concerning the well-being of sentient beings. But he offered the most effective benefit to the sentient beings. He stayed inside his room. People would not have the wisdom eye to see what is going on. Just by seeing his face, they would have freaked out. People would rather be more depressed.

In conclusion, the main thing is the heart. Sometimes, in our worldly ordinary way, the conventional way, we focus more on showing off, rather than doing quietly. Nowadays, if you come to do any beneficial things, you need to take a picture to show the world that if you are giving food to a beggar. Anything good you do you have to take a picture to upload, to let people notice. I am not judging people's motivation, they may be doing so to inspire people, but sometimes you never know. So, we focus more on material, external, less on the internal motivation, so to bring more effective benefit, the motivation, the heart really counts a lot.

Subhūti, what do you think about this? Do you think it is easy to take the measure of space in the east?

So, he is comparing the merit you offer from your heart to our conventional measurements.

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so." The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, similarly, do you think it is easy to take the measure of space in the south, west, north, above, below, the intermediate directions, and the ten directions?" Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so." The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, similarly, the heap of merit of that bodhisattva who gives a gift without abiding is also not easy to take the measure of.

"Subhūti, what do you think about this? Is one viewed as the Tathāgata due to the perfect marks?"

We need to relate all the conducts we engage with the others through our body, speech and mind, through the virtuous conduct of someone following the Bodhisattvas path, in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. We meditate in the concern of the well-being of sentient beings. We study Dharma in the concern of the well-being of sentient beings. We do this retreat in the concern of the well-being of sentient beings. We eat food in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. We sleep in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. We live in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. We will die in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. We decide to live in the Samsara, we decide to live in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings. If you want to become Buddha, you become Buddha in the concern of the well-being of the sentient beings.

We have to apply this understanding in all actions and practice of the other Paramitas. The main thing is a correct motivation. The motivation has to be altruistic; the motivation has to be unstained by worldly concern. The last step of the 8 thoughts of transformation trial says, “whatever you do, not to be influenced or contaminated by worldly concern”, apply the practice of emptiness in everything. That concludes all the earlier 7 verses. The main focus is on Bodhicitta, the method aspect of the path. How much great the practice of the method, the practice of the Bodhicitta that you do, if it is not coordinated or not combined with the practice of emptiness, there is a great danger of being stained by worldly concern, stained by false view. And whatever merit you accumulate, whatever virtue you engage in, it will not carry all the greatness of the impact of the practice. The moment you have the support of emptiness, which is free from worldly concern, free from dualistic concern, even the slightest form of practice becomes of a great impact. The impact will be up to liberation.

So now it is a serious matter. So now from here onward, the understanding, the identity of anything, including Buddha or sentient beings, or whatever, has to be known or to be understood as lacking substantial existence. Not recognize Buddha because of his marks, because Buddha has this physical form or got this light or different marks. Buddha is not a mark, isn't it? But if we are not careful, we define Buddha as a mark. We know Buddha because of the marks. In some ways we define Buddha because of that mark, that sign. And the sentient beings and Buddha differentiate something that which is not them. We define someone as a Buddha which is actually not them. We define sentient beings as something which is not them.

Like these aggregates, we define them as Samsara. But because of having this body we define me as a sentient being and I am defining us as a suffering being, using a reason which is not me. So, you will not be able to find one single substance being me. But our false view identifies me being different from you, it is something which is very similar to you, like this body is not me. And why I can use you to define me, this body or mine, your body over there or the table, is similar to this body. But why I have to define something unique, something separate, using this particular base only, why cannot I use this table as my base?

And if you think at a deeper level, it sounds like there is a substantial existence that defines you and the substantial existence in here, in this body or in this mind or maybe in my father, mother, or from my father, mother. Therefore, when you have to establish Buddha: Buddha exists but at the same time does not exist at all. The non-existent Buddha, the empty of Buddha is the only basis where you can actualize Buddha. Isn't it? Empty of you is the only correct base to make possible your existence, not your body, not your mind. Not even nothing, not even one moment of your mind. Not your merit that you accumulated from beginningless times. No, we have this idea of this product, this me is the result of my past karma. I mean we say like that. If you do not think carefully, it is very much like saying there is something which is ultimately existent out there as the reason for me to exist as this sort of person. It is dualistic. It is a false view. We need to do some meditation to make sense of it.

Subhūti, what do you think about this? Is one viewed as the Tathāgata due to the perfect marks?

We have to ask the same question to ourselves. What do you think about this, is one view as Tenzin Zopa, due to this imperfect marks? Imperfect body and mind? Same question.

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is not so; one is not viewed as the Tathāgata due to the perfect marks.

The conventional way of establishing and the correct way of establishing conventional existence when not understood, then this wording can quite be disturbing. The interdependent existence establishing things, for example Buddha's existence based on interdependent causes and conditions, that is valid. But viewing as Buddha exists due to this mug is false.

Why is that? Because, that itself which the Tathāgata called perfect marks are not perfect marks.

So, this is another point. If you go to search the mug itself, there is no substantial mark there. If you go to search the perfect mark, you will find it is empty of being perfect. The mark is empty. Emptiness is mark.

He replied thus, and the Bhagavān said this to the venerable Subhūti: “Subhūti, to the degree there are perfect marks, to that degree there is deception.

So even making a judgment just because seeing a perfect mark. A perfect mark is a deception.

To the degree there are no perfect marks, to that degree there is no deception.

So, finding no substantial mark, then that is free of deception.

Thus, view the Tathāgata as marks and no marks.

View the Tathagata as a mark interdependently, as a no mark inherently.

He said that and the venerable Subhūti replied to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, will any sentient beings produce correct discrimination upon the words of sūtras such as this being explained?

Since Buddha came up to now, there was 3 or 4 times of 500 years. Buddha’s life-existence counts for a period of 500. Then after that, when Nagarjuna came into existence, another one. Maybe about one year after that, another 500 years. Then I think around the period of the dismantling or disappearing of Nalanda, the institution...which was a great destruction time in India, for Buddhism, especially Mahayanist Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism, you can regard as another 500 years. And now during our time, another 500 years. Our time is regarded as very crucial. But at the same time, because of the preciousness of the wisdom teaching, because this subject is so profound, Subhuti doubted that during our time there would be nobody able to explain that teaching or not. With a deep concern he said that.

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, do not say what you have said, ‘...in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, will any sentient beings produce correct discrimination upon the words of sūtras such as this being explained... Moreover, Subhūti, in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, there will be bodhisattva mahāsattvas, endowed with morality, endowed with qualities, endowed with wisdom. Subhūti, those bodhisattva mahāsattvas moreover will not have made homage to just a single buddha; they will not have produced roots of virtue to just a single buddha. Subhūti, there will be bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have made homage to many hundred thousands of buddhas and produced roots of virtue to many hundred thousands of buddhas.

Buddha says there will be Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas who carry so many merits that we do not need to worry. Dharma will completely perish. The magnitude of the destruction of the Dharma we are facing in our time is huge. The number of people who practice are low. Even among the Buddhists, those who already have faith in Buddha, who are born in a Buddhist environment, the one who trying seriously to learn emptiness are very rare. I have mentioned the first day, how it is not easy to have interest in learning about emptiness, not easy to encounter emptiness discourse. On top of that, you may find some, but there may be a lot of false explanations. There are a lot of emptiness teachings that leads to nihilism or eternalism.

Then, there are a lot of so-called Vipassana teachings which is a special insight practice, a very profound practice. But sometimes, people say “I went to Vipassana”. It was so easy busy. Just “om”, or “Thayata”, and they feel this is so profound, unbelievable. You will find abundance of Vipassana. And they are many who think this is ultimate. And I am not saying those who are doing that are not right, but there are also many who are just limiting the access to profound explanation, profound study. Similar goes with the meditation. There are so many meditations teachings. People thought that this is ultimate. Just breathing in, breathing out and space out. Very good for the body. Very nice for the mind also. Relaxation.

But when you go to study the real taste of Dharma, it is not easy. Your bottom will get pain, your head will start to have headache. And there will be a lot of distractions. Like « I do not understand. I am going to leave this place. All, I just cannot take it. What is this blabla going on, but there are so many. What? it exists but do not exist? ». And sometimes, it even goes to a point: “what was the big deal: exists, do not exist? It is nothing to do with my life. Exists also I cannot earn my bread. Do not exist also I cannot earn my bread. What are you talking about?”. So, it is not easy. It is very tough.

Even to talk about the number of Buddhist practitioners who really learn and live in the practice, there are so few statistically. And who is really living in the practice? It is really like a dot. So very, very rare. And the delusional disturbances, then the external distractions. It is overwhelming. And our life is put into a zone from where there is no escape. Even if you wish to practice, to dedicate full time in the practice, also there is no way to go. You are not allowed to go, the world system bounds us, you must continue to work to pay the bills. If you go to practice, then you will not be able to pay the bills. You will be dying of hunger and with no place to live. We are cornered up to that. That is the distraction. That is a huge distraction.

Even now in the Himalayas, you cannot sit any more in the blessed caves to do any practice. The villagers will use them to earn some money with tickets. What are you going to do? you will have to pay a rent in the cave. And now you have to buy a ticket to go to the cave, can you imagine? So that is why it is said Dharma is perishing. No one is valuing it anymore. It is not about in 500 years later or another 500 years, the era of the destruction, which we call the era of the sign, it is right now.

When we talk about the 3 essences of the Dharma, we talk about the practice of the 3 higher trainings. This higher training of morality is so rare now. When you talk about the higher training in morality, it is about the individual liberation vows. Even in Tibet, which is regarded as the paradise of the Dharma, it is in every single atom. But even conventionally, the Sanghas, who are regarded as the preserver of the higher training in morality, are only 10.000 – 20.000? Among 6 million of Tibetans, there is only 20.000 – 30.000 of monks and nuns only.

Among the 7 billion of humans, if you count together the practitioners of the individual liberation morality from the Theravadan tradition, the Chinese Mahayanic tradition, Tibetan Vajrayana tradition, we will not even reach 100.000. Even if there were 1 million, it would be so little. And among them, how many really seriously observe the vows? How many? We, as monks, how many are truly accordingly, following the rules? It is so rare.

So, Buddha said the preservation of Dharma, which is about the wisdom teachings, depends on the preservation of the higher training of concentration. The survival of the higher training of concentration depends on the preservation of the higher training of morality. So, those 3 serve as causes and effects. So now, think about the fact that there are just few thousands of ordained Sanghas living in the vows of individual liberation? There are less and less interest in accepting the vows. It is rapid. For the past 10-15 years period the number are rapidly decreasing.

And even in my village, in those remote places, even in Tibet, even within the family, the parents' focus is about going and earning money to build a home. In the past, even though the children had no interest in practicing the higher training of morality, the parents will make sure that at least one son or one daughter would go to practice that. Even in my village, if you have 3 sons, one son must become a monk. Now even if you are already a monk, the parents will ask to come out, to better go and earn money.

I remember among my classmates in Sera, those who were about to finish Geshe studies, during that time, had already spent almost 20 over years in a Monastery. Then, it took about 10 years to finish graduating as Geshes. I came out number one, first one, long time ago. We had the maximum number of classmates, 360 at that time. Some of the classmates, they got a lot of phone calls from their parents saying “we sent you to study, it has been 10 years, and you did not even send one single money. Our neighbor in just 3 years, went to America, and already built a big, huge house next door. What are you doing? Quickly come

back, send money". Literally it happened that in real time. And there are a lot of pressure like that. People prefer to send to academic schools, so they get a job. So even those who are practicing Sangha vows, they have no value in the society. Really who cares like that? Because of the society does not care much, the Sanghas also do not care. Half Sanghas, half not Sanghas. Many many like that.

So, it is really a period of Dharma perishing. So true. But think about what Buddha replied to Subhuti. There are Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas like His Holiness, like Kyabke Lama Zopa Rinpoche, it so obvious. Those beings who live among us. Like what Buddha says, their merits were not just accumulated in one lifetime, or they were not blessed by just one Buddha. They are not like making aspiration to just one Buddha. They make aspirations many many times, to many many numberless Buddhas. Such emanations exist and they will explain the teachings correctly, which is so true. Especially Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, put so much effort. He is very special. I mean everybody is special, everybody has a focus. Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche has this focus on the importance of the Diamond Cutter Sutra reading, writing, memorization, printing...which sometimes we do not really see, even in monasteries. Not many people do that. And Rinpoche has been talking and teaching about the benefit again and again everywhere.

That is very obvious, so you can very openly say like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, like Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, these Lamas, were prophesized by Buddha. You can claim Buddha prophesized their existence in the world and we had the opportunity to receive blessings, unbelievable, isn't it? Think about it, really unbelievable.

So I think from here, explaining the benefit. Subhūti, those who will acquire merely a single mind of faith upon the words of such sūtras as this being explained, Subhūti, the Tathāgata knows. Subhūti, they are seen by the Tathāgata; Subhūti, all those sentient beings will produce and perfectly collect an unfathomable heap of merit. Why is that? Subhūti, because those bodhisattva mahāsattvas will not engage in discriminating a self and will not discriminate a sentient being, will not discriminate a living being, will not engage in discriminating a person.

So true, like His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I mean even the people who took away his home, his land, who killed his people, his family, all the Tibetans who are his child, his emotions too. But still, he expresses so much compassion, so much love instead of hate. This is a living practice. There is no discrimination. He lives alive with the value of seeing one human family, and he practices it with the whole world, among religions, among different ethnics, among so-called others, but from his side, everybody is his family, one human family, his brothers - sisters. He illustrates that, a living example. So, this is exactly according to the teaching.

Then, I share the story of Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, maybe you have heard or just seen him. Sometimes, many people tried to see him in person, and may not have, did not get the opportunity, because he is always with people. His schedule is fully packed 24 hours. But whether you see him on the road side, whether you see in person, from his side, everybody is equal: whether you know them, whether you do not know them, whether you are a big benefactor, or not a benefactor, whether you serve him before or do not serve him before, people come in just to check it out who he is, or people coming with faith; from his side, it is like equal, completely equal and he gives full time. So that is why the attendant must make a very strict time schedule because it does not matter who ever come, that is it, he gives full time, 24 hours. He will never say "ok now you go", and he will give everything that he has. This is him, like that, no discrimination at all.

So that is why Buddha says Subhuti "do not worry, in this degenerated time, there are many Mahasattvas out there for us, Bodhisattvas". I do not know how many, but the Lamas I know like Lama Zopa Rinpoche, with a whole unbroken transmission of lineage of commentary, of oral transmissions, realizations, for example, the Diamond Cutter Sutra, the lineage can be traced up all the way up to Shakyamuni Buddha. In today's time, for us to be in their presence, I think that is maybe the greatest thing that can happen, the most fortunate thing, in our existence.

Why is that? Further, Subhūti, because a bodhisattva should not wrongly grasp phenomena, nor grasp non-phenomena.

So, this is talking about overcoming the 2 extremes. It means should not grasp at phenomena as an inherent existence or substantial existence. To establish existence, you do not have to establish inherent existence. They are philosophers, scholars, to establish existence had to establish substantial existence, otherwise you cannot establish existence. That falls into Nihilism. Establishing lack of inherent or substantial existence does not mean you are establishing non-existence of the phenomena. So, to overcome Nihilism, to overcome the 2 extremes we have to establish a legitimate existence of a person or self through this. One should not wrongly grasp to the person, or one should not grasp non-person.

When you find no self, when you establish no self, you have to establish no self by not losing existent self. So, you are establishing no self, you are establishing no substantial self, nor true existence. The moment you establish no substantial self or no true existing self or no inherent existing self, you are in fact establishing interdependent self. You are in fact establishing legitimate existent self. The real person who commits the karma, who purifies the karma, who pursues the path, who will get liberated. There is a legitimate person out there. I am a real person.

But the true existence is established by the ignorance as a true existing person or inherent existent person, this do not exist. Finding no self is finding no true existent self. But you also cannot grasp no self completely. There is a self and that is an interdependently existent self. Or merely labelled. So, when you talk about interdependent, here interdependent to the mind, that which we labelled as Tenzin Zopa and that does exist. Tenzin Zopa exists, or my identity as Tenzin Zopa exists, but merely dependent on the imputation of the mind, in the name only, nothing more than that. You cannot even find even the slightest substance that defines its substantial existence.

Therefore, thinking of that, the Tathāgata said, "If, by those who know this Dharma treatise as like a boat, even dharmas should be given up, what need is there to mention non-dharmas?"

Grasping to the Dharma should be given up. The grasping to the interdependent existent, substantial existent "so precious Dharma", that must be given up. Then no question about giving up the non-dharma. Which is even worse. The grasping to something good carries at least some goodness, but grasping to the bad thing is totally a disaster, isn't? So, it does not mean you throw away the Diamond Cutter Sutra. The substantially established Diamond Cutter Sutra should be thrown away, not the real Diamond Cutter Sutra, which merely exists in words, and those words exist based on interdependent causes and conditions like the ink. Even the transmission or the actualization of the transmission of this sutra brought into this text, this is the interdependent existence of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. You should treasure it. You should venerate it. We already talked about so many merits. I will not get you to throw away that, will I?

That is why, for everything, every existence, there is 2 ways of existence, 2 ways of establishing phenomena out there. One is established in the nature of true existence; one is established in the nature of lack of true existence. So, you let go of the phenomena including Diamond Cutter Sutra that is established in the nature of true existence. That you should let go. The other one, you should adopt.

Further, the Bhagavān said to the venerable Subhūti, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever? Has any Dharma been taught by the Tathāgata?"

Same meaning, so you have to apply the 2 ways of knowing.

He said that, and the venerable Subhūti replied to the Bhagavān, "Bhagavān, as I understand this meaning that was taught by the Bhagavān, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. That

dharma that was taught by the Tathāgata does not exist whatsoever. Why is that? Because any dharma manifestly and completely realized or taught by the Tathāgata is not to be grasped, not to be expressed

Not exaggerated, not to be expressed in the words, that which are infused by the ignorance, infused by the grasping.

it is not dharma nor is it non-dharma. Why is that? Because ārya beings are differentiated by the uncompounded

So therefore, you can clearly establish Dharma and at the same time non-Dharma. The truthful Dharma and the false Dharma are not from the object side, the false and the truth are established from the point of view of the subject, the view of the mind. Then after that talking about the benefit of the Sutra.

The Bhagavān said to the venerable Subhūti, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? If some son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage, completely filling this billionfold world system with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts, do you think that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an immense heap of merit on that basis?” Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, immense. Sugata, immense. That son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an immense heap of merit on that basis. Why is that? Bhagavān, because that very heap of merit is not a heap; therefore, the Tathāgata says, ‘Heap of merit, heap of merit.’

You see, since there is no substantial existence there is no limit. If there was a substantial or true existent nature, in the merit, then you have to limit them, you have to number them. In conventional truth, we have a limitation in the direction, limitation in size, limitation in numbers, limitation in everything. But in ultimate truth, there is no limitation, because there is no substantial base which will define obstructions to make limitations.

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, completely filling this billionfold world system with the seven types of precious things

7 precious things like rubies, gold, copper, silver, all this kind of natural kind of precious components is there. And when you make such precious thing as an offering to the merit field, to the Buddhas, you create so many merits. Comparing with that, the merit you accumulate in relation to the practice of the Diamond Cutter Sutra is even more immeasurable.

were to give gifts, if someone, having taken even as little as one stanza of four lines from this discourse of Dharma, also were to explain and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others, on that basis, the heap of merit produced would be much greater, incalculable, unfathomable.

So, each and every one of you are liberating me because of giving me the opportunity to explain, to read Diamond Cutter Sutra. So, you are my Gurus. You are my liberator each and every one of you. You organize this, you are liberating me. Then the merit to be able to share the Dharma is unbelievable. The gift is incomparable. Even if you were giving me the entire Universe filled with gold, that would be nothing compared to the value generated from having this discourse. For all of us, just to discuss about it, just to hear, just to be able to express it, even just four lines, is unbelievable. How much negative karma is purified? This is the direct word of the omniscient one. I mean he has no reason to say wrong thing to us, isn't? So, this is so true. This is so valid, unbelievable.

Why is that? Subhūti, because the unsurpassed perfectly completed enlightenment of the tathāgata arhat perfectly completed buddhas arises from it; the buddha bhagavāns also are produced from it. Why is that? Subhūti, because the buddha dharmas called ‘buddha dharmas,’ are those buddha dharmas taught by the Tathāgata as non-existent; therefore, they are called ‘buddha dharmas.

He is referring to the wisdom realizing all existent nature in one taste. That wisdom is the Dharma. That is the liberation. So, that is the blessing, that is the antidote to purify our mind, purify Samsara and its causes.

If we manage to sustain in that wisdom, then that is it. Before going out of this gompā, you already achieved the state of liberation. But then if we do not want to enjoy the liberation, then we go back to our own usual word, our usual mind. And then we ourselves create our own word. So, what kind of word do we want to experience. So that is why the difference between the Buddha and us, even though we carry the same nature, is that one is fully awakened. Some of you may be half-awakened, maybe, some of you are 90% awakened. Some are like 10% over again. Some not even near like me. So, we cannot complain about Samsara, it is our own choice.

From here onward, Buddha will talk about the four different kinds of Arhatships from the Sutra point of view, from the Hinayana point of view.

Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the stream-enterer think, 'I have attained the result of stream-enterer'?

It is one of the Arhatship, one of the liberations from the Hinayana, the sutric point of view called the stream-enterer.

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so. Why is that? Bhagavān, because one does not enter into anything whatsoever; therefore, one is called 'stream-enterer.' One has not entered into form, nor entered into sound, nor into smell, nor into taste, nor into tactility, nor entered into a phenomenon; therefore, one is called 'stream-enterer.'

Bhagavān, if that stream-enterer were to think 'I have attained the result of stream-enterer,' that itself would be a grasping of that as a self, grasping as a sentient being, grasping as a living being, grasping as a person.

Grasping as a sentient being, as a living being, grasping as a person that is already going disaster. That is why if you think "I arrived home", you are going openly expressing grasping. Or "I am practicing", you are openly expressing grasping. "I am not practicing and today I feel lazy" or "today I'm doing retreat". So, all are wrong, wrong vocabulary. The moment you use "today I am doing emptiness meditation. I-AM-doing meditation emptiness", you are expressing grasping. So, you must keep quiet. In the same way, if you think "I am staying quiet", that is also not right. What to do? So, we must delete all the dictionary. All the languages must be destroyed. It is like all the brain has to be destroyed. Is the brain still there? There will still be something moving. Are the hard days of grasping still moving?

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the once-returner think, 'I have attained the result of once-returner'?"

Another way to corner. This is the second type of being who achieved Arhatship, which is called the once returner.

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon of entry into the state of the once-returner does not exist whatsoever. Therefore, one says, once-returner.

So then now the third round of calling.

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the non-returner think, 'I have attained the result of non-returner'?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon of entry into the state of the non-returner does not exist whatsoever. Therefore, one says 'non-returner.

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the arhat think, 'I have attained the result of arhatship'?"

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon called ‘arhat’ does not exist whatsoever. Bhagavān, if the arhat were to think, ‘I have attained the result of arhatship,’ that itself would be a grasping of that as a self, grasping as a sentient being, grasping as a living being, grasping as a person.

Bhagavān, I was declared by the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha as the foremost of those who abide without afflictions. Bhagavān, I am an arhat, free of attachment; but, Bhagavān, I do not think, ‘I am an arhat.’ Bhagavān, if I were to think, ‘I have attained arhatship,’ the Tathāgata would not have made the prediction about me saying, ‘The son of the lineage, Subhūti, is the foremost of those who abide without afflictions. Since not abiding in anything whatsoever, he abides without affliction, he abides without affliction.

Since not abiding in anything as if we were floating in the space, this is called the space-like mind. When your awareness abides in the space-like mind, then it is very much not abiding in anything. You must train repeatedly in that meditative state of mind or that absorption state of mind to make it habitual. Then eventually, you will get to see the state of completely losing of entire substantial existence and see the ultimate truth, which is empty of lack of inherent existence, without any imputation of any concept.

We need to first overcome depending on concept. But when we do the analytical meditation, we still depend on concept. We depend on philosophy. We depend on words. We depend on texts. We depend on teachings. We depend on guidance. But there is a benefit since we are still training, still practicing. That will lead to actualizing the object of meditation of your absorption meditation. That will bring you to a stage where you really see, you can say you realize the losing of the entire object of grasping.

Then in that state of voidness, the voidness achieved by losing all the object of grasping, you abide into it, single-pointedly. This is called absorption meditation. At an initial level, the practitioner train in abiding in nothingness, but that is not the final meditation. You have to achieve the capacity of special insight, which is while abiding in a complete void, complete voidness, at the same time, you are able to be aware of existence and that is the moment when you combine wisdom with method, called the union of method and wisdom, where you abide in complete voidness of losing all the grasping, the object of grasping and losing the grasping, and that introduces the feeling of liberation and that experience of liberation brings bliss.

Experiencing that bliss while the wisdom is still abiding single-pointedly in complete voidness, you achieve special insight, you develop the capability of special insight while making portions of your dedicated wisdom to do the job of directly negating the negation, without losing the single-pointed absorption. And that is the way you achieve the 2 stages of the meditative state of the path. The first moment when you are in the practice of special insight during the absorption meditation on emptiness, you are able to occupy the entire space of negation with the antidote. The negation is no more there in your system, but you cannot claim yet that you are completely free from the negation.

Then, because of the single pointedness in a sustainable absorption meditation, you are able to progress to the next level of absorption meditation, where you are able to achieve the cessation, which is the complete eradication of the negation. An example usually given is in the middle of the night you hold the night switch and the darkness, which is like example of the negation, is no more there. But you cannot claim that the darkness is completely overcome, because the moment you switch off, the darkness will come back. So, you have to carry on the switch on until the daylight comes back. Within the period of that 24 hours, you are able to stay on until the daylight comes, when the daylight comes, you achieve the cessation. That portion of night that will never return.

The first time you see emptiness directly, which is the third level of the path of seeing, you face 9 different sessions of defilements. The first one is the gross one, then the second the subtle, and the most subtle. The antidote at the beginning is lighter, and it becomes more and more intense. The job through the 10

Bhumis is eradicating those 9 portions of defilements while abiding in the path of special insight, doing the job achieving these 2 stages of the path. After that, you get into post-meditation, you do accumulation of merits, you engage in generosity, etc... The moment you have a great store of merits, you go back to meditation again, special insight meditation, and again you do slightly more subtle portion of negativity. It is the way to purify by achieving these 2 levels of meditative absorption.

When you come to the 10 Bhumis you are still in the path of training. The transition from the 10 Bhumis path of training and the path of no more training which is the path of Buddhahood, happens during the meditative absorption. So, during the training, you hold the switch in the middle of the night, and you are able to stay on the switch until the next morning. When next morning arrives is Buddhahood, which is the path of no-more learning. So, I will conclude here. Thank you.

Third Session – 16/03/2024

Any boiling question online or here in presential?

Question: In the passage earlier there was a comment about not being able to label yourself as something because then you are not that. How do you know what level you have attained if you cannot conceptualize that?

Geshela's answer: you can still label. Here what it really means, is that you cannot claim something out there to be achieved, like those different stages of Arhatships, if it is false. Because that claiming is based on grasping to this inherent existence or substantial existence or true existence, either at the destination, or at the stages. So, the teaching is very much referring to those who have not realized those stages. Those who have already achieved Arhatship, then there is no grasping. But to teach us Buddha is giving an example of an Arhat grasping to a realization that he is claiming to have achieved. So, the text is not talking about nothing to be labeled. Everything in fact exists, but merely labelled only.

The following lines are to teach about conduct that they had actualized without abiding.

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was received by the Tathāgata from the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dīpaṅkara exist whatsoever?"

Buddha Dipankara. There are 7 called courageous Buddhas of the fortunate eons, he is not just talking about this eon but the previous one, before this 4 Buddhas fortunate eon. Buddha Dipankara was one of the earlier Buddhas.

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so. That dharma that was received by the Tathāgata from the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dīpaṅkara does not exist whatsoever.

It is the same meaning. The text is giving many different examples, many different incidents, many different phenomena to make us really leave a strong imprint about how things truly do not exist. The only existence is non-existent truly, everything mainly exists in the name. During this conversation between Shakyamuni Buddha and Subhuti, they are using many objects, many phenomena to illustrate the lack of true existence. So, that is why the Dharma that taught by Buddha Dipankara, the fortunate era of the past does not exist substantially. Because of not existing substantially, therefore, it does exist. Therefore, the Buddha Dipankara did not speak about the Dharma.

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, if some bodhisattvas were to say, 'I shall actualize arranged fields, they would speak untruly.

There is no substantial object as an "arranged field to be achieved", isn't? And a Bodhisattva would say that he would speak untruly. When we claim "this is me. I am here. This is mine. You are there", all these are actually false claiming. This separation between us, you and me. The discrimination was falsely established. If we realized the ultimate nature of you and me, you and me we would find in one taste. One

nature. There is no true nature. Human beings and the plants. This is true differentiation. This discrimination of these 2 differences of asserting or of grasping, of having its true separation nature is false. Ultimately in fact, even this tree and you, lie in the same nature, one taste. And that similar goes with Buddha and sentient beings, Samsara and Nirvana. Samsara and Nirvana ultimately are in one taste.

So, conventionally claiming Buddhahood is separate from Samsara, and Nirvana is separate from Samsara is true to the conventional truth, but it is false to the ultimate truth. Ultimately it is a false claim. That makes sense to everything. Even this counting of 5 aggregates. In ultimate nature, there is no separation and nature are in one taste. Same as the lack of true existence of the form aggregates, if there is no different nature, then we can posit the lack of true existence of the compositional factor, of the mind. The lack of true existence nature of the Buddha is not different from the lack of true existence nature of a samsaric person. Therefore, Samsara and Nirvana, you and me, even female and male, short and tall, thin and fat. Everything in ultimate nature is one taste.

In conventional reality, it exists merely dependent on the other side of the factor. By this alone, there is nothing to be claimed as a me. If there is no you, there is no me. If there is no is, there will be no not. If there is no short, there will be no tall. If there is no fat, there will not be thin. So really if you think carefully, these are quite easy. It really makes sense. So, because of the existence of the short, it makes possible the existence of long. So, in short there is no relative substance that can prove to be ultimately short. So, there is no ultimate short. There is no ultimate you, there is no ultimate me. It is very much like the echo, very much like the reflections in a mirror. Very much like that.

Another example is the reflection of the moon in the water. For certain beings, maybe the moon is up there, or maybe certain animal never look up in the sky, only to the ground. And suddenly see that there is a moon there. Our perceptions to the relative truth are very much like we have never seen the ultimate truth. So that is why we have this grasping of true existence, of a "self" here, in order to have the "you" there, the moon is in the water.

This wisdom or the awakening into ultimate truth, the benefit will bring the practitioner to overcome the causes of suffering, the causes of creation of karma, which is the direct cause for the suffering. So, even at an immediate level, you will be able to overcome emotional suffering. These are the benefits. It will stop generating this partial attitude. The suffering comes with the aversion to those things that you do not wish to experience, and by experiencing those, you have suffering. Because of the attachment to those things, you want to achieve, those things that you are attached to and not achieving it or even achieve, but then leaving from you, that brings the suffering.

Therefore, realizing the relative truth, false to the ultimate truth, it helps overcome the causes of the suffering like delusions. So, that is the benefit. That is the whole reason why you try to make sense to emptiness, to make sense to the understanding of the 2 truths. So that is why Buddha says two truths are to be understood clearly, and in order to sustain that understanding as a form of wisdom in you, then you need to adopt the true path, the method of wisdom as a path. With a sustainable practice of the true path, will result the true result, the truth bodies of the Buddha. So, these 2 truths are in fact the object of this study, object to be learned. Emptiness is something that has to be studied. And the more you study, the more it impacts the purifying of the grasping.

That is why during the analytical meditation you reflect on whether I exist or not. You can say your name. That is your identity, whether that identity exists in your aggregates, the whole of the aggregates, or one of the aggregates, or without. In relative observation of the relative truth, you will find no basis. No substance. No relative substance. No relative organs or aggregates that can define as you. You cannot even define as your legitimate basis. Some philosophers say in order to name something you need to have a correct basis, otherwise how to differentiate the differences. You need to have a correct base otherwise how to differentiate relatively the differences, the different characters dualistically.

But in fact, in the relative truth, conventional truth, if you search thoroughly, you cannot define the relative, conducive or relative correct base to be able to give a correct name. If you say my 5 aggregates, this main form body is the main basis to give the label of human identity, or the existence of you as a sentient being. But then if you lose your physical form, for example when you reincarnate in a formless realm, that will mean that your continuum is stopped. Your continuum, your existence is still there. But then the regarded correct base of the form basis is not there.

And if you want to establish consciousness as the correct base. There are some philosophers who say maybe not all the consciousness can serve as a base, they are unstable. They even categorize 6 or 7 types of consciousness. It is said there is a consciousness that which is very stable, it serves as your base to identify your being. But even that consciousness is momentarily changing. There is no one consciousness that is always permanently there to serve as your ever existence, as a living being. When you become a Buddha, you are still a living being, when you are a sentient being, also you are still a living being. That living being exists forever. Even your samsaric being comes to an end, but your living existence forever exists. So even in the relative truth you cannot find one very form forever serving as your correct base.

So therefore, it sounds like the relative truth is true to the conventional truth or relative truth. But if you investigate thoroughly, you may even be able to prove the relative truth itself, is also a false to the relative matters or relative truth. So, no question about how it is false to the ultimate truth.

Why is that? Subhūti, because arranged fields called 'arranged fields,' those arrangements are taught by the Tathāgata as non-existent; therefore, they are called 'arranged fields.'

Because of calling "arranged fields" therefore they are not existent. Because I am called Tenzin Zopa that is why there is a nonexistence of Tenzin Zopa. Because of having this name Tenzin Zopa, it is the real proof that Tenzin Zopa does not exist. So therefore, as Prasāngika Madhyamika said: Tenzin Zopa merely exists in name. So that is correct, isn't it? You exist merely in name. It is not correct just because Nagarjuna said so. If you really investigate truly, other than in name, you cannot find anything. And that name also exists merely based on the conditional factor. So, if Tenzin Zopa does not exist before I was born, how can you explain that living being was already existing in my mother's womb. So, Tenzin Zopa conceived by my mother at that time does not exist? Isn't it?

After I was born, you were there and you told my father, mother, you'd better name your baby James Bond. So, that Himalayan baby is going to be James Bond not Tenzin Zopa. And yes, if you are going to be James Bond, my passport, my citizenship will have James Bond on it, not Tenzin Zopa and then the CIA, how you call the American CIA, they will chop the visa on James Bond, not Tenzin Zopa. But then they choose to name Tenzin Zopa, everybody believes Tenzin Zopa. If you are going to open a bank, account, they believe you are Tenzin Zopa, that is it. Actually, it is not true. You are giving a bank account to our non-existent person.

But then, there are traditions, even in the Mahayanist tradition who follow the middle way path, the middle way philosophy, they assert complete negation of everything including the base. But then Lama Tsongkhapa said not necessary, you do not have to negate, you have to establish the relative truth and that relative truth in fact, serves as a correct basis to be able to establish ultimate truth, meaning this labelled Tenzin Zopa has its own unique characteristic, and posit that will not hurt to the establishment of the ultimate truth. Therefore, these human aggregates including those of the karma, those of genes that I carry from my human parents, you can take all those 5 aggregates as a correct base to be able to establish Tenzin Zopa as a human being.

Therefore, in Lama Tsongkhapa's understanding, you do not realize ultimate truth, you do not realize emptiness, until you realize interdependent arising as a meaning to emptiness, interdependent arising as dependent on causes and conditions, interdependent arising as a meaning for the empty of the true

existence or substantial existence. Until you realize that, you have not arrived at the final understanding of the emptiness, emptiness' final understanding.

So that negates that kind of final false to even some of the Tibetan earlier Vajrayana or Mahayanist Tantric practitioners, who followed the Madhyamika philosophical system, to whom just by realizing total losing of the entirety of the relative basis of establishing the voidness of emptiness, has not arrived at the actual final understanding of emptiness. So therefore, what is the meaning of emptiness? The meaning of emptiness is interdependent arising. What is the meaning of interdependent arising? It is the meaning of inherent existence for that to be realized.

Subhūti, therefore, the bodhisattva mahāsattva thus should generate the mind without abiding, should generate the mind not abiding in anything

Complete void. You have to arrive to a space like-mind, the space-like mind wisdom of emptiness.

They should generate the mind not abiding in form, should generate the mind not abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomenon.

“Subhūti, it is like this: If, for example, the body of a being were to become thus, were to become like this, as big as Sumeru, the king of mountains, Subhūti, what do you think about this? Would that body be big?”

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, that body would be big. Sugata, that body would be big. Why is that? Because it is taught by the Tathāgata as not being a thing; therefore, it is called a ‘body.’ Since it is taught by the Tathāgata as not being a thing; therefore, it is called a ‘big body.’

So again: this big body exists in interdependence of there is no big body. Other than that, there is no big body. It is again talking about interdependence arising.

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? If there were also just as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, would their grains of sand be many?”

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, if those very Ganges Rivers were many, there is no need to mention their grains of sand.”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, you should appreciate; you should understand. If some man or woman, completely filling with the seven kinds of precious things that many world systems as there are grains of sand of those rivers Ganges, were to offer that to the tathāgata arhat perfectly completed buddhas, Subhūti, what do you think about this? Would that man or woman produce much merit on that basis?”

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, much. Sugata, much. That man or woman would produce much merit on that basis.”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, compared to someone who, completely filling that many world systems with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts to the tathāgata arhat perfectly completed buddhas, if someone, having taken even as little as a stanza of four lines from this discourse of Dharma, were to explain it and correctly and thoroughly teach it also to others, on that basis the merit that itself would produce would be much greater, incalculable, unfathomable.

“Furthermore, Subhūti, if, at whatever place on earth even a stanza of four lines from this discourse on Dharma is recited or taught, that place on earth is a real shrine of the world with devas, humans, and asuras, what need to mention that whoever takes up this discourse of Dharma, memorizes, reads, understands, and properly takes to mind will be most astonishing. At that place on earth [where] the Teacher resides; other levels of gurus also abide.”

When you keep the Diamond Cutter Sutra with you, then, all the Buddhas reside with you, all your Gurus abide and reside with you. You have the best place, the most comfortable place to be. The void of grasping is the best place to be, the best celestial mansion to be resided, the best place to be completely free from all the negativities, filled with all the positivity. So, these are the benefits.

To really feel the taste of the emptiness, you have to meditate long time and many times, as you can see in commentaries, emptiness treatises... The word emptiness itself has limitation. The actual taste of emptiness is inexpressible, unimaginable and inexpressible in words. The experience is truly astonishing, unfathomable, it is so true. It is one of the most blissful experiences that one can ever experience. One of the best freedoms, the greatest freedom that one can ever experience. The perfect liberation that one can ever experience.

Even the moment you try to understand and try to meditate, as I mentioned in the introductory teaching, dividing our 24 hours in 2 sessions of practice post meditation and meditation sessions, just to be able to exercise ourselves to experience our life like that day to day, you already start to taste liberation, the taste of what it means true happiness, inner peace, what it means freedom from suffering, it is very much like you can even stay away from the pervasive compounded suffering. While carrying this samsaric mind, samsaric body, you are kind of exit from that. While carrying these samsaric aggregates, you are still able to experience the state of freedom from Samsara or the pervasive compounded aggregates. It is a great great protection; it is like that. There are no words to describe, even for someone out there who has realized it, there is not enough words to make us understand the real experience of emptiness.

I usually give the example of the empty sweet chocolate. Today, while we were making a tour of the Stupa I distributed chocolate. Can you explain to me the exact taste of chocolate? Almost everybody would say quite the same thing. They would, say it is sweet. The taste is sweet, delicious. So, can you tell me exactly what do you mean by delicious, or the sweetness? I do not really understand the sweetness, so can you explain? Please tell me. You will start to say it is not sour, it is not bitter. There will be none of things there, not this, not that, not this. But I still do not understand exactly the taste of the sweetness. Please tell me. And the only way to make me understand is to put your chocolate in my mouth. Then, now you got it, the taste. The "oh I see". So now you please tell me back, how is it? What's the taste? Is it? "sweet". Again, I will hang around, circle around with this limited dictionary.

So, emptiness experience is like that, you see. Once you get a guidance, a course of basic knowledge, correct knowledge, even basic but correct knowledge, then the only way to do this are those two types of meditation: space like meditation and analytical meditation. Again, the words are very few, it sounds like the simplest meditation. Even comparing to breathing meditation, emptiness meditation is much simpler. The only thing is you have to do it, you have to exercise it, through repetition, through repeated exercise, you will get a result of gradual realizations: first conceptual realization, then ultimately a realization, and so that is it.

If we do not meditate, how many scriptures we study, even if we study the entire wisdom treatise, we will accumulate extensive merits yes, a lot of purifications, but we will not effectively progress on realizing the path. It will not happen like that. Like His Holiness used to say: he has meditated daily, and his main focus practice in his day-to-day life for over 40-50- 60 years is emptiness. Now finally he feels hopeful to achieve the path of preparation. He does not even say the path of seeing. He says he sees the sign that he may be able to realize the conceptual realization on emptiness after trying 60 years.

But this is an expression of his humility. He is already realized, he is already Arya Bodhisattva, no doubt. But he is giving the teaching to us that we need to put great amount of effort. That is the direct teaching. It does not work with occasional meditation. That will not lead you there. He says when he starts to go to the garden, he starts to do analytical meditation: while walking, he really feels like himself, the garden, exist but at the same time do not exist. It is really coming from wisdom; there are not just words. He is

really experiencing that, really like illusion-alike, like that and losing the grasping. And that is so helpful even to develop Bodhicitta.

So, in fact, emptiness meditation or exercising in emptiness meditation is one of the most powerful tools to help to develop Bodhicitta, because the more you develop emptiness, the more interdependent arising makes sense. It makes sense to interconnectivity, interrelations. So, then you will find a legitimate reason of why I am related to you, why I am related to the rest of the sentient beings, to the rest of the world. So, you become much more compassionate, much more altruistic. That is the way you will find that interrelationship with the rest of the sentient beings, the interrelationship as a mother with her child. If we are not able to establish interdependent reality or interdependent truth how to establish interrelationship with someone in this life who has nothing to do with you?

So that is why emptiness helps with Bodhicitta. When you meditate on Bodhicitta that will help with emptiness to realize emptiness like that. So, Lama Atisha in Lamp for the path to enlightenment says these 2 practices have to be combined. He says "Wisdom without Bodhicitta method is a bondage. Method without wisdom is also bondage", same limitation. So, wisdom without method, no enlightenment. The bondage cannot be purified, the obscuration cannot be cleansed. Method without wisdom, you cannot even achieve liberation, you cannot overcome delusion. So how to achieve enlightenment? So that is why it becomes bondage.

He said that and the venerable Subhūti replied to the Bhagavān, "Bhagavān, what is the name of this discourse of Dharma? How should it be remembered?"

He said that and the Bhagavān replied to the venerable Subhūti, "Subhūti, the name of this Dharma discourse is the 'wisdom gone beyond'; it should be remembered like that.

Why is that? Subhūti, because the very same wisdom gone beyond that is taught by the Tathāgata is not gone beyond;

Therefore, it is called 'wisdom gone beyond. The wisdom that surpasses all conceptual knowledge, the wisdom gone beyond: the wisdom that surpassed all conceptual cleverness. In other words, the wisdom achieved by all the past Buddhas, all the past realized, fully awakened ones. That is the name. The diamond wisdom, the Vajra wisdom, they are called Vajra Cutter Sutra, or Diamond Cutter Sutra. It should be remembered like that.

"Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the dharma that is taught by the Tathāgata exist whatsoever?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, the dharma that is taught by the Tathāgata does not exist whatsoever."

same meaning. does not exist inherently...

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do think about this? Are the quantities of particles of earth that exist in a billionfold world system many?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, the particles of earth are many. Sugata, they are many. Why is that? Bhagavān, because that which is a particle of earth was taught by the Tathāgata as not being a particle; therefore, it is called 'particle of earth.' That which is a world system was taught by the Tathāgata as not being a world system; therefore, it is called a 'world system

Let's say the phenomena exist substantially, then there will not be possible of the mind to label timely. Then also no need to go and find the label to be able to label, because it would be already self-labelled. It would be existing by its own self. Therefore, the possibility of being able to label is because there is no non-existent self conditionally labelled. In this life, I am born in Himalaya conditionally, Himalayan culture, Tenzin Zopa is the correct name. And my next continuum, if I am born in America, then conditionally I will

not be named Tenzin Zopa, surely, I will be named something else. John Litter, of whatever. Maybe by then, maybe Tenzin is one of them, maybe Tenzin will be a favorable name used in the West. Many of the Himalayans are already in the West and they might be reincarnated back in the Himalayas. And then there is a lot of imprints of Westerner and then a lot of John and then David John coming from the Himalaya like that.

That is definitely possible, isn't it? Because there is no true existence. That is so true. That is so flexible actually. It really makes things much easier. If things were truly existent, everything would be much more rigid, that means that is it: no way to improve, no way to purify, nothing can be achieved, nothing can be overcome, if substantially existent or truly existent. So therefore, we can be really thankful to emptiness, thankful to the ultimate reality.

Fine. I am a samsaric person, it is ok. In short. Give me a break. Fine. I will still hang around in Samsara for some time and yes, I will be liberated. I do not have to be super depressed. Because my nature is lack of inherent existence. So, my samsara could be until tomorrow morning only. Or could be maybe just for this life. And next life, somewhere else. You see? So, all these are the blessings of emptiness, isn't it? Blessings of interdependent arising, blessings of true existence, lacking inherent existence. Because of that, anything is possible. So that is why we are studying Dharma. Otherwise, no point in studying Dharma.

So that is why Buddha has a reason to reveal this Wisdom Sutra, so we can take a break from Samsara. So, we can totally say goodbye to Samsara, what Rinpoche says. With Diamond Cutter Sutra bye bye doctor, bye bye Samsara, bye bye death, bye bye fear, whatever. All this is possible, because of emptiness. It is very much like even in relative world because of that empty space, that is why everything is possible. If there is no empty space, how to build tangible things. If there is no void, space or void of obstruction, how to bring tangible things. And so even in relative truth, it acts as a mirror picture to the ultimate truth.

So then after this, I think the text is about how correctly seeing, correctly perceiving.

The Bhagavan said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha due to those thirty-two marks of a great being?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so. Why is that? Bhagavān, because those thirty-two marks of a great being that are taught by the Tathāgata are taught by the Tathāgata as no marks; therefore, they are called 'thirty-two marks of the Tathāgata.'"

The 32 marks of the Tathagata are not inherent, not inherent to anybody. If it is inherent to anybody, inherent to that individual, then that individual should be a Buddha from the very beginning, without accumulating any independent right causes and conditions to achieve Buddhahood. Someone becomes a Buddha by accumulating causes and conditions of these marks. When these marks are complete then you become a Buddha, isn't it?

Therefore, it is so true: "Tathagata are taught by the Tathagata as no marks". Therefore, they are called as the 32 marks of the Tathagata, the Buddha. You know it is quite interesting, after repeating quite a similar thing, after repeating many times, it makes us more comfortable, isn't it? It makes things softer; it makes more sense at a deeper level. Initially it is like, how to handle this? Now ok, you are fine. You can imagine Subhuti is also more settled, before then Subhuti was what? What's going on?

So, then after that the benefit.

The Bhagavān said, "Further, Subhūti, compared with some man or woman completely giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges, if someone, taking even as little as a stanza of four lines from this discourse of Dharma, also were to teach it to others, they would produce on that basis many greater merits, incalculable, unfathomable."

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche said exactly like that. These benefits are quite repeatedly reminded and that shows how amazingly precious it is. I think in our conventional world or education, that is what I heard, how true it is I do not know: if you say something a few times, it is easier remembered, something like that. So, the smartest person, the Buddha is repeating the same thing many times. He is emphasizing the importance to remember the benefit, and to really carved deeper imprints of this important topic. So, he repeatedly mentions it again and again. Beyond our ordinary way of understanding, you can think that Buddha is saying again and again the same reasoning to bless our mind, when someone is reading, when someone is studying, like that.

Thereupon, the venerable Subhūti, due to the impact of the Dharma, shed tears.

The people who have so many merits already, when they even just hear the name emptiness, the goosebumps stand up, the tears fall, they are heart-touched, because they deeply understood how karma, how ignorance are shattered. Thanks to their predispositions or firm foundation. It is like opening door to liberation. Then thinking of the kindness of Buddha, thinking of the kindness of the Guru, meeting this teaching, brings the impact, you feel so heart-touched, so grateful, then the tears fall like that. Otherwise, no feelings, very difficult to feel. Even if you put the text here (gesture of banging the head with the text), it does not.

Having wiped away the tears, he replied to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, this discourse on Dharma taught thus by the Tathāgata, Bhagavān, is astonishing. Sugata, it is astonishing. Bhagavān, since my production of exalted wisdom, I have never before heard this discourse on Dharma. Bhagavān, those sentient beings who will produce correct discrimination upon this sūtra being explained will be most astonishing. Why is that? Bhagavān, because that which is correct discrimination is not discrimination; therefore, correct discrimination was taught by the Tathāgata saying ‘correct discrimination.’

From the beginning it really makes sense to his heart, to feel the blessings as I mentioned before. That is the sign of realizations taking place. That goes similar also with Guru yoga practice, with the practice of Bodhicitta. There is a common sign, tears naturally fall down, and goosebumps stand up like that. In the Ornament of clear realization by Maitreya, he emphasizes those qualities. There are inner signs, outer signs of the blessings taking place like that.

Bhagavān, upon this Dharma discourse being explained, that I imagine and appreciate is not astonishing to me. Bhagavān, in the final time, in the final age, at the end of the five hundred, those sentient beings who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read, and understand it will be most astonishing. Furthermore, Bhagavān, they will not engage in discriminating a self; will not engage in discriminating a sentient being, discriminating a living being, discriminating a person. Why is that? Bhagavān, because that itself which is discrimination as a self, discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, and discrimination as a person is not discrimination. Why is that? Because the buddha bhagavāns are free of all discrimination.”

Here, “correct discrimination” is different from the earlier one. Here it is the discrimination of what is Dharma and what is non-Dharma, what is to be adopted or what is not to be adopted. There is a specific wisdom which is called the wisdom of discrimination, which is a quality. It consists in discriminating, being able to discriminate the one as false, even how smart is it, the smartness of the ignorance has to be abandoned. Then the smartness of the wisdom, the smartness of the mind that which is totally opposite, how apprehend its object from the ignorant as a wisdom to be adopted.

He said that and the Bhagavān replied to the venerable Subhūti, “Subhūti, it is so; it is so. Upon this sūtra being explained, those sentient beings who are unafraid, unterrified, and will not become terrified will be most astonishing.

Why is that? Subhūti, because this highest wisdom gone beyond, taught by the Tathāgata, the highest wisdom gone beyond that is taught by the Tathāgata, was also taught by unfathomable buddha bhagavāns – therefore, it is called ‘highest wisdom gone beyond.’

There are 2 points. The earlier point is practicing this wisdom of emptiness in our time, the most degenerated time, the merits we accumulate and the benefit we receive, are far greater than when you cultivated the wisdom during the fortunate time. So, during this difficult era, there is an astonishing benefit already explained in reading, writing, memorizing, studying, meditating on this Sutra... Therefore, we understand that we should practice; rather than not practicing, thinking it is a degenerated time, or because “I am not understanding it, this is so difficult to understand”. Then you leave aside. In fact, it is the most beneficial time, to do any practice in relation to the Diamond Cutter Sutra, or Wisdom Sutra.

Then the second point is you need to accumulate a lot of merits to really to feel comfortable with this Sutra. Otherwise, there are beings who get afraid to even think about emptiness, who fall into Nihilism. When you meditate, when you learn, practice of emptiness, you fall into Nihilism, until you experience that you are completely getting lost. Everything is kind of departing from you, losing from you, like families, your body, all the basis of your identity, the things that you own. The individuals who fall into Nihilism, instead of arriving to emptiness as establishing legitimate existence, your emptiness, you arrive to nothingness. Then even that brings even heart attack possible. Therefore, you need to accumulate a lot of merits to awake from that deep absorption into nothingness, to bring the result into the union of the 2 truths, or the union of the wisdom and method, to experience the bliss instead of completely get lost.

Even in Tibet there is a commonly shared story, not long ago, much more later than Lama Tsongkhapa’s time, so maybe 200-300 years ago. During one Dharma discourse on wisdom teaching, there was this master while he was receiving the teachings, he was really seriously engaging into the meditation and then suddenly he arrived to a realization on emptiness, but lacking of merits he had that moment of experience of completely losing everything, and develop a fear from quite a lengthy period. But luckily due to his observation of long-time morality and practice of compassion etc.... he was able to awake from that zone and suddenly to catch that he is here, and then there he realized the real emptiness.

Just like Lama Tsongkhapa said: completely being void of all substantial existence is the legitimately existence or interdependently existence, in another way it is establishing the complete void of inherent or substantial existence is to establish the real existence in relation to the self, completely bringing empty or substantial existence of self, within, without, in all bases, even in the name. This is in fact to establish interdependent existence. So, when he arrives to the complete empty, the moment he was able due to meritorious condition, to lift up his hand, able to hold the shirt, he woke up. Oh, I did not completely lost, actually I exist. So, he arrived at the same time to the exist but not exist.

Then Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche often mentioned when he kept teaching on emptiness the fact that we have to meditate on voidness, empty of substantial existence and being in absorption into complete nothingness, until you reach that fear of completely losing everything. It is necessary. So, if you are serious about realizing emptiness and if you want to examine about where am I? When you do emptiness meditation, if you arrive suddenly to feel a sense of fear of losing everything, then this is a good sign. And you need to arrive to that zone, to exercise again during the post-meditation, while accumulating merits to make sure that I wake up from there, not drawn in, not drawn into that hole. But that fear is necessary. If you did not get to that stage, then still it is a sign of the thickness of the grasping is still here, the thickness of like holding onto something is still there.

Further, Subhūti, that itself which is the patience gone beyond of the Tathāgata has not gone beyond. Why is that? Subhūti, because when the king of Kaliûga cut off my limbs and appendages, at that time there did not arise in me discrimination as a self, discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, nor discrimination as a person, and in me there was no discrimination whatsoever, yet there was also no non-discrimination. Why is that? Subhūti, because, if at that time there had arisen in me

discrimination as a self, at that time there would also have arisen discrimination of malice; if there had arisen discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, discrimination as a person, at that time there would also have arisen discrimination of malice.

So then from here I think he is talking about the interdependent conditions of the Buddha becoming Buddha through interdependent accumulation of causes during his training in the Bodhisattva path in the past lives' times.

“Subhūti, I know with clairvoyance that in the past period, during five hundred lifetimes, I was the rishi called Preacher of Patience’; even then there did not arise in me the discrimination as a self; there did not arise the discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, discrimination as a person. Subhūti, therefore, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, completely abandoning all discrimination, should generate the mind for unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment. One should generate the mind not abiding in form. One should generate the mind not abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomena. One should generate the mind not abiding in non-phenomena either. One should generate the mind not abiding in anything whatsoever likewise should one view the bodhisattva who totally gives up a gift by falling into anything.

“Subhūti, it is like this, for example: upon dawn and the sun rising, a man with eyes sees various kinds of forms; likewise should one view the bodhisattva who totally gives up a gift by not falling into anything.

So not falling into any form of grasping, any forms of influence by knowledge.

Further, Subhūti, those sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read, understand, and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail are known by the Tathāgata, they are seen by the Tathāgata. All those sentient beings will produce an unfathomable heap of merit.

“Further, Subhūti, compared to some man or woman, at the time of dawn, totally giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges – also totally giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges at the time of midday and evening, in such number totally giving up bodies for many hundred thousands of ten million, hundred billion eons⁴³ – if someone, having heard this Dharma discourse, would not reject it, if they themselves would produce much greater merit on that basis, incalculable, unfathomable, what need to mention someone who, having written it in letters, takes it up, memorizes, reads, understands, and correctly and thoroughly teaches it to others in detail?

“Further, Subhūti, this Dharma discourse is unimaginable and incomparable.⁴⁴ This Dharma discourse was taught by the Tathāgata for the benefit of sentient beings who have correctly entered into the supreme vehicle, the welfare of sentient beings who have correctly entered into the best vehicle. Those who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read, understand, and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail are known by the Tathāgata; they are seen by the Tathāgata. All those sentient beings will be endowed with an unfathomable heap of merit. Being endowed with an unimaginable heap of merit, incomparable, immeasurable, and limitless, all those sentient beings will hold my enlightenment on the shoulder. Why is that?

Subhūti, this Dharma discourse is unable to be heard by those who appreciate the inferior, by those viewing a self, by those viewing a sentient being, by those viewing a living being; those viewing a person are unable to hear, to take up, to memorize, to read, and to understand because that cannot be.

“Further, Subhūti, at whatever place on earth this sutra is taught, that place on earth will become worthy to be paid homage by the world with devas, humans, and asuras. That place on earth will become worthy as an object of prostration and worthy as an object of circumambulation. That place on earth will become like a shrine.

So, if you want to make your home a shrine, you can read this Sutra, you can write this Sutra, you can host this Sutra. If you want to make your garden a shrine you can do that. If you want to consecrate yourself you can do that and you become object of veneration, object of prostration, even just by seeing your name, calling your name, they accumulate merits, they establish meritorious collection, amazing isn't it?

Guided meditation – 17/03/2024

We will do a short analytical meditation on selflessness of person, selflessness of the I.

Before you do that as I mentioned yesterday, there are 4 points that you need to keep in mind to discover the emptiness of the I or emptiness of phenomena. The first point is what is the obstacle that obscures us to see the real I, not the false I. Why this thing out there obscures us. Why that obscuration makes us believe that false I is the real me?

The 1st point is to understand what the negation is, what needs to be negated. The innate ignorant is to be negated, the conceptual fabricated, the emotional or the conceptual delusional ignorant, has to be negated. Or in other words the conceptual or the superstitious influence, or the philosophy or any kind of ideas' influence has to be negated. The idea of establishing that I, that ignorant has to be negated. In another word, inherent existent I is the negation, the grasping of the inherent existent I is the negation. True existent I or the substantial existent I is the negation. The grasping of true existent or substantial I is the negation. Dualistic existent I is the negation. The grasping mind of the dualistic existence is the negation.

Anything to do with the person I or the rest of the functioning phenomena, when you search for its true existent, then, the permanently existent I or the phenomena is the negation. Grasping to the permanent existent I or the phenomena is the negation. Independent existent I and the phenomena are the negation. Grasping on interdependent I and the phenomena is the negation. Autonomically existent I is the negation. Grasping on autonomically existent I is the negation. All those different mentioned names and terms are the different characteristics or meaning of inherently existence.

So, what do you mean by inherently existence, how does it look like? If it happens to exist inherently and how would it look like? Can you describe it? Can you describe inherently existence's meaning? Then the meaning is all the terms just mentioned. Those are the different ideas, ways to establishing existence. Those different negations, the different characteristics of negation that I have just mentioned are all the different characteristics of that one final negation, or most subtle negation that we usually presented or learn from the Prasangika Madhyamika view, which is regarded as the Buddha's final view on emptiness. And that inherent existence is nothing other than the characteristics make up by all the rest of all the characteristics I have just mentioned.

So, now if you want to purify or negate the inherent existence or the grasping of inherent existence you need to negate all the mentioned ideas, all the mentioned false views, all the ignorant not knowing the other side of the different characteristics just mentioned. This is the way to purify or to negate inherent existence or the grasping at it. And that is the way to realize the ultimate truth or emptiness of the object that you are investigating, if you want to realize emptiness, or firstly understand the emptiness of the person or self, then gradually realize at least conceptually, eventually realized direct realizations of emptiness of self.

That is the only one way. The way is negating from the gross to the subtle of those mentioned different layers of the negation, and that is the way. The final arriving or discovering of the complete false of the wrongly grasping, as well as the innate ignorant, is the only way to realize the truth. It is the moment you arrive to that state of knowing, which is the opposite to all those grasping, to all those negations, and that is the knowing of the wisdom, or realizing the wisdom, which is called wisdom of selflessness or wisdom of emptiness.

Simply negating that negation, the void of negation, that is the discovery of emptiness, nothing more than that. So, the main work is nothing to memorize or nothing to achieve, something new kind of knowledge, or some tangible things, or to be arrived at a certain place so-called "this is emptiness". Nothing out there. It is simply the void, whenever you are able to negate the negation, that is the arriving at the zone of emptiness. That is the arriving, that is the "realizing wisdom". Right there, the moment you overcome the negation. So, when you examine the ignorant and finding no ignorant itself is the wisdom. Finding no substantial ignorant is the realization of emptiness of the ignorant, or the wisdom of emptiness.

Lama Tsongkhapa makes a very strong statement. In order to realize the wisdom of emptiness you need to have first a very clear knowing of what is exactly the negation. He is giving the example, if you want to catch a thief, if you do not know the thief, then how you going to get rid of the thief. I usually give the example of the onion, if you want to find the emptiness of the onion, or the core essence or the earl onion, you have to find either within the onion or without, isn't it? So first you go and look within the onion. Obviously, you would do that cause there is a strong grasping of the round thing as an onion. But then the first layer of the skin, there is no onion, you cannot find the onion, that is onion skin.

You know subject and object, it is so obvious, isn't it? So, whether ask yourself or someone maybe so-called supreme intelligent one, or maybe that little baby. And you put the onion right in the center and maybe there are 5 different kinds of beings, and 5 onions, and you say grasp the onion, and they will all go to grasp that onion, that display, the whole thing the display in the middle. And everybody would present the onion as if the whole thing is the onion. But then if you ask where exactly the onion is to make them have some kind of analytical observation on exactly where the onion is, then, all of them, maybe except the little child, may have some uncertainty, in fact, about what exactly is the onion.

So, you peel the first layer, the first skin, the second skin, all like that. So, it is peeling the gross negation, like the negation asserted by the earlier philosopher: the self being as impermanent, self being as independent, self being autonomic. It is like 3, 4 layers of the onion, you peel like that. Then you peel the slightly more central layers, the more subtle layers than the skin, and that is the negation presented by slightly higher philosophers' presentation, like Cittamatra, the dualistic grasping, you peel that skin out.

Then you still cannot reach to the onion, because every layer is not the onion. Until you come to the very central one. Is this onion? Then how about the rest of the things that you just peel out? You may still have a certain basis, certain reserved basis, that you need to analyze which is the central one, the very central one of the onions, that also you want to cut it through, to see whether the real onion is right in the middle, also it may be possible. When you get there, you discover the false apprehension of the subtle negation existence of the onion, you discover the false onto the grasping to the subtle negation like Svatantrika Madhyamika, the establishment of the existence which is things do not exist in true nature. But it has to have a substantial base, an inherent base, from the subject, or from the object, in order to establish existence.

But then when you examine even that subtle level, such as the center of the onion when you open it, there are you cannot find the real substance of the onion, the only you can find is the void of all the skin you have just peeled out. What you find once you cut the middle is empty, fine that is it. So, there is not even a single substance because there is only wide, void left. Like the knife cut, and like this (gesture: the onion is split into 2) and only the void left, nothing left. So that is equal as finding not even the slightest form of inherent nature from the object of from the subject side, that serves the basis for the existing of the onion.

So, in any phenomena, self and phenomena, you discover the self is lacking true existence, but is still without having its special characteristic, a base than we are not able to establish a person. We struggle with that isn't it? The struggle is that, if there is no substantial special characteristics base, like what we discussed yesterday, there is no way we can differentiate 2 persons. Then everything looks like the same, everything is the same. But the reality is the differences is just simply in the name. No more than that.

Simply the discriminative mind is the one that makes the differences. Otherwise, there is no differences. Otherwise, everything is in one taste.

Therefore, substantially the onion also does not exist at all, there is nothing to serve as a basis to actualize onion. Now within the onion you cannot find the onion. Now within the onion you only find empty of onion, or non-existent of onion. So now, you already discover the whole thing is not the onion, that is easier to understand. That is why you initiate to search somewhere within the onion. So now the only thing that is left is that you search the onion in other than the onion. And that is much easier to find, the only one difficulty is that you may doubt that maybe from the subject side they may be substantial potential that which makes the onion.

Like Cittamatra, mind only school. For the mind-only school, everything is a manifestation of your karma. This we usually talk about I, we Buddhists say, "everything is your karma". This happens. This is my karma. That happened, this is my karma. My karmic imprints ripen, that is why I look like this, this is happening with me is the ripening of the karma, of my karmic imprints. And that is exactly saying that in the mind, there is a potential, there is a substance that which bring the different characteristics of existence.

So, even not careful, even this claim all Buddhists have claimed, this is his karma, he has a good karma, that is why he is great. This is bad karma if he is going through crisis. Alright, then also this idea of everything is due to our mind. And if we did not meditate well or understood well, instead of following the Prasangika Madhyamika ways of saying everything is imputation of the mind, everything is because of the mind, dependent of the mind. We may most likely say the way how Cittamatra says. As if there is something, something that is making up of the existence and that is not the final arriving of emptiness. That is still bondage.

That is why the negation established by Cittamatra and the establishment of the emptiness, the characteristics of what emptiness means, a definition of what emptiness means by Cittamatra is not satisfying for the Prasangika. It is very gross, that is why there is a saying that Cittamatra Asanga would say: I am Mahayanist, Mahayanist philosopher. So Nagarjuna would say please better do not claim you are a Mahayanist, better of like the Vaibashika, they do not claim Mahayanist and it is ok for them to not any assertions of dualistic existence, true existence. You claim as a Mahayanic, yet you still assert true existence of the mind. That is a disaster.

You should be by now, at least understanding the most subtle level of understanding on emptiness, but still, it seems like far away, but still, you carry this heck of the tag that we commonly carry together. This is just a teasing. Even Asanga ultimately realized emptiness and accordingly with the Buddha's final intention. Asanga by now is an enlightened being. But Asanga chose to hold this philosophical position to create debate, discussions, and all this like Vasubandhu, the philosopher of the Vaibashika, the initial school of the Buddhist philosophy, but Vasubandhu is now enlightened. By then Vasubandhu is already Arhat. Just to create a base to discuss, since the discovery of emptiness is so difficult. And there are different, as I mentioned before, the presentation of the different philosophy is so helpful, like the onion. You just to peel one layer out. First you peel the Vaibashika assertion of the onion, then the Cittamatra assertion of the negation, you peel that out, then Svatantrika Madhyamika assertion of the negation, you peel that out. And by peeling all that out, this is the arriving of the wisdom of emptiness. So, it is so helpful in that manner.

So anyway, there are another 4 points, and other notes, that Roms will share with you to take home to serve as a little guidance for you to take for your emptiness meditation. The one is the analytical meditation, and the other one is a guide to the absorption meditation. Those of you who want to be serious about emptiness meditation it is necessary to have a slightly broader understanding on emptiness. And what is presented in Diamond Cutter Sutra is already the most extended one. It is the most profound. So, last month in Santa Fe, I did a few classes, quite detailed teachings on emptiness, then after that we did one weekend of emptiness meditation retreat. So, there is a recording there. So, if you are serious maybe you can look into it.

Of course you can refer to those treatises like Nagarjuna, Chandarkriti, Aryadeva, Lama Tsongkhapa, the wisdom chapter of the Lam-Rim, Shantideva's wisdom chapter. Then also the Nagarjuna's precious garland. There is a section dedicated to the teaching on emptiness. But there is sometimes a lot of philosophy, the way of the presentation, sometimes some individuals may have a bit of difficulty. So, when we teach, we try to have a bit of summary, based on those teachings.

So, there are another 4 points that are good to know. As a person, the self does not exist by or within itself. Then self does not exist by other, other cause, even conventionally by other causes, or by other inherent existent causes, self does not exist within itself, meaning self does not exist at the time of the cause. So, there are certain reasoning presented. If the self exists at the time of cause, then there is no reason to be a reproduction of the result. In another word, another way to understand is itself does not exist substantially by its own substantial potential or at the time of the substantial causal stage self does not exist. Therefore, self does not exist by self, self does not exist by others, self does not exist by both, not self-caused, not others caused, not a production by both, self also is not a production of no causes.

It is analyzing whether the self, even at a conventional level, if you examine the result, it does not exist at the time of cause. Then if it exists at the time of cause, then it is a self-production. Then the false is that there is no reason to reproduce. There is no reason, why do you need to produce again? Or it would be the false of ever producing, non-stop, a limitless self. So, the first one, the self-production one, is similar idea of the Cittamatra is asserting. Cittamatra asserts the existence of me, the potential already exists in the mind, the mental continuum as a karmic seed. Because of having that karmic seed, it manifests into you, it manifests into me.

So, I am simply a manifestation of my mind, a manifestation of my karma. The potential that which is already preexistent. I already exist at the time of cause. So, that is the self-production. Worse than that, the ability of self-production, it is able to do so, because it lies in the nature of true existence, so this is a second layer of false. The Cittamatra would say the potential is already pre-existing in the mind like this flower have to happen to be here is my karma. It is a manifestation of the seed to actualize this flower to me, it already ripens, it already exists in my mind. Without that, it is not possible for this flower to be here. Then on top of that the worst thing is it is possible because that seed is truly existing. Worse than earlier, it is not only pre-existent, but the main power lies in the true existent power, or in the inherent existent. That is a solid one that already exists in the mind. So that is why the flower actualized in front of me. So that is the self-production.

Then, like this flower, let's say, all these are, maybe this rose, that self-potential, maybe we can say the seed of that rose flower. That alone cannot produce the rose. You need other cause. The other cause is not talking about condition, it is talking about [taking another flower] the seed for this other flower has to come together to produce this rose, self and other causes. The seed of this and the seed of the rose have to come together to produce the rose. That is not possible, isn't it?

So, it is already it is already defeated the earlier one, that is not self-produced. Now it is a production of both. It is not possible the self-production, now it is not possible the production of both. Self-caused and other cause come together. So, now, it does not make any sense that to produce rose, you need the seed of some other thing, isn't it? And worse than that, that is still underlined by its true existence. That is the main potential carried by the seed of this flower's seed that must be with the seed of this rose in order to produce the rose. The first one is self-production. The second one is produced by others, this flower. The rose has to be produced by the cause of this flower. The rose seed is not true existent, then fine, not carrying self-potential to produce the rose, the rose is produced by others' cause, by the seed of this flower. That is the second one. The third one is what I explained before, by both. The fourth one is the rose produced by no cause. That is even worse.

So, this is the common logical reasoning to examine the selflessness of self, of phenomena. It is called the diamond fragmented logical reasoning to negate the false way of actualizing the self, or to discover the

emptiness of self and emptiness of phenomena. So, that is one of the logical reasoning you can use while doing analytical meditation. And also, many other logical reasoning like the 7 kinds of chariot: the example of the chariot, the chariot is not part of the chariot, the chariot is not the whole of it, etc...so, there are seven kind of logical reasoning you can use. So, each one is on my notes so you can check it out.

Ok so now maybe now we do a short meditation.

First nine rounds of the breathing exercise. So, now do another 9 rounds focusing single-pointedly on the breathing in and out, the awareness of the breathing, or the sound, or simply follow your mind, right behind the breathing in and out. When the breathing goes out, remember, be aware that the breathing comes in from the nostril, like traveling up somewhere to the forehead. And there is kind of a band, a pipe which is the nervous system, then going on along the spine, going from the right channel all the way around the navel channel. There is like two pipes link. Then the air following from the other channel, the left channel, going all the way up to the crown, then a V shape come down, then release from the left nostril.

So first 3 rounds, do the same way. Then the 3 next, the opposite way. The third round as if the pipe or the 2 channels, like a break, or a crack, a whole, the two channels down there went inside the center channel, like two pipes put inside one big pipe. So, when you breathe in, you breathe in from the two nostrils, meaning from the two pipes, then you breathe out from the center channel. You can breathe from the mouth, but the visualization, the air is going out from the forehead. So, you are chasing after the breathing. About the hand mudra, the gesture is usually quite hard, quite like that [doing strong gesture], more like a robot. Very affirmative way. Even physically there is some exercise happening, stretch your back, hands on your knees. Thank you.

So, day to day in your spared time, you can do another two more, or at least one more specifically dedicated to purifying the three poisons as we did yesterday. If there are any obstacles in life, then you can use the breathing meditation to purify them, heal yourself, it could be physical disease, any form of obstacles, mental obscurations...Today, instead of doing that part, since we do not have much time, we do short preparatory single pointed concentration to the actual meditation on Shamata practice.

Shamata is something that we should pursue to develop, once you develop Shamata, every practice has strength, every practice will be most effective, even for the emptiness wisdom, without the Shamata mind, you will not be able to develop the special insight. Yesterday we discussed about the usage of special insight, without which one cannot progress on the paths and grounds.

Then there are two kinds of practitioners. Certain practitioner, their mind is too active. Their mind is very good with the discursive objects, being mindful in discursive objects, being very alert, very focused when they do too many things, when they think too many things. Some individuals they are not multi-tasking, they need to do one by one. They have the capability to completely rest or place their concentration in one object.

So, the first type of people, you meditate on emptiness first, doing analytical meditation. Then, you try to develop Shamata when you do the absorption meditation on emptiness. You will be training your busy mind, sharp busy mind, which will be very helpful for the analytical meditation on emptiness and at the same time, when you develop the wisdom from the analytical meditation on emptiness, you are already training yourself to be able to calm and focus your mind to the absorption meditation. The moment when you achieve the wisdom of analytical meditation, it is already a preparation for absorption meditation. So, whenever you do absorption meditation, that takes as a journey to develop Shamata. So, when you realize emptiness directly, for that kind of practitioner, you realize Shamata simultaneously. When you realize emptiness, you realize Shamata together. So, you are actualizing special insight when you realize emptiness directly, even you have not realized Shamata separately before.

Then, second type of practitioner, you first need to develop Shamata, to develop the nine level of Shamata. Then once you reached the ninth level, you choose emptiness wisdom as the object of your meditation,

using that Shamata serviceable mind to do effective analytical meditation. Then, with little effort, in absorption meditation, you already achieved special insight.

There are two ways. Individually you need to know what kind of person you are, what kind of mind you have, so then you can choose like that. Otherwise, those busy minds, no matter how much effort you put into doing Shamata, you will not succeed. And some dull mind, no matter how much you try to analyze emptiness, you are dull, so that is very hard. So, you need to know your own capability. That way within a short period of time effectively you are able to develop realizations.

Even the Lam Rim teaches about the preliminary training on single pointed concentration, the Shamata practice. For the preliminary training, first you try to train until you are able to stay single-pointedly for 22 minutes. That is the guidance from Lama Tsongkhapa. Then half an hour. Then one hour. Then 3 hours. When you are able to remain single-pointedly for 3 hours, you are quite prepared, you are ready to go into Shamata training. Without that, you are going to Shamata retreat, yes of course, you can train for a few years or a few months in the preliminary practice, but for Shamata itself you need the full dedicated time which most of us we do not have time, we still have a normal life. Every day, in early morning you take at least 5 minutes or 10 minutes to do single-pointed meditation led by this breathing meditation.

Then the Buddhist teachings advice to choose holy objects, just by remembering holy objects, you accumulate merits, that is the main reason. Otherwise, you can choose a normal object to do concentration. So here, as a Buddhist, we use holy objects, like Buddha's image or Buddha's eye, or Buddha's crown, the goldish energy of the Buddha...

If you are using Buddha's image, then certain teachings emphasize to visualize as small as possible, like thumbnail size. That will help our mind to channel into one single-pointed concentration, because he is so small. So, you have a way to see it clearly. You need to have three qualities of your meditation. One is the clarity of the object. So, when you visualize small in order to have the clarity you already kind of tease your mind to channel in one direction. So that helps for the concentration. That is the one reason. And the second quality is the single-pointedness, not just the clarity of the object, but single-pointedness. The third one, you need to have a sense of relaxation, a sense of stillness. If you are too much stressed when you do meditation, so that is not right. The moment you do meditation, you need to feel good, mentally, settled physically, you feel so comfortable, "so good, like the best resting time", and when you come out of meditation, you need to have this impact of well rested both your body and mind.

Certain teaching emphasizes to visualize as huge as possible. Maybe that also will make you to really see very clearly the object. It is up to you. You have to investigate at least for some time, you have to research. One is research on what kind of object is suitable for you. Big, small, bright. You have to determine that. Second research is the time. Some people in the morning are so fresh, for others the morning time is the loosest spirit. Others, the moment dark night falls to you, you become so fresh. Normally, it is said dawn time is the best time. But not for everybody, so you need to know which time is the best time for your meditation.

Then, you also need to research which type of meditative posture is good for you. Generally, seven meditation Vairochana posture is the best. But it is not the best for everybody. I often share this story. There was this master in Tibet. He had been meditating for quite some time and he is doing everything correctly: visualization is correct, seven Vairochana meditation posture is correct, but he is not actualizing the realizations. So, he thought maybe something is wrong. He looked into the text. Everything is correct. He went to seek consultation with a senior meditator who claimed to have a clairvoyance. So, he says your posture is wrong. He answered "no, I am doing the correct posture". He said "no, your right posture is like a cow lying down, like a cow. Your immediate previous life was a cow. So, there is the subtle aggregate, even the physical aggregate was greatly influenced. So, your channels are not like that. Your channels function straight when you lie down like a cow". So, then after that, he lied down like a cow, then he meditated, and the realizations came so fast eventually.

So again, we need to know what posture you need. So, it is not so good example for you. For me my best posture is in the bed. In the morning. It is not really working at night, but in the early morning in the bed. Even for my prayers, daily sadhanas, everything in the bed, and do that even before breakfast, even if possible before going to the toilets. So, there is some sense of focus. So again, it is against all the rules. You know they say you need to fresh up, brush your teeth, clean, wear nicely, have a nice table, prayer altar, then you do meditation. It does not work for me. For me, if you wake up, while I was lying down like this, if I move to be straighter, I can feel it is already a little distraction, already some activity intrudes. Even that move, so the best part for me it works, the moment you wake up, I freeze there, do my practice straight away, I do not try to sit properly to meditation right there. Do not follow my way, this is for me. I do not want to give any bad example. Like everybody sleeps. Like stay in your bed, in pajamas, do your practice.

So, there are some basics researches you need to do. All these factors are conducive to you. Then even in a very short period of time, it is really helpful. Another thing is as I mentioned before whether your mind is good for discursive objects of meditation or single-pointed meditation. That is very important. Then do not force something that which is not really right for you. You do the one that is right for you. So then maybe no need for meditation as I already took so much of your time, but keep this information, they are important. If there is any newcomer here like me, then maybe it is helpful. So otherwise, you do what you do.

And also, a conducive place is important. Certain place really helps you to get into meditation or practice, full of inspiration. Certain place, even if everything looks good, it will not inspire you. It is so good with the distractions but not good for the practice. Why so many people go to Nepal, to the Himalayas, to Tibet, to monasteries? Sometimes, the monasteries, and the Himalayas are not a quiet place. Maybe much busier and noisier than Land of Medicine Buddha, but even in the mist of that business, that noisiness, somehow like your heart will be filled with inspiration. Your heart is like ready for meditation. Even in the huge noise, we are able to get into a very fruitful meditation and practice so I am just giving an example: it could be therefore your home, it could be your own hermitage, your hut, your cave.

The West can be the best retreat place, not necessarily only the Himalayas. Because of our karma, we do not know. So whatever places you have the opportunity to go, take the opportunity to at least once a day, do a few hours of meditation and check it out. I remember in Australia, there is this place called Blue mountains, I stayed there for about three years. I did some retreat there and even the daily practice somehow was very good. And also, the current place, where I stay with my niece, very good too somehow. It is just right in the middle of all the houses, all the people. But it is ok. And some places, people say very good, but it does not really work for you. That also good to check.

Question: So, the nine points meditation that you were speaking, when you breathe in, is there anything like in the stomach, you are supposed to release out, is there any particular technique?

Geshela's answer: usually maybe biologically, the breathing does not really go out, it is more within the lungs. But your visualization has to be as if you are breathing in all the way up to your naval chakra, even though the chakras are actually going below that, but the connection and whenever the two left and right channels need to do any activities in relation to the central channel, then this happens around the naval chakra. And not only up to the belly, but you also feel like you are transmitting the whole breathing to the entire body. And when you hold all onto the breathing you feel like kind of stretching, it is like kind of staffing all the breathings, and when you breathe out lengthy, you feel really kind of taking whatever remain breathing in entire your body like sending it out like that.

Question: So, when you breathe in you have to make your stomach out or?

Geshela's answer: so actually, it works a bit in the opposite way. When you breathe in actually the stomach goes in. When you do this breathing meditation in a quite intense way, when you breathe in, it is like the

stomach goes in. When you breathe out, the stomach goes out. Because when you breathe in, it is like the air is stuffing the other area. And it is like punching the stomach area like that. When you breathe out it is like all the entire area is punched, flat, then somehow the stomach is helping to push out, you feel the stomach is exploding like that.

Question: Thank you. And one last question. Sometimes when you do analytical meditation, the mind becomes so active like you cannot sleep the whole night because it is too fresh and active and the next is spoiled, so what to do?

Geshela's answer: better do not do analytical meditation at night. Better do more absorption meditation, usually because we go to sleep so for the deity yoga practitioners you go to sleep in the Dharmakaya meditation, so clear-light meditation, so going to sleep like the same process as dying. So, you do the dissolution, it is another very important meditation. When you are already practicing highest yoga tantric deity, the clear-light meditation is a must for the maximum benefits in your spiritual journey, one of the reasons is when we pass away, there is a natural clear-light occurrence without force.

So, if you train when you are alive, that really prepares you to utilize the clear-light occurrence onto the path. Then that gives possibility to full enlightenment right there. And if you do the dissolution, that will give you a very good sleep. It is like going into a very deep deep state. Because even before you do the dissolution, you even prepare your bed, like so comfortable. And you are sleeping on a lotus, floating, not a hard bed. Then eventually, you have to do until the dark near occurrence, because that time not only you feel the darkness of the night, even internally you feel complete darkness and that is really good for sleeping, and from that complete darkness you are completely settled into nothing to cling on, which is the clear-light, like very much going into the clear-light zone.

It is so comfortable, so free, most of the time you cannot sleep because there is something is bothering like grasping or subconsciously you hold to many things, maybe subtle fears, subtle concerns, or past, future. These are the things that make us not sleep. It is all our system kind of like disturbed.

But then, no highest yoga tantric practices, it does not matter. There are many ways to meditate. One of the things is the lotus, moon disc, sun disc can be visualized by any practitioner. Then you just simply understand your true nature is Dharmakaya and then dissolving into the Dharmakaya, dissolving into emptiness, and you go to bed.

Another thing is you visualize your guru, just next, your pillow is your Guru's laps. And the Guru is there on the lotus, moon disc, sun disc, if the Guru has already passed away. If the Guru is still living, then do not visualize the lotus, you visualize a cushion. If the Guru is going to reincarnate, also you should not visualize the lotus, only visualize the cushion. Usually, the lotus is only visualized for those with no reincarnation like Shakyamuni Buddha, there is no reincarnation. So, otherwise, for the Guru, the safest way is to visualize the cushion, then you put your head on the laps of your Guru, so the pillow is very much the Guru's laps.

And you are completely fully watched by your Guru, you are completely summing everything, whatever bad things you have done, whatever good things you have done, everything is in the Guru's hands. Whatever kind of karmic consequences you are going to experience, everything is in the Guru's hands. And you have a full trust that the Guru has the ability to cause you to purify everything instantly, cause you to actualize all the best instantly. With that full trust you go to bed and have a very good sleep. Thank you.

Final Session – 17/03/2024

Hello everyone, welcome back. We need to complete the text. So, I will straight away start and continue from where we stopped yesterday page 15.

It says like this:

“Subhūti, whatever son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage takes up the words of a sūtra like this, memorizes, reads, and understands, they will be tormented; will be intensely tormented. Why is that? Subhūti, because whatever non-virtuous actions of former lifetimes that were committed by those sentient beings that would bring rebirth in the lower realms, due to torment in this very life, those non-virtuous actions of former lifetimes will be purified, and they will also attain the enlightenment of a buddha”

In general, when you practice altruistic Dharma, in particularly this Diamond Cutter Sutra, it is so powerful that all the unripen definite karma of the past will ripen now. The definite karma is the one we cannot escape without experiencing the result. We ourselves are responsible for that. We already committed complete karma, complete conditions for that. Just the time had not arrived yet. Instead of experiencing it next life, or even experiencing in the Hell realms, or a few countless eons lives later, all those karmas, due to practice in relation to Diamond Cutter Sutra will ripen upon us now, within this lifetime.

Now, when we when we learn about the nature of the karma. The karma has a power to increase. Even if it is definite to produce certain result, the karmic course will continue to increase its power to bring greater magnitude of the result. So “definite” karma does not mean whatever amount of karma is already committed, that it just stopped there, just fixed the ripening of the result, the amount of results, not like that.

The unfortunate part is that it increases its magnitude. So, when you experience the definite karmic result, the longer you delay that, the greater the result you have to experience. Longer the delay, longer the period of time that you have to experience the karma. So that is extremely extremely devastating.

So, all Dharmas serve as an antidote, but not as effective as The Diamond Cutter Sutra. Even just by reading the Sutra, it will purify those definite karma by ripening in this very lifetime. And when it ripens in this very lifetime, because of the power of the antidote, it ripens in a minor way. It must ripen because it is definite, to ripen the definite karma. But it ripens in with minor consequences, and lesser duration of time.

The definite karmic result committed in the past lifetimes, such as heinous crime is supposed to be experienced through unbearable suffering in the Hell Realm. Now, because of this Sutra, it ripens in this line in the form of maybe cancer, maybe in the form of headache, maybe in the form of a diarrhea. But you must experience some pain. But it is very minor. So, the more the dedicated practice you do, lesser the duration and the lesser the pain, even there has to be a pain, but lesser the pain.

When you practice this sutra, we may not know what kind of karma we committed in the past; the moment you start to practice this sutra, a lot of unbelievable things may fall in, troubles may fall in our place. And those who really know about karma, those who really know the power of the practice, they will rejoice. They will feel liberated. And they will feel so rejoice “I got this problem”, so that I do not have to suffer for eons of lifetimes in the lowest Hell Realm or Hungry Ghosts Realm, or Animal Realm, or wherever it may be, in unbearable kind of suffering. You know, here, especially if this suffering ripens upon the time and the place where there is a lot of conducive help, like good doctors are there, a lot of painkillers are there, families and friends who can be beside you. It is so comfortable to get sick, so comfortable to get in trouble.

By the blessing of the Sutra, by the blessing of even just reading one stanza of the Diamond Cutter Sutra, then, writing it, meditating on it, meditating on emptiness. The essence of this teaching is emptiness, accordingly with the teaching in relation to that.

When the practitioner understands that, when the suffering problem comes in their way, he truly regards it as a blessing of the Guru. Truly it is a nectar. And he feels most fortunate, and you endorse yourself that, and not any kind of practitioner, quite a good one. You know, it is quite effective. You may be so proud of yourself and well done to be proud. Such practitioner will never be depressed. You see, the moment you start to practice this, Diamond Cutter Sutra, maybe in the rest of your life, only troubles may come in your way: the health gets worse, financial state gets worse, so much trouble in the society that, everybody starts

to blame you; to file false accusation against you, people start to throw stone to you. You will feel unbelievable blessing.

You see, it is so powerful that there is even the possibility that the more stubborn, the heaviest negative karma also ripens in this life, that even the practitioner was put into the rank of a wandering street dog. Before you meet the practice, you are a quite respected human being, you are at least recognized as a human being; but with the blessing taking place, you may be put into the rank of a dog. A street dog, not a very comfortable dog, the street dog as in Nepal, in India, not like the dogs in America. In America, instead of being born as a human being, may I be born as the pet of an American family. That is the most comfortable rebirth. The dogs can learn how to talk, how do guide people.

Now the practitioner who really knows the Dharma, how the karma works. It is not easy to know how the karma works, especially the subtle one, only Buddha knows. So, in order to know roughly how the karma works (maybe not the subtlest one, because you need to become Buddha omniscient to see the subtle level of karma) that already shows that you carry such a high wisdom. Then when you have irresistible faith, irresistible trust, or full conviction with the support of your merits, and the knowledge that you have in relation to emptiness, the Sutra like the Diamond Cutter Sutra; then, you will celebrate your promotion from a human rank to a dog, a street dog rank. And when you are able to celebrate the rank of this wandering street dog level, the next moment you will have the rank of a god.

So, the true practitioner, a really dedicated practitioner, a good practitioner, a Yogi, day and night, wait and pray: "May I be discarded from the human rank", and arrive to the dogs' rank, like, my late master, Geshe Lama Konchog used to say that. He went through that stage, after he came out from the cave, in the village, passing through a narrow road, the doors are facing the main road, most of the houses are about 2 stories high, underneath for the cows, and the second floor is for the human. So, when he was passing through the village, some were holding a stone to throw him.

And there is one family, they waited with the dirty carpet that we usually use for their sleeping or whatever. And usually, in the villages, they go to the field and without taking off the shoes, they will just step onto the carpet and maybe, once a year, they may just clean it. Mostly even not. So, they wait with that carpet, and when Geshe Lama Konchog was coming, right in front of his face, they bang the dust to his face. They treat worse than the worst beggar. He is not disturbing anybody, he is just passing through, only because he looks poor, ragged like alien, he does not look like a human being, they treated him like that. Because he was a caveman. And we were blind by the ignorance to see the actual level of practice.

But I was told and his students too, they say they did not understand why, but he was singing song. Actually, he was thanking them. He was acknowledged. He was reminded where he arrived. He finally discarded from the rank of human. And he was put into the dog's street dogs rank and he felt that "oh, okay well done I think I did well in my practice". He felt immeasurable the blessings, immense blessings of the Guru, inner bliss. Then make a special prayer, a special aspiration to these people who treat him like that.

Later, maybe like 20-30 years after, the family who was leading all that, the husband renounced, he has a wife who was hijacked by the brother, then he went through so many samsaric suffering. When he renounced, he was kicked out from home. No place to go. Then, the first person that came to his mind was Lama Konchog. So, he came to Lama Konchog. He confessed. He explained how he saw how Samsara was out there. And Lama Konchog ordained him. Then assigned and to guide him through practice. Until he passed away.

Basically, all the individuals who treated Lama in that way everyone became almost all heart disciples later. By the time they realized that this is their Guru, by then, he was already in the rank of the Gods. But the journey took 20 years, or you can say even 40 over years, in that region, about 20 years of diligent practice, never giving up. And he experienced those 3 phases of life within that short period of time.

Then, if we do not know the karma well, then we may think “from the moment I started to practice Dharma. Oh, there is obstacle coming into my way”. It is not because of practicing Dharma that the obstacle come in our way. We already have the cause committed before. It is just a matter of time, if you wait even one day longer, one moment longer, the karma is going to be even more intense. In fact, the Dharma helped to purify the Karma, to lessen the suffering of the karmic consequences. We have to understand like that. Some people do not understand: “after I practice Dharma So many obstacles fall in my way. Dharma is supposed to kind of liberate me from obstacles”. People give up Dharma.

That does not mean that whenever you practice Diamond Cutter Sutra, you always get into trouble. If you have already purified your karma before, you have no karma left. You do not have to experience it. Many do experience some troubles, because they never purified their karma before and there is an abundance of karma out there. But there are also many who really starts to progress in their life: better health, longer live, prosperity. These are the blessings if you do not have the karma.

This is what you mean: ***“They will be tormented, will be instantly tormented”***. This has to be understood correctly.

Even when your practice is any other Dharma, once you come into a spiritual journey, meet genuine Dharma, Dharma environment, Dharma practice, some may feel: “My life become more like kind of bit of more disturbed or more disorientated and say like that, more than before I met the Dharma”. Some people may think like that. “The Dharma is making me more trouble”. No, it is not like that. It is the purification taking impact, and so fast.

Once you get liberated from there, no need to wait until next life. It can be just maybe moral. You can enjoy your life. Or maybe later in your life. For some it takes one life. Only by next lifetime. Or maybe another few lifetimes. But they will have all the conducive conditions to continue the practice and within a few lifetimes, they have full opportunity to purify, until they purify completely.

In short, Dharma has all the benefits. The whole purpose of the Dharma practice is to do 2 jobs: purify the karma and accumulate meritorious causes. These are the main two jobs of the Dharma. When you practice Diamond Cutter Sutra, these 2 jobs happen in the most effective way, swiftest way, without any distraction, straightforward.

When we practice the Dharma, it is not easy: a lot of hardships. When you look at all the past Masters, Mahasiddhas, Gurus with our ordinary minds, why would you choose that kind of life? Why do not you enjoy? Why do not you just lay down in the beach, have burgers, ice cream, and just do what you like, but do not bother about concerning, harmonizing or always concerning about others. Why need to be busy buddy? You know, just, care about yourself. Forget about it. You know, we may think like that.

Like, our Guru, like Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, day and night serving others. So tiring, not from the ordinary view, he does not even have enough time to eat properly. If you put breakfast around 7 o'clock, he may have breakfast around 11 o'clock.

It is not purposely. If he has free time, then he needs to do his daily prayers because he is a lineage holder, if he does not keep up with the commitments, how to pass down the lineage, there so many students who rely on him. The moment he starts to eat breakfast, right after that he has to meet with people. You have no other excuses. Not only towards the humans. Before he eats foods, he spent about 1-2 h making prayers, sharing the food and the merits with the rest of the other sentient beings, in one of the most extensive food offering prayers that the Lama does.

Many of you have experienced that: if you if you have a meal appointment with Rinpoche, you have to expect to eat a very cold outdated food you know, 2-3 h later. So, if Rinpoche asks to have a meal together, you would already have lunch before, otherwise your lunch would be more at dinner time. Because he is making charity out of it, he makes prayers, even full offering prayers or any dedication, and he is already

condensing his dedications, otherwise he would go one person by one person, one Hell being by one Hell being.

I used to think in the initial stage, because his teachings goes on so long hours, until very late night and you feel tired, you feel sleepy, you feel hungry, and when he made dedications, he made this specific dedication to the humans, specific dedication to the animals, he mentions the names of the animals, all the hungry ghosts, all the Hell beings, the Suras, all the Asuras... Sometimes, I used to think: "why do not you just say all sentient beings, everybody is inside there. Why? it is just taking so much time, you know, saying one by one". But he is paying specific attention to all, one by one. He is paying attention to all of us individually, unbelievable. This is being in the service of all sentient beings, until you have no time to sleep, no time to rest. From the ordinary point of view, ordinary mind when we look at him, "why are you wasting time?".

So, it is not easy when you practice Dharma, you do not become like a king. For example, observing vows is not easy for an ordinary mind. Delusions are there. If you go along with the delusion and with what comes, if you let the delusions manage your life and if you ask this person: "would you like to stay alone or you want to go with a girlfriend? Beautiful girlfriend. Or maybe many girlfriends"? You know, and they say surely want to go with many girlfriends and beautiful girlfriends. You know: "do you want to eat just this same kind of food, or you want to eat many different kinds of?" surely you want to go and try many, many different kinds of food.

"Do you want to wear this the same color every day, all life or you want to have a very fashionable, you know, different colors, different design?". And different hairstyles. But of course, the ordinary mind definitely likes to try different hairstyles, different colors. I mean, surely, I want to try the rainbow color hair style. I also want to try the there is a long head dropping from here. But this side, I completely shave. And I do not want this just bold, enough.

You know, you ask if your ordinary mind like that. You see? So, it is not easy to observe vows. Not easy to observe a refuge vow. Not easy to observe 5 lay vows. Not easy to observe even like Bodhisattvas vows. It is not easy at all. Not easy to observe Tantric vow, not easy to practice Dharma at all, so many hardships.

But the harder it is, and the better it serves as an antidote. When you understand that, there is no hardships. That is the bliss. But if you do not understand that there is lot of hardships. There is lot of limitation. When you think from the meaning, from the Dharma point of view: wow. I am the freest. Because I do not have one girlfriend in fact, entire sentient beings are my girlfriend. Since I do not attach to one family, entire sentient being is my family. You see. Since I do not have one house. The entire universe is my house. You see, so it is like that, you know. From the spiritual way of thinking, then, everything is bliss. Everything is so wonderful, you know, so wonderful. Otherwise, it is a tormenting. Not only, but "instantly" tormented. "Intensely" tormenting.

So even if people come to Dharma center, people go to monastery. Do you think it is easy? No. Sometimes people go to Dharma center and people may find that there are more troubles than in the ordinary world. Especially if you really directly engage in serving a Dharma center, it is more complicated than serving in a corporate office. You can go through a lot of pain. And to be in the service of sentient beings, oh, that is the hardest job. That is the hardest job, you see? But from the Dharma point of view, that is the best job. That is the most beneficial.

Can you imagine? Your job is planting the seed of someone's enlightenment. Can you imagine? It is priceless. It is unbelievable. You are true Guru. No need to sit on the throne and talk about Dharma. Each person who is working here, each person who is cleaning or gardening or whatever, managing or whatever, whatever work, each one of them are planting seeds of enlightenment in each of us or whoever comes here. And they are Guru. They are actually guiding us to the path to enlightenment. So, from the spiritual understanding, the Dharma way of understanding, you are accumulating that much unbelievable benefits. So, the Guru is not just the one who sits on the throne. You know Buddha is not that just on the altar you

know, whoever serving sentient being, they are the emanation of Buddha. They are the emanation. They are the embodiment of the Guru.

When people who do not have Dharma in their life, before they come to Dharma, they experience clashes, that clash of energies. Why do you go through so many troubles? Sometimes they become bit out of their mind sometimes: "oh, I used to be quite calm, but after meeting Dharma. It is like everything is to straight up like that. Why?". But if you understand the real point of view of what's happening, it is because of 2 energies clashing: the worldly energy, Dharma energy is clashing.

You might become wilder than before. But if you are able to pass through that transition with the help of the people around you, like the Gurus, the Sanga members, who take care of this individual the first time they come to the Dharma, in a skillful way, gently. When they are able to pass through that: they experience huge realization, huge progress.

Now later, when you commit to take refuge: another clash. Then later when you want to progress on your path, maybe you want to take 5 lay vows, another clash. Then after that you want to progress to take Bodhisattva vows, another big clash, after that you want to practice Tantra, another big clash. After that you want to become Sangha another big clash. That challenge carries on. You know, until you reach a steady path like such as the Arya being path, you will go through that.

So that is why, even Bodhisattvas, even ordinary Bodhisattvas who are in the path of preparation, until you reach the fourth level of the path of preparation, the supreme Dharma, before that, there are many Bodhisattvas who give up Bodhicitta. They just let go and they say, "I cannot handle this" You know, "I'd rather pursue my own self liberation", many. Many, even the Bodhisattvas, those who are already in the path. Now can you imagine for us? We may have once a while wanted to give up. And once we know this teaching, then, it becomes an encouragement to not give up, because if a Bodhisattva can give up, why not me? So, therefore, even while being so ordinary, I still have the heart to continue. Thumbs up.

So, many individuals practicing Dharma coming into Dharma center, becoming Sangha, practicing Buddhism, like an escape zone from our early troubles. That is the wrong motivation. Sometimes you may experience even worse times, than in a worldly environment after you get into the Dharma. So, once we know that, then, okay. Okay, now I am distracting so much. And I have so much to finish. But I thought it was important to clarify this section.

Subhūti, I know with clairvoyance that in the past period, in even more countless of countless eons, much beyond even beyond the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dīpaṅkara, there were eighty-four hundred thousands of ten million, hundred billion buddhas whom I pleased, and having pleased, did not upset. Subhūti, from whatever I did, having pleased and not having upset those buddha bhagavāns and in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, from someone taking up this sūtra, memorizing, reading, and understanding, Subhūti, compared to this heap of merit, the former heap of merit does not approach even a hundredth part, a thousandth part, a hundred-thousandth part; does not withstand enumeration, measure, calculation, similarity, equivalence, or comparison.

So, it is a measurement, it is just a calculation of how great numbers and how great number of eons or time. That much pleases the Buddha. Of course, obviously, you accumulate so many merits, but then comparing to you reading this Diamond Cutter Sutra, even one Stanza the merit surpass like that.

Subhūti, at that time, the sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage will receive a quantity of heap of merit that, if I were to express the heap of merit of those sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage, sentient beings would go mad, would be disturbed.

"Further, Subhūti, this Dharma discourse being unimaginable, its maturation indeed should also be known as unimaginable."

Then, the venerable Subhūti replied to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, how should one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle abide, how practice, how control the mind?”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, here, one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle should generate the mind thinking this: ‘I shall cause all sentient beings to pass completely beyond sorrow into the realm of nirvana without remainder of the aggregates. Although sentient beings were caused to pass completely beyond sorrow like that, no sentient being whatsoever was caused to pass beyond sorrow.’ Why is that? Subhūti, because if a bodhisattva engages in discriminating a sentient being, he is not to be called a ‘bodhisattva.’ Also, if he engages in discriminating a person, he is not to be called a ‘bodhisattva.’ Why is that? Subhūti, because the dharma called ‘one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle’ does not exist whatsoever.

“Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata from the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever?”

He said that and the venerable Subhūti replied to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata from the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever.”

He said that and the Bhagavān replied to the venerable Subhūti, “Subhūti, it is so. It is so, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata from the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. Subhūti, if that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata were to exist at all, the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara would not have made the prediction to me, saying, ‘Young brahmin,

He is talking about the Buddha.

in a future period, you will become the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha called Śākyamuni.’

So that was prophesized by the previous fortunate eon Buddha, the Buddha Dipankara.

Subhūti, thus, since that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever, therefore, the Tathāgata Dīpaṅkara made the prediction to me, saying, ‘Young brahmin, in a future period you will become the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha called Śākyamuni.

’ Why is that? Because Subhūti, ‘Tathāgata’ is an epithet of the suchness of reality. “Subhūti, if someone were to say, ‘The Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha manifestly and completely realized unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment,’ they would speak wrongly. Why is that? Subhūti, because that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. Subhūti, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata has neither truth nor falsity. Therefore, ‘all dharmas are buddha dharmas’ was taught by the Tathāgata.

So “all Dharmas are Buddha Dharmas” the first one is referring to the phenomena, all phenomena. “Buddha Dharma” is referring to the emptiness nature. So, all and the ultimate nature of all phenomena are the emptiness.

Subhūti, ‘all dharmas’, all those are non-dharmas. Therefore, it is said that ‘all dharmas are buddha dharmas.’ Subhūti, it is like this, for example: like a human endowed with a body and the body became large.

All Dharma lies in the same nature, which is the Dharmakaya, the Buddha Dharma, because all those are non-Dharmas. All Dharmas and the non-Dharmas. The conventional aspect of this discriminated different phenomena is not the ultimate reality. That is why the conventional truth is true to the convention only, but not to the ultimate, it is false. Therefore, it is said that all Dharmas are the Buddha Dharmas.

The venerable Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, that taught by the Tathāgata, ‘a human endowed with a body and a large body,’ is taught by the Tathāgata as not being a body. Therefore, ‘endowed with a body and a large body’ is said.” The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, it is so; if some bodhisattva were to say, ‘I shall cause sentient beings to completely pass beyond sorrow,’ he should not be called ‘bodhisattva.’ Why is that? Subhūti, does the dharma that is called ‘bodhisattva’ exist whatsoever?”

If you just aspire to generate Bodhicitta, aspire to abide all sentient beings in the state of enlightenment without any sense of knowing the ultimate nature of the self, sentient beings, enlightenment and the act, the practice to do that; then, there is no meaning. It is not possible, and the enlightenment is not possible. The importance of the altruistic attitude also has to manifest out of the ultimate reality. Emptiness.

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it does not.”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, therefore, it was taught by the Tathāgata that ‘all dharmas are without a sentient being, without a living being, without a person.’” Subhūti, if some bodhisattvas were to say, ‘I shall actualize arranged fields,’ he too should be expressed similarly. Why is that? Subhūti, because the arranged fields called ‘arranged fields’ are those taught by the Tathāgata as non-arranged.

Listening to such sutra as if we just believe in what Buddha said, not just quoting Buddha. Because of Buddha being omniscient, Buddha achieved exalted wisdom, saw the ultimate truth, he is just sharing the reality. That is why we know, we trust him. That is why we quote him. It is not like in an ordinary way because I obey him and I need to quote him and I need to trust him and I need to believe whatever he says, it is not like that. The wisdom that he found, the ultimate truth, that is the reason why you say “oh, Buddha say so”. That is why, like that”.

Therefore, they are called ‘arranged fields.’ Subhūti, whatever bodhisattva appreciates that dharmas are selfless, saying ‘dharmas are selfless,’ he is expressed by the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha as a bodhisattva called a ‘bodhisattva.’ “Subhūti, What do you think about this? Does the Tathāgata possess the flesh eye?”

There are many higher wisdoms: wisdom of realizing emptiness or wisdom of Dharmakaya. There are many other wisdoms that which Buddha possesses, which you will possess, when you start to achieve concentration like Shamata, start to train in emptiness wisdom. For us, this is not just understanding the lack of inherent nature of the self and the ordinary phenomena like table, etc..., but also to understand the emptiness nature in all the qualities that Buddha would have achieved, you know, etc.

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is so; the Tathāgata possesses the flesh eye.” The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathāgata possess the divine eye?” Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is so; the Tathāgata possesses the divine eye.

There is another kind of clairvoyance.

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathāgata possess the wisdom eye?” Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is so; the Tathāgata possesses the wisdom eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathāgata possess the dharma eye?” Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is so; the Tathāgata possesses the dharma eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathāgata possess the buddha eye?”

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is so; the Tathāgata possesses the buddha eye."

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? If, there being also just as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, there were just as many world systems as there are grains of sand of those, would those world systems be many?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is so; those world systems would be many."

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, as many sentient beings as exist in those world systems, I totally know their continua of consciousness of different thoughts. Why is that?"

Subhūti, because a so-called 'continuum of consciousness' is that taught by the Tathāgata as a non-continuum.

Therefore, it is called a 'continuum of consciousness.' Why is that? Subhūti, because past consciousness does not exist as an observable, nor does future consciousness exist as an observable, nor does present consciousness exist as an observable.

"Subhūti, what do you think about this? If someone, completely filling this billionfold world system with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts, do you think that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an enormous heap of merit on that basis?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, enormous. Sugata, enormous."

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, it is so. It is so; that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an enormous heap of merit on that basis. Subhūti, if a heap of merit were a heap of merit, the Tathāgata would not have taught a heap of merit called a 'heap of merit.'

"Subhūti, what do you think about this? Should one be viewed as the Tathāgata due to total achievement of the form body?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so; one should not be viewed as the Tathāgata due to total achievement of the form body. Why is that? Bhagavān, because 'total achievement of the form body' is that taught by the Tathāgata as not being total achievement; therefore, it is called 'total achievement of the form body.'"Therefore, it is called the total achievement of the form body.

Buddha has those 3 bodies: form. Also, you can categorize in 2 bodies: form body and wisdom body. Or you divide into 4. Form body has 2: Nirmanakaya body and Sambhogakaya body. Wisdom body has 2: the Dharmakaya body, then the cessation, the body that has achieved cessation overcoming all the obscurations to Nirvana, all the obscurations to omniscience. Then the cessation itself is also is Buddha's body, and that is the wisdom body. So, Rupakaya is a form body. Within Rupakaya, there is the Nirmanakaya and the Sambhogakaya. So Dharmakaya has two: the wisdom body and the cessation body.

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so; one is not to be viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks. Why is that?"

Because that which was taught by the Tathāgata as perfect marks was taught by the Tathāgata as not being perfect marks; therefore, they are called 'perfect marks.'"

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, what do you think about this? If it is thought that the Tathāgata considers, 'the dharma is demonstrated by me,' Subhūti, do not view it like that, because the dharma that is demonstrated by the Tathāgata does not exist whatsoever. Subhūti, if someone were to say 'the dharma is demonstrated by the Tathāgata,' Subhūti, he would deprecate me since nonexistent and wrongly seized.

Why is that? Subhūti, because that demonstrated dharma called ‘demonstrated dharma,’ which is referred to saying, ‘demonstrated dharma,’ does not exist whatsoever.”

The following section is talking about how very rare it is to have people who believe in such teaching in the future, due to the degeneration of merits.

Then, the venerable Subhūti said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, in the future period, will there be any sentient beings who, having heard this demonstration of such a dharma as this, will clearly believe?”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, they are not sentient beings nor non-sentient beings. Why is that? Subhūti, so-called ‘sentient beings,’ because they were taught by the Tathāgata as non-sentient beings, therefore are called ‘sentient beings.’

In ultimate nature, nothing to be obtained, nothing to be spoken.

“Subhūti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever?”

The venerable Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathāgata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever.”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, it is so; it is so. For it, even the least dharma does not exist and is not observed; therefore, it is called ‘unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment.’

“Further, Subhūti, that dharma is equivalent since, for it, inequivalence does not exist whatsoever; therefore, it is called ‘unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment.’

That unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment –equivalent as selfless, without sentient being, without living being, without person – is manifestly and completely realized through all virtuous dharmas. Subhūti, virtuous dharmas called ‘virtuous dharmas,’ they, taught by the Tathāgata as just non-dharmas, are therefore called ‘virtuous dharmas.

Virtuous Dharma simply exists interdependently, through the existence of the non-Dharma. If there is no existence of the non-Dharma, there is no reference to establish something called Dharma. It is talking about interdependent arising.

“Further, Subhūti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage collecting a heap of the seven types of precious things about equaling whatever Sumeru, king of mountains, exist in a billion world systems, and giving gifts, if someone, having taken up even as little as a stanza of four lines from this wisdom gone beyond, were to teach it to others, Subhūti, compared to this heap of merit, the former heap of merit having not approached even a hundredth part, does not withstand comparison

...the benefit.

“Subhūti, what do you think about this? If it is thought that the Tathāgata considers, ‘Sentient beings are liberated by me,’ Subhūti, do not view it like that. Why is that?

Subhūti, because those sentient beings who are liberated by the Tathāgata do not exist whatsoever. Subhūti, if some sentient being were to be liberated by the Tathāgata, that itself would be, of the Tathāgata, grasping a self, grasping a sentient being, grasping a living being, grasping a person.

Subhūti, so-called ‘grasping a self,’ that is taught by the Tathāgata as non-grasping, yet that is grasped by childish ordinary beings. Subhūti, so-called ‘childish ordinary beings,’ they were taught by the Tathāgata as just non-beings; therefore, they are called ‘childish ordinary beings.

Again, childish ordinary beings, realized beings, it is all interdependent. This simply exists merely in name. In ultimate nature it is all in one taste. It is truly nonexistent. By the same time, truly it is there. Legitimately

there, and legitimately non-existent also. Exists but does not exist. Then, the Buddha's marks, at the same time no marks. Buddha has marks, at the same time does not have marks. You know in the common language it is interdependently. Buddha has no mark inherently.

Subhūti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks?"

Subhūti replied, "Bhagavān, it is not so; one is not viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks".

The Bhagavān said, "Subhūti, it is so; it is so. One is not viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks. Subhūti, if one were viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks, even a chakravartin king would be the Tathāgata; therefore, one is not viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks."

He is almost indirectly saying if you define a Buddha based on the marks, then there is a substantial potential in the mark that define Buddha, then it is not possible for Chakravartin King to become a Buddha. Because that substantial inherently existent mark is already out there from its own side, then it has to be only in the Buddha, not in anyone else, not in us.

Then, the venerable Subhūti said to the Bhagavān, "Bhagavān, as I understand the meaning of what the Bhagavān has said, one is not viewed as the Tathāgata due to perfect marks. Then, these verses were spoken by the Bhagavān at that time:

"Whoever sees me as form, whoever knows me as sound, has wrongly engaged by abandoning, those beings do not see me..

These statues. If you try to see Buddha based on the Mudras, based on the sitting posture, or you try to see Buddha in the statue, the tangible statue, you will not be able to see the exact Buddha. The exact Buddha is Dharmakaya. Empty of being of this statue. But for us, obviously, in order to see Buddha we have to see the statue. So, we have to convince the conceptual mind that Buddha is there and that itself is a mistake, that itself is the obstruction.

So, therefore, you know, as discussed before, we have to go out of relying on concept, label, figures, name. You have to go beyond that, in order to really see the Buddha. Why even though we have the same nature with the Buddha, why we cannot fully awaken? Because we are stuck with the names.

We are stuck with the concept. We are stuck with this body. This decaying body. We are stuck with all the differentiations; we need to accumulate a lot of merit. Then only will become Buddha. We need to purify so much karma. We are completely stuck there. The karma is just an impression of our confusion. In reality, the differentiation: there are merits to be accumulated, there is karma to be purified. In actual fact it is a confusion. That is the obstacle to really, to fully awaken.

Therefore, meditating in space like mind or absorption meditation in the space like meditation is so helpful to purify those obstacles. So that is why we need to arrive to a zone that you lost everything, until there is some sense of fear. We need to arrive there.

Until now, I do not even understand how to meditate it, but I try and never had the experience of getting fear. I feel so nice, whenever I try emptiness meditation, I feel so nice, there is no sign of fear at all. That means I am completely far away. Beyond reachable to the real emptiness experience. So, when you experience that fear of losing everything, like completely arrived in that kind of like center of space where nothing to land on to, to hold, endless down hole, as if there is no ground to land. But you are dropping. It is like a stone dropping. Nothing is there, like nothing, nothing to kind of like stuck somewhere or hook somewhere. Like a black hole, maybe. Or maybe like pushed in this direction and like that is no end. No gravity. But dropping. So free fall. You become helpless.

That kind of hopefulness. Like sky diving. Because you have a grasping, you will not have the great intense fear of you completely dropping, because there is a rope, you are grasping to, that little holding onto something.

I quite hardly hear this, this particular pit instruction. I hear this from Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche. He mentioned it again and again. If you look into more in detail the teachings on emptiness, you will find something, but very subtle to find. It always ends to say you have to arrive to complete voidness, but never talk about that, that fear aspect. And Rinpoche, very precisely, used to mention that. And that is that I would say this is a pit instruction. It is a huge blessing.

Living in analytical meditation: when you go to altar, when you look at Buddha, look at the statue, try to pass through the fabricated, or the lens of this statue, the material, you know, the statue. You try to directly arrive to the Dharmakaya. The form, that is Buddha, that is the base where the rest of the Buddha's form body, the rest of the Buddha's bodies were manifested, the Dharmakaya, isn't it?

These are great practice. And we are so dependent on object, and sound, and form, feelings, even to the guru, this is the huge obstacle to the ultimate Guru Yoga, to achieve the inner Guru, that Guru inseparable from your own Dharmakaya mind, your own mind, your own body, speech, and mind is inseparable from the Guru.

But because Guru is out there, we are too dependent to the physical form. Otherwise, you are totally separated from the Guru. "I am traveling to Nepal to see my Guru". It is a false statement. The moment we see our Guru, the physical manifestation, then only you are satisfied: "finally I get chance to see Guru". If you really try to understand what you are saying from the wisdom mind: "It is, oh poor boy, oh poor boy", showing so much excitement, but actually so deluded. It is completely living in the darkness.

And when the guru speaks to you nicely, you feel so happy. When the Guru does not really bother you, you feel so sad. When we do not get chance to see Guru, we complain. It is all ignorance: it is the one that is defining how should you express in relation to all these experiences, not by wisdom.

So, these are these are very intense practice. That is why the kindness of the Guru, the physical living Guru, is unbelievable. In one way it is like because we are just too stubborn, the students are too stubborn, and the Gurus have to manifest dissolving their physical body. For many even after being shown that teaching we are unable to realize it. Still like we feel like devastated. Guru left us. Now I am completely lacking guidance. And some say, no, I have no Guru. Now I give up. You know, I do not want to practice. Because I have no guides. People do that.

In fact, Guru already obtained Vajra body. He has the choice not to die. It is in Guru's hands. For your practice, whether from the Guru's side, he is really enlightened being or not, but that is your practice and in fact the Gurus are the manifestations of the Buddha. All the Buddhas have prophesized that in a degenerated time, I will come in the form of Guru. That means their holy body is Vajra body, but they have the choice not to die at all, not to depart the physical aspect from us. But that relationship is not their ultimate goal, it is not the ultimate pursuit of spirituality.

The ultimate pursue of spirituality is our resultant Guru, by taking refuge in the external Guru or the causal Guru and attain the resultant Guru. Yourself becoming oneness with the Guru. Is the result of relying on the outer Guru, isn't it? So therefore, like dissolving of the physical form of the guru is actually the sprouting or the giving birth to our inner Guru, the real Guru Yoga practice.

"Whoever sees me as form, whoever knows me as sound, has wrongly engaged by abandoning, those beings do not see me. The buddhas are dharmatā viewed; the guides are the dharmakāya.

The Dharmakaya is like the base camp. The base for you to communicate within the form body, the Nirmanakaya, the Sambhogakaya, then including the Guru. You know that is the final way of doing it not the other way. Other way, there is a danger of distractions. Like we've been distracting from the point of

view of the emptiness practice. This changeable statue is actually holding us back, to arrive to the ultimate purpose of seeing the Dharmakaya.

Since dharmatā is not to be known, it is unable to be known.”

“Subhūti, what do you think about this? If one grasps that ‘the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha is due to perfect marks,’ Subhūti, you should not view so for, Subhūti, the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha does not manifestly and completely realize unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment due to perfect marks.

“Subhūti, if one grasps that ‘some dharma has been designated as destroyed or annihilated by those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle,’ Subhūti, it should not be viewed so; those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle have not designated any dharma whatsoever as destroyed or annihilated.

From the emptiness wisdom, you do not have to annihilate anything. In the wisdom of emptiness, everything comes in one taste. There is no Samsara that need to be negated, need to purify. There is nothing, no negative karma to be purified. Everything, everything, it is actualized in one taste.

“Further, Subhūti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, completely filling with the seven kinds of precious things as many world systems as there are grains of sand of the rivers Ganges, were to give gifts, if any bodhisattva attained forbearance that dharmas are selfless and unproduced, on that basis the heap of merit they themselves would produce would be much greater. Further, Subhūti, a heap of merit should not be acquired by the bodhisattva.

So, the forbearances here referring to the third level of the second level of the path (from the five paths) the path of preparation: on the third level, the path of patience or path of forbearance. So there, you realize at least, the conceptual realization on emptiness.

So, ***“if any bodhisattva attained forbearance that dharmas are selfless”***, conceptual realization of ***“selfless and unproduced”***. Unproduced, in relation to these four points that I mentioned this morning: unproduced from the self and unproduced from others and unproduced from neither and unproduced from either, both and no cause.

...on that basis the heap of merit they themselves would produce would be much greater.

That helps to prepare to realize emptiness directly, that will help when you reach to the path of preparation. Great stores of merit by realizing even the conceptual realization on emptiness, supplement to the first great eons of merits that you accumulated when you were on the path of accumulation, helped to realize emptiness directly or help to arrive to the path of seeing.

Further, Subhūti, a heap of merit should not be acquired by the bodhisattva.”

The venerable Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, should not a heap of merit be acquired by the bodhisattva?”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, acquire, not wrongly grasp; therefore, it is called ‘acquire.

You should acquire Buddhahood. You should acquire merits, but not wrongly. Do not grasp. All the thing he is mentioning about the negative side, do not to grasp, do not pursue them.

“Subhūti, if someone says, ‘The Tathāgata goes or comes or stands or sits or lies down,’ he does not understand the meaning explained by me. Why is that? Subhūti, because ‘the Tathāgata’ (‘the One Gone Thus’) does not go anywhere nor has come from anywhere; therefore, one says, ‘the Tathāgata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha.’

So, you relate this to your Guru. Your Guru comes from nowhere, you Guru goes nowhere, your Guru is oneness with you.

“Further, Subhūti, if some son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage were to render as many atoms of earth as exist in a billionfold world system, like this for example, into powder like a collection of subtlest atoms, Subhūti, what do you think about this? Would that collection of subtlest atoms be many?”

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it is so. That collection of subtlest atoms would be many. Why is that? Bhagavān, because if there were a collection, the Bhagavān would not have said ‘collection of subtlest atoms.’ Why is that? Because that ‘collection of subtlest atoms’ that was taught by the Bhagavān was taught by the Tathāgata as no collection; therefore, one says ‘collection of subtlest atoms.’ That ‘billionfold world system’ that was taught by the Tathāgata was taught by the Tathāgata as no system; therefore, one says ‘billionfold world system.’ Why is that? Bhagavān, because if there were to be a world system, that itself would be grasping a solid thing. That taught by the Tathāgata as grasping a solid thing was taught by the Tathāgata as no grasping; therefore, one says ‘grasping a solid thing.’” The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, grasping a solid thing is itself a convention; that dharma does not exist as expressed, yet it is grasped by ordinary childish beings. Subhūti, if someone were to say, ‘Viewing as a self was taught by the Tathāgata and viewing as a sentient being, viewing as a living being, viewing as a person was taught by the Tathāgata,’ Subhūti, would that be spoken by right speech?”

Subhūti replied, “Bhagavān, it would not. Sugata, it would not. Why is that? Bhagavān, because that which was taught by the Tathāgata as viewing as a self, was taught by the Tathāgata as no viewing; therefore, one says, ‘viewing as a self.’”

The Bhagavān said, “Subhūti, those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle should know, should view, should appreciate all dharmas like this; they should appreciate like this, not abiding whatsoever in any discrimination as a dharma. Why is that? Subhūti, because discrimination as a dharma, called ‘discrimination as a dharma,’ is taught by the Tathāgata as non-discrimination; therefore, one says ‘discrimination as a dharma.’

“Further, Subhūti, compared to any bodhisattva mahāsattva who, completely filling unfathomable and incalculable world systems with the seven kinds of precious things, were to give gifts, if any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, having taken as little as a stanza of four lines from this perfection of wisdom, were to memorize or read or understand or correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail, on that basis the merits he himself would produce would be more, incalculable, unfathomable.

“How should one correctly and thoroughly teach? Just how one would not correctly and thoroughly teach; therefore, one says, ‘correctly and thoroughly teach.’

“As a star, a visual aberration, a lamp, an illusion, dew, a bubble, a dream, lightning, and a cloud – view all the compounded like that.

View everything is like that, every experience like that. Every good thought comes, view like that. Every bad thought comes, view like that. Suffering comes view like that. Happiness comes to you like that. See Buddha view like that. See, harm harmful people view like that. See Guru view like that. See no Guru view like that. See Samsara like that. See Buddhahood like that. See path like that. See grounds like that, see negation like that.

The flashes of the star, it is very temporal. The light is not the star. But then, we label as a star, we apprehend as a star. The stars light, we apprehend as a star. But what we see is just not, that is not there, the way how we see, the way how we perceive, the way how we claim. Things are like that, everything we should view like visual aberration, such as a mirage.

Because of the interdependent cause and condition, the light, the water, the sand. But when you reach there, actually there is no water. You see? The cloud, there is so many factors to form a cloud: the moist, the empty space. There is so many in the clouds, similar to the rainbows. When you go to examine it, there is not even one single atom that you can define as substantially existent. And you view all the tangible things...

We should talk about this table. It is my table, it is my cup, it is my phone, it is my watch. Actually, it exactly exists similar like the cloud and rainbow. If you go to examine it, you cannot find something that which inherently belongs to you. And you can claim as mine, and not only that, even yourself. The claimer, the person, you know, there is no I, substantially. Falsely the false claimer, falsely claiming, to the falsely object.

What's a big deal to discover that? The big deal is we do not want to suffer. We want to experience only peace. So, the grasping is the one that initiates suffering into us. You know, that is the reason why we need to make you understand that is the reason.

The lamp in a windy place. There are few meanings. One is in interdependent arising. The existent, the lamp. Another one is impermanent, momentary shifted, the flame like that moves, it lies in the so fragile impermanent nature. That we can relate, like that lamp flame is very much like our life, our existence, which with some little condition can just vanish like that, an illusion.

Everything is like illusion. So, like the object that the magician is using. Initially, at this stage we do not know that we are influenced by the substance, the magician's substance. And the mantra or the substance. We arrive to a place where there is a magic show, and the magician already influences our eye senses. And when you see that stick that brings magic draws an elephant. And maybe the elephant is being tortured and you have so much compassion, you see that you get affected, like real elephant is there, and the elephant is being tortured, you will be throwing all the criticisms on the poor guy: how can you beat up an elephant? You may be filing a case in the court. But actually, it is just a magician. Fooled, at this stage, we are fooled by you know, ignorance and fooled by dualistic mind, fooled by all the delusions.

All these differentiations: Samsara or Nirvana, suffering - pain, good or bad, it is the same. But then after learning all this teaching, you start to practice, you at least realize that "oh, actually I was influenced by ignorance. I was influenced by delusion, by dualistic mind. So now, when you see things, you will purposely know that you are going to watch the magician's performance.

But at the same time, you do not have a grasping. So, when the elephant will be beaten up, you will not have that suffering feeling. You may be laughing. You may be enjoying the show. Because you have no grasping. Substantially inherently, out there, the elephant, the real elephant is there.

So eventually we will come to that point. We will still see dualistically. We will still see 2 existences. But we will have no attachment to it. We will have no aversion to it. So that is the benefit.

So now the magician. The magician himself. You know, he has this flipping choice. You know, he can also influence his own eye to see the magic. But he can just see the stick. And but the movement of a stick. For him, he does not even see if the elephant is there, but people are laughing with the elephant performance? By that stage you have the control of how to design your mind, how you can influence your reality, in a meditative absorption, you really see empty of inherent, empty of dualistic existence, you really see like illusion, illusion alike.

You really see things and even experience illusion alike. So, these are the progress of the training that can take us to experience like that every day, illusion-like.

That having been said by the Bhagavān, the elder Subhūti, those bodhisattvas, the fourfold disciples – bhikṣhus, bhikṣunis, upāsakas and upāsikas – and the world with devas, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, overjoyed, highly praised that taught by the Bhagavān.

“Bodhisattvas”, so the fourfold disciples who are listening to this teaching, their audience, so it is MahaBodhisattvas, ordinary Bodhisattvas; then the 4 different kinds of Arhats, four-fold disciples; then normal ordinary beings, but they are holding high vows like Bikshus, Bikshunis, Upasakas, lay practitioners who hold the lay vows. Upasakas and Upasikas, lay woman, man practitioners who’s holding like refuge vows or who's holding 5 lay vows, who's holding maybe 8 Mahayana precepts, it could be many like that. And the world with the Devas, so many devas from the formless Realm, they are also listening from the skies, you know.

And there is so many humans, it could be, kings, it could be ministers, it could be beggars. All different people also may be listening, Asuras and Gandharvas, the different gods and demigods. So, all of them were overjoyed, you know, highly praised and, that Buddha has spoken this teaching.

We have completed the text.

The Exalted Mahāyāna Sūtra on the Wisdom Gone Beyond called The Vajra Cutter is concluded.

With so much rejoice. Thank you very much everyone, the SPC, Rooms who organized this discourse, retreat on Diamond Cutter Sutra, which is very rare to happen. And those of you are in person. You know, it is not easy to attend to this kind of retreat, it is not like any other kind of retreat. I already said on the first day. It is not. Not so easy. Meritorious wise is a very intense thing. And those of you who are on online, some of you, I think are maybe in Australia, some Southeast Asia, the opposite time, you put so much effort in the middle of the night.

But all this, for me, based on the teaching, you know, one can regard this as one of the most meaningful things happening in one's life. I will regard that and truly happens that. Now, can you imagine how much purification of negative karma, have purified unbelievable negative karma has purified. If I am diligent enough, maybe there is no more negative karma to be purified.

That much power from the object, from the benefit of this sutra, and that what Buddha himself expressed, that happened to you. From our ordinary point of view, we may not feel anything different. Life will carry on the same way. From the spiritual point of view, it is like a miracle, a real miracle, real magic happened like that. It is unbelievable. So truly, you should rejoice. And I am so, so thankful to each and every one of you, who makes this possible.

Dedications

So, we dedicate this great number of merits individually collected or collectively collected, and together with all the merits and virtues that collected, by all the past, present, future Buddhas, all the merits and virtues collected by Gurus, Dharma’s brothers and sisters and all the sentient beings.

May this collective, may be a complete cause for numberless sentient beings to be free from oceans of samsaric suffering, and its causes: karma and delusions, and actualize from temporary happiness, the virtuous all the way up to enlightenment accordingly.

Made this collecting merit be a complete cause, anyone who passed away, in particularly in last 49 days, in particularly who passed away with so much pain, mental or physical, who passed away in natural disaster, who passed away in the war zone, who passed away untimely, facing untimely death, may this suffering of death, suffering in the intermediate state, of rebirth be purified instantly and actualize higher rebirth in Buddha’s Pure Land. And within that lifetime may they actualize the state of full enlightenment accordingly.

May this collective merit be a complete cause, anyone who has requested prayers from me, those who are living those who passed away, and especially those who are distressed, by physical health, financial difficulties, legal case, or whatever problem they may be, requesting prayer support and, also those to you

who have requested prayers, or even people did not request prayers but you saw them, that they needed prayer support, it could be animal, insect, spirits. So, we dedicate this collective merit, you know, for them to purify whatever inconvenience they are going through, and they actualize virtuous meaningful life accordingly.

May this collecting merit become a complete cause all the good people in this world like His Holiness the Dalai Lama or our precious Gurus and yourself, your family members, or anyone even those of husbands who bring peace and happiness to their wives, those wives that bring peace, happiness to their husbands, those children there who serve respect, you know, who bring so much service to their parents, grandparents, and the parents who take care of their children, you know, who brings so much benefit of virtue to the children, etc. Whoever is beneficial even for one person or one animal, the dog or cats, always enjoy good health, long life and fulfill all the aspirations mundane and spiritual aspirations accordingly.

May this collective merit become a complete cause also dedicated to our most precious Guru, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, all his holy wishes be fulfilled and may we, sentient being in the world, actualize his unmistakable reincarnation and have the all the conducive conditions to carry on, you know, Rinpoche is enlightened legacy to serve the Dharma, to serve the sentient beings accordingly.

May this collective merit become a complete cause all the virtues institutions like the monasteries, nunneries and all the Dharma centers, and especially Land of Medicine Buddha, and also online, any individual students that link to their own Dharma centers or monasteries and they may made these centers made this in the Dharma environment be free from inner, outer, secret obstacles actualize all the conducive conditions to preserve the Dharma, preserve the virtue in extensive learning and actualizing realization on the stages of the path accordingly.

May this collecting merit become the complete cause each and every one of us really able to follow the footsteps of the Venerable Subhūti, who really is the one of the conditions to the Buddha to reveal this most profound teaching. And may we too be able to actualize all the practice, realizations and enlightenment for the benefit of numberless sentient beings accordingly.

The foundation of all good qualities is the perfect, kind and pure Guru,
Correct devotion to him is the root of the path,
By clearly seeing this and applying great effort,
Please bless me to rely upon Him with great respect
Lama Tsongkhapa

So, for all these reasons and many more, may Geshe Tenzin Zopa always have good health, a very long life, postpone his Parinirvana to turn the wheel of Dharma again and again for the benefit of all of us...
Thank you for everything Geshela.

Transcriber: Venerable Tenzin Kunzang, any mistakes, errors, omissions are mine alone...

Care of Dharma Materials

Dharma materials contain the teachings of the Buddha and thus protect against lower rebirth and reveal the path to enlightenment. Therefore, they should be treated with respect. Printed Dharma materials, as well as phones, tablets, laptops, and hard drives containing Dharma, should be kept off the floor, beds, chairs, meditation cushions, and all other places where people sit or walk. Dharma materials should not be stepped over or put in places where the feet or buttocks will point at them. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects, including statues, stupas, ritual implements, malas, reading glasses, and so forth, should not be placed on top of Dharma books and devices containing Dharma materials. Avoid licking the fingers to turn the pages of Dharma texts. If it is necessary to dispose of printed Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, visualize that the letters transform into an A (ॐ) and the A absorbs into your heart. Imagine burning blank paper. As the paper burns, recite OM ĀḤ HŪḤ or the Heart Sutra, while meditating on emptiness. Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends that images of holy beings, deities, and holy objects not be burned. Ideally, if undamaged, they should be put in a stupa. Otherwise, put them high up in a tree inside a well-sealed structure, something like a bird house, so that the images are protected from the weather and do not end up on the ground.