

KARMA & EMPTINESS IN THE YOGA SUTRA

(PART ONE)

**Quiet Retreat Teachings
by Geshe Michael Roach**



**Nov. 28 - Dec. 1, 2002
Diamond Mountain Retreat Center
St. David, Arizona**

Afternoon: Day One ❄ November 28, 2002
Geshe Michael Roach

I think some of you may have read the book called *The Garden*, and today is the very day that the hero of the story meets the young girl, who turns out to be some kind of Angel.



I thought I'd tell the story about how I learned to cut diamonds. I was already working in a diamond company, but I wanted to learn how to cut them. I looked for a long time to find a teacher, and it was very difficult. Diamond cutting is almost like a secret skill that people don't teach easily, and for months I looked . . . no one would teach me.

But one day I mentioned to my co-manager . . . I had a very beautiful, incredible woman who was my co-manager. Her name is Rachel, *Rachel (Hebrew pronunciation)*. And so I told her I had trouble finding a teacher and she said, "Oh, my husband is a teacher." So we made all the arrangements and I went to the place.

They work a lot on Sundays because Saturday is the holy day. And so it was a Sunday morning in Manhattan, and mid-town in the diamond district was all shut down. I remember going to this dark elevator and up, I think about fifteen floors, and then into this room. And you pass through a lot of security. And then I came in and it was incredible, it was a dark room, almost all the lights out, the windows are covered with this gray powder, and this beautiful man met me, and his name is Schmuel, Shmuelof, and he's Israeli. He is not a big man but he was a boxer, before a diamond cutter, for the Israelis' Olympic team. And then later he was a sergeant in the army, and during the Seven Day War he fought. And I think all this changed his mind and he . . . he is a very warm and extremely gentle man.

And so he took me right in and he said, "Okay *Michael (Hebrew pronunciation throughout)*, this is how we do it." And he pulled out a stone from a special box, and . . . if you've ever seen a raw diamond, they don't look much like diamond. It looked like a potato—small, and it was olive green, like army green.

And he said, "We're going to start with this stone."

And I said, "How big is it?"

And he said, "Three carats."

And I said, "Schmuel, I don't know anything . . . a three carat diamond could be worth fifty or one hundred thousand dollars."

And he said, "Don't worry."

And so he put this little lumpy thing in my hand and he pulled out a thing called a *tang*. Most of the words are from Amsterdam—Dutch, and he said, "This is a *tang*." It means a "tongue," and it's a holder, like a wooden stick, with two legs on the back. You put the diamond in the front, and there's a bowl of lead, called a *dop*. Diamond cutting hasn't changed in about three hundred years.

So he said, "First *Michael*, we're going to put ze diamond in da *dop*."

So I said, "Okay."

Then he got a blowtorch and he put it on the lead and then he said, “Okay, stick the diamond in the lead.” It’s like a Jell-O now.

And he said, “Don’t hold it; just touch it and take your hand away.” But I was too slow and I burned my hand.

But the diamond goes in the lead and then it cools. And then there’s a huge iron table. It shouldn’t vibrate at all, so it’s made of heavy cast iron, and in the center there’s a wheel turning like an old phonograph wheel, about a thousand rpm’s.

And then, he showed me, you put the *tang* in your hand and you hold the diamond down on the wheel. First you take some special secret oil that your wife has made. It’s usually olive oil and ten other secret ingredients, and you put in crushed diamonds, powder — you crush the diamonds in a little pestle, and then you wipe the diamond grease — the diamonds and the grease together — on the wheel as it spins. And then you hold the diamond down.

So he said, “Hold the diamond down.” And I held it down and it, and it screamed at me. It went WHAAAAAAA. *[laughter]*

And I jumped and I said, “I think I broke it Schmuel.”

And he said, “No, no. Don’t worry. Press it harder.”

And I said, “It will break.”

And he said, “Diamonds don’t break.”

He pushed it down into the wheel and it’s screaming. . . it sounds like subway brakes. And the whole room is screaming and reverberating with the scream . . . and then I pick it up and it’s glowing like a red-hot coal.

And I said, “Schmuel, is something wrong?”

And he said, “No, no. Push *Michael*, push.” *[laughter]*

And I, I held it down and it’s jumping in your hand. It’s fighting against you. And the wheel is spinning and there’s little dust flying off, and he said, “Okay, now, pull it up and look.”

And you hold a special glass in your right hand, or if you’re left-handed, the opposite. And then you flip the holder up like a high-school cheerleader’s baton — it’s a skill. *[laughter]* And then *[laughs]*, and then you flip it up to your eye and you check it. And there’s a tiny little — tiny like a needlepoint — little smooth part on the potato.

And he said, “See, you’ve got a whiles to go.” *[laughter]* And so I held it down again and it screamed again. It’s very nerve-wracking for hours, this thing is screaming at you and it’s fighting against you and the wheel is jumping and your hand is shaking and the thing is red-hot, gleaming with fire, and little sparks sometimes flying off all over in the dark.

And it goes like that for hours — you’re fighting this diamond against the wheel. And then maybe, if it’s a hard diamond, maybe an hour later you have a little window cut into it and you can see inside and you can start to plan how to shape it.

So you fight like that day after day — I mean a hard diamond can take a couple of weeks. And sometimes, if it’s really hard, you’ll put a lead weight on the *tang* and you’ll go into the toilet and have a cigarette or something, and you come back. Sometimes it hits a soft spot and the diamond is gone. *[laughter]* But it’s fighting, fighting, fighting.

And then finally we got to the end. He taught me day after day. We did it all at night and on Sundays. Maybe a month later I had a pretty nice diamond. He used to check them every

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

half hour or so and he would bend his head like that and say, “Oh, very good *Michael*,” meaning all the angles are crooked. *[laughs]*

And then I finished and it was all dirty and black and burnt.

I said, “Schmuel, it doesn’t look much like a diamond.”

He said, “Oh, come with me.”

And we went over to the window, and there’s a hot plate with a pyrex beaker on top of it, and its boiling. And he says, “Drop it in there but don’t touch it. It’s nitric acid.”

And you boil the hell out of this black, burnt, scorched diamond. And, and then it gets a little cleaner, gets pretty nice. You pull it out with some special tongs.

And then I said, “It still doesn’t look much like a diamond, Schmuel.”

He said, “Oh, *Michael*, not to worry. Come over here.”

And we threw it in a vibration, ultra-sonic cleaner. And then finally I pull it out, and I look at it and I say, “Schmuel, that’s not my diamond.”

And he said, “What’s wrong *Michael*?”

And I said, “It’s not green anymore. It’s pure white, beautiful, blue white.” It’s also about one-tenth of the size it used to be. *[laughs]*

I say, “What happened?”

He said, “Oh, that’s why I gave you a Congo River Green.”

I said, “What’s a Congo River Green?”

He said, “It’s a big hunk of worthless diamond. We use them in oil well drills, usually. And if you’re lucky, in the very middle you’ll run into a little tiny patch of a pure diamond. And you can have it. I mean it’s worth about fifty bucks now and your labor for the last hundred hours or so works out to about ten cents an hour. *[laughter]* I don’t think you should be a diamond cutter, *Michael*.” *[laughter]*

And I put that little diamond in special papers that we put them in and folded it up, and I carried it around for months in my shirt pocket, like the big diamond dealers do, just out of, you know, bragging and like, “Oh, its nothing.”

And every time I met someone, after about five minutes I’d bring the conversation around to my diamond and say, “Oh, I have a diamond right here.” And I’d open up the paper, and it’s all greasy now, but that beautiful, perfect little diamond was right there. And later I offered it to Khen Rinpoche. *[cries]*

And so I was thinking about all the other people in retreat here for the last, oh, it’s going on three years now — the retreat will continue for three years and three months, three days. I think if you could ask them, “Tell me what’s the main thing about three year retreat? What did you find out?,” they’d say, “It’s hard, it’s really hard.”

[cries] And like that green potato, they walked in to this retreat area, *tsam*, innocent, unknowing. And we smashed them and burned them and ground them down and put them in acid and shook them in the ultra-sonic vibrator. And now we’ve come down to beautiful, crystal, white, little diamonds inside of them. *[cries]*

And just to be in a room with those five, six people is something extraordinary now. The energy is very strong and they are very strong. I want to say just one thing to them. Now that you have been smashed and ground down into little perfect diamonds, you have to put that in your pocket and show it to everybody you meet. You have to share it with other people. You

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

have a responsibility now. You can't just finish retreat and go somewhere. You have a heavy responsibility to share with other people what you learned, even if you're not sure you learned it.

So I thought we could start today. And I've asked each retreatant to lead us in a Thanksgiving meditation and one will do that at, when we begin. One of the retreatants felt that it would disturb her meditation if she spoke, and I respect that, and she won't be speaking. She'll have to speak double later. *[laughter]*

They haven't really spoken at all except for emergencies like rattlesnakes and things like that. They'll probably be quite nervous and it'll be difficult for them to speak, so you'll have to close your eyes and try to reach their hearts and we'll see how it goes. So if we could move the microphone and if there's a tape recorder I think it would be nice to have.



Retreatant Ani-Pelma: Welcome, welcome to our Thanksgiving Dharma talk. Our Holy Lama has requested that I lead you in a rejoicing meditation this afternoon.

I started contemplating on the topic of rejoicing and I am convinced that it only comes from a blissful state of mind. I decided to get behind the scenes. I focus this meditation on rejoicing, on the different states of mind. So we'll be meditating on several different thoughts, and not the physical objects that we see around us.

So please get really comfortable in your chairs. Loosen up your body. I want you to do some pretending. Pretend that your seat is in the middle of the ocean and that you are surrounded by calm waves, and that there's no one else in the room. Rest your hands on your knees. Relax your eyes. Keep them half open or completely closed. If you have any tension from excitement, think that it's just leaving your pores, all the excitement that you have. Relax your muscles.

The first object of meditation that we will focus on is your breath. So I want you to start to take some deep breaths, and let your mind follow your breath. Make your inbreath even with your outbreath, and we'll do a round of ten breaths.

[silence]

Ani-Pelma: The first state of mind that I want you to meditate on is the state of mind that is happy when others are happy. This is advice from Master Shantideva. Try to recall a special event in your life, when you have been really happy for a friend, and rejoice in that state of mind.

[silence]

Ani-Pelma: Rejoice in the state of mind that keeps you on the Dharma path to seek enlightenment for the benefit of others. It is the same state of mind that brought you here today. So rejoice.

[silence]

Ani-Pelma: Rejoice in the state of mind that has great attitude for your Lama, for these teachings, and all the work that has been done for you to come and find a chair to sit and meditate on. It probably took hundreds of hands, and little details, to create this space for you. So rejoice in this state of mind that has great gratitude.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

[silence]

Ani-Pelma: Rejoice in the state of mind that loves special people, and meditate on having that same love for every creature in the universe. And visualize yourself sending out light to all beings.

[silence]

Ani-Pelma: We dedicate this meditation to Diamond Mountain staff, Dharma teachers, administrative support, the Sangha – the monks and the nuns, the yoga, dance, and art teachers, the volunteers, the medical staff and dentists, Marjorie and Jerry, for our land, and all the people who are sending us prayers silently. I leave you with a poem:

Is it time to think, or stay still?
Listening to the moments of my breath
Constructs an empty space in my mind.
My hands go to work
And I shape and mangle my veins
Into a bright yellow sunflower
To soothe my soul.
I melt the goal of destruction into a nugget.
My flesh is burning with a red smoky passion.
I now understand what I have designed and created.
A gift of love from the heart and light.

Thank you. End of meditation.



Ruth Lauer *[chanted]*:

Om. Om.
Asato ma sat gamaya.
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya.
Mrityor-mam amritham gamaya.

(group repeats each line)

Lead me from grossness to subtlety
Lead me from pollution to purity
Lead me from darkness to luminosity
Lead me from desire to eternity
Lead me from the small self to humanity

Om. Om.



Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

It's Thanksgiving and I really wanted to thank all of you for coming. It's a really important time of our year when you all come. We can feel you weeks before and we start to get excited. And I know it's hard to come so far out of the way, and I know it's your precious time off, and we know that you are missing maybe family and friends to come here.

And it's a little hard here and it might get cold. I hope you have brought some layers to put on. The desert drops thirty, forty degrees when the sun goes down. And I also wanted to really thank all of the people who worked so hard to prepare these teachings for us. They have many other duties. They have to support themselves. They don't get paid. Usually they end up giving whatever they make to making it possible for the rest of us to be here.

And they — aside from helping all the people in retreat twenty-four hours a day, we dump tons and tons of extra jobs on them. *[laughs]* When you're sitting quietly, you get all these great ideas *[laughs]*, what you must have by tomorrow. And they have cheerfully and beautifully served us for the whole time perfectly. And they and the director and his wife, I know they are. . . I've heard the rumors, they are teaching. I know they are very busy with that. People have been in Ireland teaching recently, some in Singapore, some as far as Sierra Vista. *[laughter]*

And still on top of all of those tasks, they are serving all of us here and I think if you meet them, a lot of them are in red suits, not all of them, and all the people who help them, I think you should try to thank them, especially today on Thanksgiving. I think also. . . try to offer some help if you can. Ask them if they need anything. They might just need you to go away but, they'll let you know. *[laughter]* But I think they could use help too.

Today — it's a big coincidence, I'm sure — that today is the holiday, once a year, of the founding of Sera Monastery in Tibet. Tomorrow is the great festival of the birth and enlightenment and passing into final nirvana of the teacher of the first Dalai Lama, whose name was Je Tsongkapa. That holiday is called the *Ganden Mamchu*. *Ganden* means “the heaven of bliss.” *Ma* means “the twenty-fifth of the month,” which is tomorrow in the lunar month.

And then *chu* means “offering” and we usually, by tradition, offer *tongchu* which means one thousand butter lamps in honor of this great teacher who started the lineage of the Dalai Lamas, and this is our lineage. So the night before, we always take fifty of the butter lamps and we set them out as an offering to the person who founded Sera Monastery.

Sera Monastery is very important in our lives, foreigners who are trying to follow the path of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Many of the great teachers who have so kindly come to the west to help us crazy foreigners have come from Sera Monastery. We sat down before the teaching to try to make a list of all the great Lamas who have helped us from Sera monastery and it was about a hundred or more. And I thought it would be nice if we could put some of their photographs up around this tent with a little story of the Lamas that we know and who have helped us. And then we thought we would put some of the older paintings and drawings of the ancient teachers from Sera also.

All of the courses of the ACI, Asian Classics, that you and I have been able to learn from holy Lamas have come through Sera Monastery. There wouldn't be any of this, there wouldn't be a single word of teachings in the last twenty years or so, there wouldn't be a single person here who had learned to meditate properly and do retreats and study and serve other people if it

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

wasn't for the kindness of, especially one Lama from Sera, who is truly the source of all our good. And that's of course, Khen Rinpoche [*cries*], who has served as the Abbot of Sera May College.

And probably the largest group of Dharma centers in the world is headed by the incredible Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who has brought Dharma to thousands and thousands of people all over the world. If you've ever met him you could see the pain of his health from twenty, thirty, forty years of serving us. He's given up every hour of his life to help people like you and me. And he learned that from Lama Yeshe, holy Lama who has passed away now, and who was the first to come to our country to try to help us. And he was from Sera also. And then the great Geshe Rabten, who has passed away, brought much Dharma to European countries. And I could go on.

There are about a hundred of them who have selflessly come to our countries to help us. They never charge money. Many of them have had great physical and financial hardship. You met Geshe Thupten Rinchen, holy Lama, at Sera who taught us all so many things. He didn't have enough money to buy food. He got tuberculosis from malnutrition, while we were eating and enjoying ourselves. This is the kind of person that Sera Monastery is producing for the last six hundred years.

Sera was founded in 1419. That was the year that Je Tsongkapa passed on. The founder's name is Jamchen Chuje Shakya Yeshe. I don't know a lot about him but I know that he was a close disciple of Je Tsongkapa.

Je Tsongkapa, in his later years, became very famous. The emperor of China, the most powerful man on the planet in a Tibetan person's eyes at that time, sent Je Tsongkapa a message. He said, "I wish to honor you. I wish to learn from you. Come to Beijing."

And Je Tsongkapa was hanging out in Ganden Monastery with no food, no clothing, no place to stay really. It was sure that he would be honored with great gifts of gold and silver and jewels and he would be able to teach the emperor of China. In those days there was a beautiful relationship between the great land of China and Tibet and many teachers going back and forth: Chinese teachers teaching Tibetans, Tibetan Lamas teaching Chinese, even the emperor, and the emperor and the whole Chinese people honoring the Lamas who came. And it was a fat chance for any Lama to go and teach the emperor.

And then Je Tsongkapa called Jamchen Chuje. He said, "I'm sort of busy. I've got to teach all these students here. You go."

And, you know, to show up at the emperor's court, the most powerful man in the world with a "No" from your teacher is sort of difficult. And Jamchen Chuje said "Of course, Lama, I'll do what you ask."

And he went to Beijing; I believe he was gone for eight years on the trip. And he taught the emperor. And we know that he must have been a diplomat to survive the court. We also know from paintings of Je Tsongkapa, which we've put up on the walls here, that Je Tsongkapa taught at Sera in the final year of his life. So Sera Monastery was opened with the blessing of Je Tsongkapa himself.

How did the Lama start the monastery? We have a record of how these monasteries started. Je Tsongkapa and seven or eight disciples went out to a place amazingly similar to this

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

desert. They sat down in a little huddle. It was getting dark. Je Tsongkapa said, “Anybody have any food?” And they pull out a few pieces of bread and some yak butter.

And then Je Tsongkapa said, “We’re going to start a monastery. How much money have we got?” And everybody put in all their money. It was five dollars. He said, “Okay.” And he said, “We better eat before we start.”

And they pulled out the bread and some *tsampa* — barley flour — and they started to knead the flour into some *bak*, which is a Tibetan snack when you don’t have any money, and he said, “Hold on, we need the butter for something else.”

And they said, “Lama, you know, we don’t have much to eat here.” He said, “It’s okay,” and he took all the butter and he made some butter lamps and he made a little alter on a stone and he offered the butter to the Angels in the world.

I suppose everyone went to bed hungry, wondering how the hell are we gonna build a monastery with five dollars. Next morning they were awakened by a huge group of yaks stomping through the desert, and there were yak herders at the head and they stopped and got off the yaks and said, “What are you guys doing out here?”

And they said, “We’re gonna build a monastery. Je Tsongkapa says we’re gonna build a monastery.”

They said “you look pretty shabby and hungry.”

They said, “Yeah.”

They took about twenty yaks and unloaded all the supplies and said “You keep it.” And they just disappeared.

So we have the same job here. You don’t have to worry about anything. It’s not, it’s not money that built those huge monasteries. It was just guts.

I thought we should make a little karma for Diamond Mountain, like those butter lamps. Twenty years ago Holy Lama Khen Rinpoche, who didn’t have a nickel, he didn’t have anything in his refrigerator, we were told to keep the door closed when students came so they wouldn’t see. [*cries*] But people offered him things and he kept them and then he saved a little money and we sent it to feed the monks of the new Sera.

There’s a new Sera in India close to Mysore, because the old Sera was bombed into pieces during the invasion of Tibet. All the books were burned. Out of six thousand monks, only a hundred survived. They walked on foot over the Himalayas under artillery fire and strafing from airplanes. They took the shell casings and made butter lamps out of them as they fell down from the airplanes. They lived in tents for years in the middle of nowhere Mysore jungle. And people like Geshe Thupten Rinchen, your holy Lama, they carried cement in their bleeding hands upstairs to build the temple you sat in. And now there are three thousand, four thousand monks at Sera. And it’s a beautiful place now.

We still send them money for food. They still don’t have enough. New refugees escape every year. They come to Sera with nothing. They are taken in freely. They never pay anything.

Geshe Lobsang Thardu (Lothar), when I met him, was sleeping with twenty young monks in a single room. At night I heard banging and noises. I peeked out of my bed. The young monks had long bamboo sticks and they were knocking little pieces of bread out of the rafters, to eat something. I said “Geshe Lothar, what’s going on?”

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

He said “I hide the bread up in the rafters. They’re all starving. I need to have some for tomorrow but they, the kids knock it off at night and eat it.”

So they’re not that bad now, but still many people catch tuberculosis from lack of food, like Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche, Vinaya master who taught you while you were there.

So I thought, let’s all, today, if you can, when you are leaving or during the break, you take something, I don’t care if it’s a dollar or a dime but you get your hand in the karma of Sera Monastery. I think there’s a box or a basket and you just put anything in there. We hope to offer a small. . . the first part, it’s called *phud*, to Khen Rinpoche, holy Lama, and then the rest will go to the food fund to feed the young monks. And that will be like the butter lamps on that cold night. And then we’ll see if any yak herders show up tomorrow. Maybe it will just be some wealthy lady from somewhere. I don’t know. But we’ll send that karmic bottle out on the ocean.



I want to tell you a little bit about what we will study, and then we’ll take a break before we start the first verse. Holy Christie and I, in New York City in the stress and busyness of the final months there, we thought we would take some yoga classes to be able to sit for three years without moving. We went to a beautiful yoga center in, in the city. And I felt a little silly — we arranged for private classes because I was afraid that people would see how uncoordinated I am. And they gracefully agreed. And I also felt a little uncomfortable; there were Hindu gods’ statues spread around and, sort of, I got a Hare Krishna feeling, and I was [*laughter*]. . . I’m not denigrating Hare Krishna, it’s a beautiful thing, but I was a little nervous, and I wasn’t quite sure.

And I remember standing in the entryway and waiting for the teacher, and people are lining up for yoga classes. It’s sort of amazing; it’s a steady flow, hundreds of people coming in to twist their bodies into knots. I was sort of amazed. And people are walking around me and saying, “How’s your *chakras* doing?” and, “How are your *nadis*?” and, “Is your *prana* flowing today?” and I’m like, “Wow, this is amazing.”

Why? The whole system about *chakras*, inner centers of energy in your body, and *nadis*, channels for the inner winds, is extremely secret in Tibetan tradition. Here, hundreds of, looks to me like kids ‘cause I’m getting old, coming in and talking about these things like they were jelly beans and [*laughter*] I’m, like, amazed.

In Tibet you study twenty years in a monastery like Sera and maybe one person out of a thousand will graduate as a Geshe. Only one in about ten thousand becomes a first level *hlarampa* Geshe like Khen Rinpoche. And if you are *hlarampa* Geshe, which I’m not, then in ancient Tibet you were allowed to go to tantric college.

There were two great tantric colleges, Gyume and Gyuto. Our holy Lama attended Gyume. And then for five years you study the secret teachings. It involves learning about mandalas, doing chanting, proper rituals, study of the basics of the secret teachings. If you do very well in these secret teachings then you might be taken into a corner, privately, and taught the second level of secret teachings, called *dzok rim*, in which you work with the inner channels and *chakras*, the inner energy centers, and you are taught secret methods of turning your body into an Angel’s body.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

It's not granted to people lightly, because it's difficult and it's very rare and precious. And it takes extremely great faith and effort and courage to practice. And somewhere during those secret years you will be introduced to the asanas, the yoga exercises, as part of your secret practice, and then special methods of breathing, and other secret practices which prepare your body for the transformation into a Buddha.

So I was amazed. I saw these people flowing in and everybody already knows all this stuff. And I started some classes. I had very wonderful, kind teachers. One of them is here today, and she has done the chanting for us, and we are very fortunate to have her come. Other teachers have also visited and will be visiting to teach.

These people have spent ten, twenty, thirty years of their lives. They have learned from great Indian masters. They have been like Je Tsongkapa — nobody cared twenty years ago about these things. They were considered weird or crazy. They couldn't support themselves with yoga, they had to have other jobs. They stuck it out. They made countless trips to India, like some of us have done. You know when you step on the plane in New York, you're going to get sick in India. *[laughter]* And they have gone, bravely, and they have worked very hard. They represent a true lineage. They have studied with great teachers. We have other yoga teachers here from other lineages and they have put out the same effort.

So one day this kind teacher, who happens to be here and you should give her a hug, offered Christie and I a copy of the Yoga Sutra. And even though I was very busy, I flipped through it and put it away. I said, "I'll probably have time in retreat."

Then we went back for another class. Our holy teacher was busy. We had another teacher, came in, and he is a great teacher, he and his partner are very dedicated and have opened that yoga center. And strangely, he handed me a copy of the Yoga Sutra. *[laughter]* A different copy.

So I said, "This is odd, two people in a row in one week handing me the same Sanskrit Sutra." After that we all went to Sera Mey for classes with holy Lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen, and I had an opportunity to go to Mysore, briefly, and meet with a very great holy teacher there, of yoga. And we sat down in a small group and he starts spouting this Yoga Sutra again. And I still don't have time to look at it.

Then we came here, we started retreat. We were planning to meditate eighteen hours a day. We discovered you can't do that. *[laughter]* It was a very painful discovery. It took months to find out. Some of us went to the edge of crazy.

The people here have really earned your hard work. You should know. Many of us have been sick, many have had very difficult trials thrown up by the demons. And you should know that all your hard work is being earned. Every retreatant has pushed themselves to the very edge of their health and their sanity, really, and emotionally to the edge of where a person can go. And you should appreciate that your hard work is being earned. They feel deeply your trouble, your effort, your hard work, and I think all of them have, therefore, pushed themselves to the very edge. It's painful for me to see sometimes. *[cries]*

So we started, especially in the summer, in the afternoon for an hour or two, we thought we would start to look at some books that would help our practice, because it's impossible to meditate at that time, in the summer especially. And the caretakers sent us a big bottle of jelly beans. We eat half of them and we open up a book and we don't fall asleep.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

So I started to look at the Yoga Sutra, and I brushed off my ancient college Sanskrit and start to struggle through it. Christie's Sanskrit is getting quite good, as are some of the retreatants.

And we work through it, and it's an amazing, beautiful, extraordinary presentation of the entire content of the ACI courses. Plus the tantric teachings.

So I was extremely impressed and overjoyed to have been granted that book by my teachers. And I thought it would be wonderful for us to study it.

We asked for some extra texts in Sanskrit that we needed. They were gotten from a wonderful man in California who has like a research center for yoga. And by accident, I'm sure, there was an email slipped in that said, "NBC and The Wall Street Journal have discovered that twenty million Americans have suddenly signed up for yoga." Twenty million people in the country in the last twelve or eighteen months have started to practice what is, in our lineage, the highest, one of the highest and most secret trainings a person can ever encounter. *[laughter]*

You can call it some kind of weird coincidence. You can see it as the success of three years of hard work. But however you view it, suddenly twenty million American people are experimenting with some of the highest practices of the lineage of the Dalai Lamas.

Those practices can turn your body into that of an Angel. They are preparatory, just before the final transformation into a body of light, of an Awakened Being. I don't mean it's such a big deal to look like a light bulb. I mean, at the same time, you gain the ability to travel to countless planets at the same moment, and to appear on those planets as any kind of being at all, and lead, and guide every living creature to total bliss.

Each of us has this future ahead of us, if you're not that way already, I don't know. I often think I'm the last one. I appreciate the chance to try to catch up. But imagine, twenty million people suddenly dabbling with a teaching which can enable each one of us to reach the final stages of our, the goal of millions of lifetimes. People who see an ad for a yoga class and go, even for one hour and never go back, have extraordinary seeds in their minds from thousands of previous lifetimes, to have even seen the advertisement. It's not an accident that these things happen. Those twenty million people have spent thousands of lifetimes in serious pursuit of high spiritual goals they may not even remember.

And there are things you need to know for your body to change like that. You need to learn the other parts of the path. Even in the Yoga Sutra, which is something like a hundred and ninety six or seven verses or lines, there are only three lines about yoga exercises. You can say one percent of the book. And what we think of as yoga is really only one percent of the practice. It's all part of a much higher and longer practice that was passed on in India and in Tibetan monasteries.

And so I have a dream, a vision, what we have all learned from our holy Lamas from Sera is the missing part, I think. I think if those twenty million people who are trying to stand on their heads could somehow hear the rest of the Yoga Sutra, if they could somehow see how it all works, if they could see how the yoga fits into a larger plan, each one of us becoming a holy Angel who could serve countless beings at once, which is the goal of our whole, very existence, then what a wonderful thing would happen.

If we could meet with people and talk about the Yoga Sutra, which is really all of the instructions which all of you have learned from holy Lamas and through them the ACI courses.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

Ninety-eight percent of the Yoga Sutra is not about yoga exercises. It's about the knowledge which we have been granted by our holy Lamas, of how to make your body and mind change at the very end of your practice.

So I have a dream, a vision. It's a very strong. . . I have no idea how we'll pay for it, but John Stilwell knows, and Winston knows, and Salim-bai knows. We're going to get some old cars and we're going to drive around the United States, after retreat, and we're going to go to bookstores and yoga centers and Dharma centers or anybody who won't kick us out, and talk about the other parts of the teaching that can help people who do yoga, the exercises, not just to be healthy but to actually escape from all forms of pain and to become a being who can help every single other living creature in the universe, at one moment.

And anybody who will listen, then I thought we could just sit and talk about it, the Yoga Sutra, what it means. We thought to put out a book about it, like a story book, based on the Yoga Sutra and also other high teachings. If we can publish a book then we'll have an excuse to go to bookstores and things like that. So people are working on that. And I don't know exactly how it will go, but we're gonna go, even if we have to take a Greyhound bus. And we just need little *tsampa* bread, and we'll use the butter for butter lamps.

And I thought to go to a number of cities in a big left-hand circle around the United States. And if you happen to live in one of those cities, or you just want to come along, then I hope you will come. I think it would be really beautiful. Je Tsongkapa used to wander around Tibet with his students like that. They'd jump on a yak and go, and they would circulate in a big circle, following the seasons. And they would just have *satsang* — they would just sit down and talk with people. And then maybe we can help twenty million people. And I believe that we will discover something.

When you do a long tantric retreat like this one, three years, at some point, it's a tradition to leave and go on an Angel hunt. It's called *singalee* practice. The karma of working so hard or serving the retreatants so hard for three years, or even a year or two, the karma is so powerful that you are able to see some of the Angels who are walking among us all the time.

And so I dream that maybe we won't so much teach as be taught. I think we will run into these holy beings, people who have devoted their lives to that path and who have gained the goals that a monk in Tibet might gain after their secret studies. I believe that there are dedicated people in the yoga tradition who have gained those goals. We can't see it yet, but I have a feeling that by going out and trying to help people we will be allowed to see them. Then we'll come back and sit down, collect our five dollars together and build Diamond Mountain – a place to study to supplement all of the centers and the schools in New York and Godstow and other places.

I hope — I feel very strongly — that eventually we should consciously try to begin small centers in those cities which we visit. I know that there may be fifteen or twenty places like that, but I often think about how I met holy Lama Khen Rinpoche. He was the only Geshe teaching within a thousand miles of where I lived. I met him almost by accident. And it frightens me to think that I, if I die, I would be, I might be born again in a place where no one knows these things, no one is teaching these things. There's only television and eating and working yourself until you die.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

I don't want to come back to a world like that. I think we owe it to our future selves and to our children that there are places to go to learn these holy things. It's our responsibility and our honor to carry on the tradition we have been granted by our teachers. I think we have to work hard now, after that tour, and create places where people can come to learn both the open teachings of the ACI courses and the higher, secret teachings, of which yoga is really a part.

I'd like to take a break now. There are supposed to be three or four thangkas, religious paintings from Tibet, up on the walls here, and more will be going up each day, I understand. They tell the story of the Lamas from Sera, and also the small colored ones tell about the life of Je Tsongkapa. There's supposed to be a special area maybe Venerable Ann, if she's here, could stand up and point to it, where there are special paintings of Je Tsongkapa, where areas have been marked out. If you get a chance please look at those tiny areas, what's going on in them.

In one there's two weird guys who look like, I mean not to be disrespectful but they look like Halloween costumes, staring at each other, and there's another section where there's a big procession going on, people carrying something special and leading it in with an incense stick, there's another area where Je Tsongkapa is teaching. And then there's a big thangka of Je Tsongkapa himself in his yogic aspect, as a yogi. And I think there's one more thangka of Je Tsongkapa getting stabbed in the heart by Manjushri, the Lord of Wisdom, and getting his knowledge. So during the break you might want to look at some of those drawings and paintings. And then afterwards we'll start the Yoga Sutra.



I know there may be some new friends visiting today and — I know I don't need to tell the older yogis here, but the new ones — the lineage we're in: Gelukpa, Tsongkapa, Dalai Lamas, is tough. When you take a teaching you have to absorb it properly. You have to listen carefully. You have to take good notes. Every single person in this room should have a notebook in their lap. It should be open to the first page, Patanjala Yoga Sutram. Your pen should be in your hand.

It's not really a joke. It's extremely expensive, karmically, to hear a teaching on a book like the Yoga Sutra. You may never have a chance again. And by listening, by attending, you accept a very serious and heavy responsibility to continue this lineage on to your own students. Each person in this room, by listening, takes a responsibility to impart this wisdom clearly and accurately to their own students. It doesn't have to be in a teaching like this. It may be over coffee in a Starbucks on Third Avenue or something. But it's your duty not to let these things die in the world.

The great teachers of many yoga traditions have written commentaries on this text. Each of the great teachers of the popular yoga traditions in this country underwent serious problems in their home country, India. They struggled to learn these things and keep them alive. They often didn't have anything to eat. Those big gurus you see driving around in expensive limosines nowadays, all of them starved for many years trying to save these lineages, trying to preserve this knowledge.

Now the responsibility shifts to us. So in our lineage, when you take a teaching, then this evening, as you enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner, you should review it mentally. And if you're in

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

a group of friends, which is a very good way to review, and you see people talking about the new Harry Potter movie, you [laughter], you change the subject subtly. You say, “What did you think, what he said about that third verse?” And you have to review this teaching; you have to look at your notes tonight, and as you meet other friends here, talk with them this evening about what was said. Thrash it out between you.

And it’s a tradition in our lineage that the next day, in the morning, before the next class, you should look at your notes again. I think it’s even more effective to get together with some friends and just talk about it over breakfast. And don’t be shy — if there’s some people here that look like you’d like to get to know them, then hang out with them, say, “My name is so-and-so. Where’re you guys staying,” and meet in some coffee shop in some motel somewhere and sit down.

Each teaching, in the evening and the next morning, review it. If you don’t do it you will lose everything. You won’t remember anything on Wednesday. After the teaching is finished, get ahold of a transcript or a tape and go over it one more time. Then you’ll be prepared to help other people.

Lineages shouldn’t be passed on haphazardly or sloppily. They haven’t survived for two thousand years, in the case of the Yoga Sutra, because of laziness. We’ll be going very deep on a few of the lines. To do the whole Sutra carefully would take a year or two. We’ll do that at Diamond Mountain later. You can talk to Winston about where the place is. I think later — after the traveling around the country — we will come home here and there will be some very heavy, serious classes about the Yoga Sutra and Sanskrit and Tibetan, and also on the higher secret teachings.

I see Diamond Mountain as a place where serious people can come to learn the higher teachings also. I think those same teachings will be given in New York City. Not in as great depth, but they will be done thoroughly. And they will not be granted to anyone who hasn’t finished the eighteen ACI courses. So you have your work cut out for you, if you wish to hear those higher teachings.



We’ll go through each verse, and sometimes it’s only a piece of a verse — you’ll see a short English line on top and a long Sanskrit line below. That means I felt that there was one part of a verse that was especially important for this teaching, short teaching. I’ve asked to have readers read the English, and also just to read the Sanskrit sounds. You won’t make them perfectly, but you will learn them later at Diamond Mountain.

Each verse we’ll cover, in about five or six different ways. First we’ll talk about the Sanskrit words. I call them key words. These are words that I think, are either very important to know if you’re going to talk to those twenty million people. Sometimes it’s just a neat word that occurs in our Tibetan lineage a lot and I thought you’d like to hear about it. So we’ll cover the Sanskrit word first, word by word, the meaning of the word.

We’re going to talk more tomorrow about how Sanskrit plays a role in our lineage but you should know that both Sanskrit and English ultimately come from an older language which is called Indo-European. So really Sanskrit is very powerful for us. I think you can even feel it when we chanted today. Because English and Sanskrit are actually sister languages, almost every

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

Sanskrit word can be found in English. So I find it personally helpful to learn the English words that come from the Sanskrit word that we are trying to learn. To me it's exciting that the language that I grew up with came out of Sanskrit, and I thought you might enjoy hearing what we call cognates, English words that come from the Sanskrit word, and I thought it might help you remember the Sanskrit word better.

After that we'll talk about how the ancient Tibetan translators translated the Sanskrit word. This gives us a very clear idea of its meaning, because the Tibetans, over a seven hundred year period, translated five thousand such texts from Sanskrit. They left us with beautiful instructions on what the words really mean.

Next we'll talk about the meaning of the words all together in a verse. Then an important step I think, that I think maybe is sometimes ignored, is to show how the verse fits into the whole Yoga Sutra. There's a flow to the Yoga Sutra which is difficult to recognize if you haven't been trained in many sutras, and I thought it might be helpful to explain how the verse fits into the whole book, and the flow of the Yoga Sutra. I also feel that it's useless to read a book if it doesn't have any connection with your real life, and so after that we'll try to talk about why this particular line is important for your own life and your own happiness.

The last thing we'll do with each line is to talk about how you can serve other beings with this verse. How can we help people who are in pain or sad. How can we be of service to others with these verses. So each verse, we'll cover, from the words up to the service of other beings. I don't know how the time will go. I asked Winston to give me a watch but I'll probably ignore it. You don't get a chance like this very often. We'll have another break if we need. So I'd like to ask Winston to read the title, and then we'll start.

[Winston McCullough: The Yoga Sutra of Master Patanjali. "A Short Book about Yoga"]

I'll talk about the key words. If I say, "read the next verse," and I haven't covered a key word, Winston or someone has to bang me, okay?

I'd like to talk first about Master Patanjali. Let's just talk about the word "Patanjali." *Pat* in Sanskrit means "to fall through the air" or even "to fly through the air." The ancient Indo-European root, the ancient source of both Sanskrit and English is *pet*. And you find this word, this root, in English in, oh, three or four words. One is, *impetuous*, which means "to fly off at the handle." You find it in the word, *repeat*, the "p-e-a-t," which means "to befall us again." And there's an ancient Sanskrit word, *patra*, which means "the flyer," which is the word for "feather" in Sanskrit and for "flower petal."

"P" often changes to "f" by the time it gets to English. "R-a" changes to "e-r," and so the word, feather, comes directly from *patra*. The *feth* in feather, and the "p-e-t" in flower petal comes from *pat* also, because it's light as a feather, and flower petal was named from feather. "R" often changes to "l." *Anjali* or *Anjala* means "sacred water" or "sacred ointment." It comes from a Sanskrit word, *anj*, and the ancient, ancient root, in Indo-European is *ongw*, and that came into our language in the word *unguent*, the "u-n-g," in the word *ointment*, the "o-i," and in the word *anoint*. All of those words come from that root.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

So why do you call a great master, “fell in the ointment?” [Laughs] *Patanjali*. There was a great yogini, like a Vajra Yogini practitioner, in ancient India about two thousand years ago. Her name was Gonika. She was a great woman practitioner of the secret teachings. She was getting old. She was afraid she wouldn’t have someone to pass them onto, which is a fear that anyone who gets old and has great knowledge starts to have. And so she put some holy water in her cupped hands and she made a prayer that she could have a son to whom she could pass on these teachings. And she raised the holy water in her hands and when she opened her eyes and looked down, there was a tiny little baby in her hands. And he grew very quickly into a man, and that was Patanjali.

People think these stories are just silly old stories of Indian or Tibetan superstitions. I heard the same thing from Tibetans when I told them that Jesus Christ was born of a woman who never had sex with a man. And in the ancient scriptures it’s said that holy beings never create problems for their mother when they are born. They should be born without pain. And so people like Padmasambhava, which means “the yogi who grew out of a lotus flower” in Tibet, or people like Patanjali or Jesus, they are born miraculously, they don’t cause pain to their parents. They are not coming here by karma, they are coming here by choice. So I say, don’t be naive and think it’s a silly story. But his name was “the one who fell into the holy water.”

In Tibetan language, this is *Chur-hlung*. *Chu* means “holy water.” The *R* at the end of *chur* is a locative, “into the water,” and then the *hlung* means “to fall.” So the ancient Tibetans translated Patanjali’s name as, literally, “fell into the water.”

Pandita Chur-hlung’s name is found in an extraordinary book called the *Mahavyudpatti*. This is an ancient dictionary that was used by the great Tibetan translators, like Marpa, Milarepa’s teacher. When they translated the holy books from Sanskrit into Tibetan they used this book called *Mahavyudpatti*. It’s like a dictionary.

We still have this book; it’s in the *Kangyur*, which is our canon, our holy canon of holy books from India. And in there is a list of thirty-eight of the greatest wise men from India, those who followed after the Buddha. As you can guess, Arya Nagarjuna is there; Arya Asanga, from whom we learned the bodhisattva vows lineage; Arya Vasubandhu, who taught the Abhidharma teachings, which you people have studied in the ACI courses; Master Chandrakirti, who you have also studied in the ACI courses; Master Dharmakirti who you have also studied; Guna Prabha who taught the Vinaya teachings, the monks’ teachings on monks’ way of life and nuns’ way of life that we follow. And then right down there in the middle is Master Patanjali. He comes right before Master Chandrakirti in the *Mahavyudpatti*. So he was considered among the thirty eight greatest teachers of ancient India. We call them, in Sanskrit *Upadhyaya*, and in Tibetan the word is *Khenpo* and that’s the “Khen” in Khen Rinpoche’s holy name. Nowadays it has come to mean the head of a monastery.

Patanjali is an amazing wise man. He wrote the Yoga Sutra, which is really an incredible resensation of all the teachings of those other masters. It covers all the major ideas of the ACI courses. It covers all the major concepts presented in a whole twenty years in a Tibetan monastery and it goes further, into the secret teachings. So he had an extraordinary grasp of the entire range of the teachings from ancient India, and in some extraordinary way, he has placed them into a tiny, short, little book.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

From the issues he discusses at length, I would guess that he lived somewhere around 200 AD. There are big arguments about when he lived. Nobody really knows. The ancients didn't care about that sort of thing. They just cared if it was a good book or not. But if I had to guess, personally, and it's only my idea, he discusses many of the issues that were hot around 200 AD, 300 AD. We'll talk more about that later.

He was also a great physician. He wrote a book on *Ayurveda*, the ancient medical knowledge of India. Some people say he didn't write it. It's written under another name. Tradition says he did write it. I think he wrote it. Anyone who has that great of a knowledge of the inner channels, the *chakras*, the subtle drops of energy within a human body would naturally be drawn to the study of medicine also.

In Tibet, medicine is studied through the four great medical tantras. I believe that it would be very wonderful to study those at Diamond Mountain in the future. There are many highly qualified Tibetan physicians in Tibet, Mongolia and Northern India, or all of India. I've had the honor to translate for several of His Holiness's physicians, and I think it would be wonderful to have them here and teaching courses on a visiting basis. They are too busy to stay I think.

A lot of the medical tantras are related to the higher practices of the secret teachings of which what we consider yoga is a part, the study of the inner workings of the inner winds, inner channels, inner energy centers, which if developed properly, change into the body of an Enlightened Being.

Master Patanjali also had a deep interest in dance. He is considered the father of classical Indian dance, which is a very great and high science. And I think again, this is natural for a person who is interested in the subtle energies of the body which are linked to your meditative states.

And I want to say one thing clearly, since we're on the subject. People ask me, "Do you mean to say we should all go run to take yoga classes? I'm not very interested in exercise, actually."

And I want to answer, clearly. There will come a time in your Buddhist studies, during the secret and most advanced parts, when you will be doing exercises which are very similar to modern yoga techniques. These are meant to work on the subtle channels and to speed up the process of enlightenment.

People ask me, "Well what yoga tradition should I look into?"

I don't think it matters. The modern yoga traditions in this country, like the *Sivananda* tradition, *Ashtanga* tradition, Master Iyengar's tradition, the *Jivamukti* tradition, even the *Vikram* tradition and other ones I'm not familiar with, they all have the same basic ways of manipulating the body. I think what's crucial is that you find a teacher that has a good heart. The exercises are not very effective without a good heart.

So should you run out and take yoga now? I used to make fun of the Venerables in New York who did yoga — I confess and regret it here — *[laughs]* you can report to them. But if you feel like there's a spark of something there for you in the future, then you have a seed for it and you can do that. I don't think more than half an hour a day at the beginning is needed. You don't have to worry that it takes a lot of time. As you go along farther you may wish to do more. But a short, even fifteen, thirty minutes, could be helpful in your future advanced studies.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

Now I have students who are deeply into Tai Chi, I have a wonderful student who is a black belt in Kung Fu, one of the retreatants. They want to know, “Does this do the same thing to my subtle channels?”

I think it does. If you have a dedicated teacher and if you follow that path with compassion, then I think it can have a similar effect.

Some people can get the same results without any kind of physical activity. Some people are special that way. And so I think that each person has to follow their own inclinations.

People ask me, “Where can I find a good teacher?”

I think every single teacher that we have had in the retreat borders, one of Tai Chi, and we’ve had, I think maybe seven or around that, teachers of modern yoga techniques. I haven’t met all of them but from what I hear by notes among us retreatants, I think they all have a very big heart. I think they are all highly qualified and I think all of their traditions are authentic. And I think they might know someone in your city, where you live, if there is no one in your own place where you live.

But don’t get nervous and think that we’re all going to be jogging and standing on our heads. It’s not the point. Sometime in the future, as a small but very important part of our higher studies, it can be very useful to be able to manipulate the inner channels by means of our outer body. You can also do it from the inside, through deep meditation techniques, especially through *tong-len*, breathing exercises, and we’ll be learning all of those in a tantric way in the future. So if you have any inclination, that’s fine. If you don’t, that’s fine too. You will still move along quite well.

Where were we? Patanjali. So he was a great teacher of dance, and some of the people who are studying the higher teachings in the retreat have been taking formal classes in classical forms of dance and also modern dance. This can also be very powerful on your inner channels and it was a deep and strong tradition in Tibet, especially among the monks, to do sacred dance. This tradition was hurt very badly during the loss of Tibet and during the loss of Mongolia. We had the honor of studying briefly with the last great master in Mongolia of sacred dance, and also some in Sera still survive quietly. And this can be very powerful method of working on the inner channels also.

It’s not bad to get a start now, and then when the time comes, we will go into it in the proper way. But it’s good to get a start now.

People ask me, “I’m too old.”

I say, “Hell, I’m 50. I can st... – you’re not too old, and frankly you don’t have a choice.”

So take it gently, softly, easily, happily and it doesn’t matter what your age is. Working with the inner channels is something that I think a person who has seen a lot of life can actually do better.

So Master Patanjali was a great dancer and he’s recognized as the father of Indian classical dance as well. He wrote an incredible commentary on the Sanskrit language, called the *Mahabhasha*. It’s a commentary on *Panini*’s presentation of Sanskrit grammar.

Those of you who’ve studied the Vajra Yogini *sadhana*, teachings, there are many places where we visualize secret sounds throughout our bodies. You shouldn’t think that you are putting a picture of a squarish letter in your heart, with a weird half moon over it or something.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

It's not like that. It's already there. You're trying to see something which is already there. That letter has been singing to you your whole life. You can't hear it.

And so the study of Sanskrit is not some silly linguistic thing in India. It's an attempt to hear the sounds of the inner channels which, if you can develop properly, changes your entire body into that of an Angel who can help countless living beings. So it's natural that Master Patanjali would have all these interests.

Now I'd like to speak about the Yoga Sutra. If we go too long we'll just pick it up tomorrow, okay? I won't keep you too late. We'll go back to the meaning of the words.

Yoga comes from a Sanskrit word *yuj*. The Ancient Indo-European root is *yeug*. And that comes into English in the words "yoke," meaning to join two animals together for plowing. It's found in the word "jugular," as in "jugular vein," because the root "j-u-g" in Latin means that thing which connects your head to the rest of your body, which is your neck. So the word for neck comes from the root that the word for yoga comes from. The word "join" comes from the same root, the "j-o-i," and the word "joust," which means for two horsemen to meet each other, connect, to join. So you get this feeling of how the root means "to connect" or "join."

The word in Tibetan is *neln-jor*. This is a case where the way that ancient Tibetan translators translated the word helps us a lot to understand what yoga means. They sat with ancient Indian *pandits* for years. They discussed the best way to translate words into Tibetan. There was a royal edict, a command from the king, that no book should ever be translated without two pandits from India and two Tibetan translators working side by side for accuracy. Later on there was, by royal decree, a standardization of all the Tibetan words that came from Sanskrit. And you should realize that all the books we study in the monastery, the five great books, and all the books, all the courses in ACI are based on Sanskrit originals.

So *neljor* comes from two words, *nelnma* and *jorwa*. *Jorwa* means "to connect." Another form is *jar*, and even in modern Tibetan the word for glue is *jarsi* which means "sticky stuff." So *jar* means: the *jor* means "to connect." You also know this word in *jorlam*, the path of preparation, which connects you up to the direct perception of emptiness.

Nelma, the first half of *neln-jor*, is a very difficult word to translate. It means something like "the deep inner essence." So *nelnmar jorwa* or *neln-jor* means "any practice which connects you to the deep inner essence." The word for the inner channels, *nadis*, and the inner energy centers, *chakras*, and even the inner diamond body is called the *nelme lu*, the deep inner body, the diamond body.

So the word "yoga," as translated into Tibetan and as understood a thousand years ago by the great masters was that it's a practice which connects you to the deep inner essences, with connotations of emptiness. Sometimes emptiness itself is called *nelma*. So the function of yoga, the meaning of yoga, is to connect us to our deeper selves.

I think it's good for new people to hear the explanation of the word "yogi" and "yogini." Somebody who does yoga is called *yogin*. It means "somebody who has yoga." So you might see it spelled "yogin." And then when you use the word *yogin* in a sentence, it has to drop the *n*. So sometimes you might hear people talk about *yogis*. The feminine form is *yogini*. And of course you see that in the word *Vajra Yogini*. In Tibet the word *yogi* was not used lightly. Only very special people were galled *yogis*, or *yoginis*. There's even a vow against calling yourself a *yogi* or *yogini*. And there are connotations to deep and secret practice.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

There are four great groups of secret teachings in ancient India and Tibet. The third group is called *yoga*. The fourth group is called *anuttara yoga*. The name of the third group implies connecting yourself to the holy an . . . they call it *druptap, sadhana*, “reaching the holy Angels,” “reaching the Angels.”

It’s a pun, you see, because in one way at the beginning you come to see them, and they teach you. They might look like normal people to other people but because you’ve been sincere in your practice, there comes a breakthrough one day, and perhaps someone even around you at this moment in this tent, you realize has been an Angel all along. And then a connection is made, a *yoga*, and they start to instruct you.

But the word *sadhana* or *druptap*, like the Vajra Yogini *sadhana* that we do, has a second meaning. To reach an Angel means to become that Angel. And that’s really what the word *yoga* means, “to reach the Angels.”

First you reach them just by meeting them. Maybe they look like normal people to everyone else. That’s not surprising. You know the story about Master Asanga, who tried to save a dog who’d been hit by a cart and gained compassion at that moment, and then the dog became an Angel, and Master Asanga ran around town with a dog on his shoulders and everyone said, “He’s crazy.” But only Master Asanga saw the Angel.

So *yoga* means trying to reach them, in both ways. And, I repeat, Angel is not a funny guy or girl with two wings and flutters around and tells you the lottery numbers for next week [*laughter*]. It’s a being, a Buddha, it’s a woman Buddha or a man Buddha, who can appear as a normal person, but they are operating on every planet in the universe at the same time. We all want to be like that. It’s our ultimate goal. When you’re a child you want to grow up and drive a car. When you’re a human you want to grow up and be an Angel and serve countless living beings, help them from the terrors of death and the suffering life that we live. It’s what we all want to be, deep down. So *yoga* is a beautiful word for joining ourselves to that being, and then becoming that being.

I like the word *sutra*. It comes from a root *syu* in Sanskrit. The Indo-European word is the same, *syu*, and we see it in the English word “sew.” The W came from the U and the S-E came from the S-Y. There’s another word, “suture,” meaning a wound closed with a thread. And so the ancient meaning of the word “sutra” is “a thread,” and it comes from roots that mean “to sew.”

What’s that got to do with the book? The idea is that holy teachings, short holy ideas, are strung along the thread in a book. Sometimes you can think of it as pieces of thread twisted into a thread, like cords of a rope are twisted into a rope. The Tibetans translated “sutra” as *do*. *Do* has about three different meaning, but the first one is “brief.” *Do* means “crux,” “brief,” “a short book.” Even in modern Tibetan we say *dordu-ma* means, you know, “to put it in a nutshell.”

Do has another beautiful meaning. It can mean “the intersection or the juncture where two or three rivers come together,” which would be called *sindo*. Or even an intersection where three highways, two, three or four highways come together would be called a *lamdo*. In Sanskrit it’s the idea *triveni*, “the three sacred rivers coming together.”

This has a very deep meaning for us. There are three major inner channels in the human body that, if properly cultivated, help you turn into an Angel. And we are often working at the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

intersection, or the *do* or the *sutra* of these three streams to help create that body. And the physical exercises of what we call yoga in the modern times can help that process in a very rough way. So you get a feeling that “sutra” means “crux,” essential crux of a system which will enable us to reach the Angels. This is the meaning of the word Yoga Sutra.

I’d like to ask that the first line be read.

[Winston McCullough: *Anitya-ashuchi dukkha-anatmasu nitya shuchi sukha-atma khyatir avidya*. Things that cannot last seem to us as if they will. (II.5a)]

This is one of those cases where I’ve taken out only a piece of the verse because we don’t have time, unfortunately, to do the whole verse.

I’ll be very frank. I have this vision of my first yoga classes: there are hundreds of young people, I guess mostly from NYU, walking in and I’m looking at them and they are about to embark on this thing which is, to me, a highly secret teaching. I’m making a judgment, and it may be wrong, and I have to say that at the beginning – I don’t know that each of those young people wasn’t a tantric deity or a high Lama, but it may be the case that there are people who are looking upon yoga as a system of physical exercise. They hope that by attending these classes they will become stronger; almost everyone is hoping they will lose some weight. Frankly, me too. And everyone is wondering if they’ll look like David Life or someone healthy, strong, trim. And that can be a reason. . . I’m afraid if it’s what it looks like to me, and my eyes are certainly not pure yet, but it could be that people are thinking about their physical body and its health and its strength and they undertake yoga as exercises.

And if I had to grab one of those people and sit with them in a room, I would say, “Look, Yoga Sutra, accepted by every school of yoga in the world as the grandfather or grandmother of all yoga teachings, the most ancient, or the principal book on yoga teachings: there’s a line in there that says, ‘Things that you think are going to last won’t last.’ Don’t be naive, you know. You are getting older as you stand on your head. You are one hour older at the time you walk out of the class than the time you walked in. The process of aging is going on while you exercise. You are dying as you exercise.”

There’s nothing sadder to me than to meet a person who put all their hopes in a exercise program, and even spent years and got good at it, and then they simply got old and couldn’t do it anymore. This is not the purpose of yoga. This is not the purpose of the holy teachings of Patanjali, Master Patanjali, or all the other great saints. Yoga exercises are only a tiny sliver of a larger plan that can take you beyond death itself. And if anyone ever asks you, “Why the hell did a Buddhist monk teach Yoga Sutra out in Arizona?” you can say, “He has only one concern, that people have to die.”

And there’s a way not to die. And people have found it, people have achieved it. Maybe people sitting quite close to you. Then imagine how it might feel to such a person to sit and watch a room full of people who must die simply because they don’t know something.

So the first line from the Yoga Sutra that I think anyone should hear is this line. Your body won’t last, your friends, your husband or wife, or children, the people around you in this tent, if they don’t learn the real teachings of how to reach the Angels, they will die. It’s a life and death matter. This place, Diamond Mountain, all the teachings of ACI in New York, all the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

efforts of the Lamas from Sera, they have only one goal, that's to help people who are dying, help people not to lose the people they love around them.

Nitya, anitya. *Nitya*: the root is “n-i” in Sanskrit. The ancient Indo-European is *en* and it came into English in the word “in.” The idea is that there's something about you; inside you have an independent nature that protects you from dying. And that's not true. *Nitya* means “will last forever” because it exists in and of itself, which is wrong.

The Tibetan word is *takpa*, which means “unchanging.” Then actually everything is *anitya*. “A” is the negative in Sanskrit and in Greek and it comes into English in the negative, in Greek words like “apolitical,” or “amoral” or “atheist,” meaning “not”: even in the word “ignorance,” the “a” changed to “i.”

There's a power which is making our bodies get old during a yoga class. That power can be stopped and reversed. But to learn it you have to want to learn it, and you have to admit to yourself that even if you become a very good yoga student, you're still getting older every year, and there'll come a time when you can't do those poses. There'll come a time when you can't walk up the stairs to the yoga class. There'll come a time when you can't put your foot out of your bed. And that has to drive you to learn how to stop it. The original purpose of yoga is to stop those terrible things. These are accidents. You don't have to live like that. *Mitakpa* is just the negative of *takpa* meaning “changing,” which means “not unchanging,” everything is changing, all the time. Next verse.

[Andrea McCullough: *Bandha karana shaithilyat prachara samvedanach cha chittasya para sharira-aveshah.* And they realize that the body itself is a prison. (III.39b)]

There are no key words here. I just thought it was a great verse. [laughter] *Prachara* means “a prison” or a fenced-in area. The “c-h-a-r” came into English in the word, “incarceration.” The “c-a-r” in “incarcerate,” comes from the “c-h-a-r” in *prachara*. This is actually a verse about a very high tantric practice of moving your mind out of your body into another body because your own body has become like a prison, called *trongjuk* in Tibetan. It's one of the six teachings of Naropa. But the point is that all of us are stuck in this kind of a body, flesh, blood, bones. You don't have to stay in that kind of a body. You weren't meant to be in a body like this. You were meant to be in a body made of light, a body that could go to countless people at the same time and help all of them. And so it's important that we look upon this mortal body, as a prison that we want to bust out of, using the techniques of yoga. Next verse.

[Ven. Elly van der Pas: *Sthira sukham asanam.* The poses bring a feeling of well-being which stays with you. (II.46)]

Master Patanjali really only devotes one line to the physical exercises, out of almost two hundred lines. This happens to be that line. I thought, if you're going to talk about Yoga Sutra to people interested in the exercises, you better throw in this line.

Let's talk about *asana* first. *Asana* is a Sanskrit word that means “a seat.” It comes from a root, “long a-s”: *as* which means “to sit down.” I've checked very carefully and the word “ass” is not a derivative [laughter] of *as*, but it certainly seems like sitting down involves your ass.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

The word comes from a root “*as*.” The Indo-European word is *es*, and that came into English in the word “is”: “to be,” and the word “essence,” and the word “yes.” So all of these words have the same root as *asana*.

Asana means, then, a seat or a position in which you meditate, originally, and one big function of the yoga exercises was to be able to sit for long periods in a yurt in a desert and meditate. And if you read great books like the *Hathayoga Pradipika*, the first series of *asanas*, there’s more of the book spent describing how to sit for meditation than there is for describing the more active yoga exercises. So originally *asana* or yoga exercise meant a comfortable way of sitting or exercises to enhance the quality of your meditation sitting.

There’s a very important word, *vajrasana*, which means “the *vajra asana*.” *Vajra* means “diamond,” *asana* means “seat,” and it’s said in scriptures that on every planet there’s a *vajrasana*. It’s what we call Bodhgaya nowadays. In the old days it was called Vajrasana, “the Seat of the Diamond.” Every Enlightened Being is said to become enlightened in that place, on the diamond seat, in the Bodhgaya or the Vajrasana of their own world. Even nowadays, when we bless our seat for a long retreat we do a *vajrasana* mantra.

The Tibetan word is *den*. It also means “a seat.” Carpets nowadays, even in Tibetan, are called *kaden* which means “a seat” – something you sit down upon. Sera Monastery is called *Densha*, “A Seat of Higher Learning” and Vajrasana is called *Dorje den* in the Tibetan language. So we get the feeling of *den* meaning “seated properly,” and the original purpose of the yoga was, was to work on your channels and to allow you sit in long meditations where you were also working on your channels from the inside. We’ll talk more about working on your channels from the inside, because if you don’t work on them from the inside, just working on them from the outside doesn’t allow you to reach the goals.

So you can say that these yoga exercises bring you some kind of *sukha*. *Sukha* means “pleasant.” I like the word, *su*; the first part of the word is *su*. *Su* comes from an . . . the ancient Indo-European root is *esu*. When that prefix came into Greek language, the S disappeared, and you get “u,” like “euthenasia,” or “euphonic,” or “euphemism,” or “eurhythmics” [laughs] which means “good sound.” So “e-s-u” – the “s” drops out and becomes “e-u” in our languages. In Sanskrit, the “e” dropped out and it became *su*, which means “good.”

Kha means “a hole.” Space is sometimes called *kha*. When you say *khachari* paradise, it means “to move in the space,” *Kha-a-chari*, which is Vajra Yogini’s paradise. And so *kha* has come to mean some kind of open space or cavity or hole. And people say that *sukha* came from a word that meant “a good hole in the middle of a wagon wheel,” which means the wagon wheel runs smoothly, and that’s where the word *sukha* came from. This is a case where the accent of the word *sukha* is useful in understanding the word, and I think those of you who study Sanskrit in the future at Diamond Mountain, you will learn things like, like the accent, which is not taught much nowadays.

The ancient Indo-European word is *ghai*. And that came into our language in the word “chasm,” the “c-h-a” comes from *ghai*; the word “gap,” the “g-a” comes from *ghai*; the word “gape,” “to make a hole out of your mouth”; and, there’s one more, “yawn” [laughs], the “y-a” comes from “g-h-a.” So it means “a good hole” which means “to feel good or to ride smoothly.” Of course it’s not the goal of *asanas* or yoga postures to just feel good. It’s *sthira*, “ultimate happiness,” ultimate feeling good, which cannot be done in a mortal body like the ones we have.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

But that's the one line that introduces the ideas of a yoga exercise which has now become what people call yoga. And it's important to know, I think.

Next, next line, please, and I think we will probably not finish all the lines today. We'll probably go another fifteen minutes and we'll finish the rest tomorrow. So one more, maybe one or two more lines.

[Ven. Lobsang Chukyi: *Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara-asevito dirdha bhumiḥ*. Your practice must be steady, without gaps. (I.14b)]

The key word here is *nairantarya*, and it means “without gaps.” Master Patanjali's sutra is following exactly the same structure as the Heart Sutra — which you were reciting as I came in — by accident, I guess [*laughs*]. The Heart Sutra is an outline of the five great spiritual stages that every one of us will go through. Master Patanjali's book is the same. This line comes in a section which is describing the first two paths, called the path of collection and the path of preparation, or the path of accumulation and the path of preparation. These are the first two stages of every person's spiritual growth, and in a few lines later, Master Patanjali describes the five specific parts of what we call *jor lam* in exactly the same way as they are described in all Buddhist texts. But he starts to talk about the idea of practice, and the first thing you'd want to tell anyone who is trying to learn these deep things about their channels, is that you gotta keep it up steadily. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is constantly telling us, “It takes time and it takes hard work, and you have to be steady. You have to keep it up every day.”

The word *antar* came into English as “inter,” as in “interruption,” meaning you don't practice steadily. The Tibetan is *bar*. I stuck it in there because you know the word *bardo*. *Bardo* means the place in-between your death and your next birth. So you get a feeling for how *antar* means an interruption. And it doesn't matter whether we're talking about meditation or yoga *asanas* — exercises — or retreat or study. It all boils down to the same thing. You have to do it every day; you can't have an interruption. You can take days off to rest, and you should, but they should be planned. “Every Sunday I'm going to rest; every Saturday I'm going to rest.” But the other five days you can't get anywhere if your practice is not steady.

It's much, much better to start with five minutes a day and do it every day, than to start with an hour and a half and then do it less and less every week that goes by. It's just very simple and very practical advice from Master Patanjali. Start with small, modest practice, but don't skip any days. And you can't succeed in the higher teachings unless you get in the habit of doing it every day.

So cut down on how much you do. Don't try to do an hour and a half of yoga, or an hour and a half of study, or an hour and a half of meditation. Fifteen minutes is fine, ten minutes is fine. But get in the habit of doing to every day, at the same time. Otherwise you will surely fail. Next verse.

[Brian Pearson: *Vyadhi styana sanshaya pramada-alasya-avirati bhranti darshana-alabdha bhumatva-anavasthitatvani chitta vikshepas tentarayah*. And the fifth of the obstacles is laziness. (I.30e)]

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

Okay, obviously this is only a piece of the Sanskrit verse in which Master Patanjali presents the obstacles that you're likely to run into on the first two paths, especially the path of preparation. The key word here is *alasya*. "A" is the negative like we spoke about with *anitya*. I like the word *las*; the Sanskrit word is *las*. The Indo-European root, the older root is *las*, and it means "to be lively or frisky." And it came into English in two words, the first is "lust," and the second is, "lascivious" [*laughs*] meaning "frisky." *Alas* means not so frisky, and here it means, laziness.

Those of us who have been in three year retreat have discovered a deep spiritual truth. [*laughs*] The only reason you don't do your practice is because you don't want to, you don't really want to. It's not that you're too busy, we can't say that. We've got not one single other thing to do really. It's frightening. We've got twenty four hours a day, those beautiful, incredible, extraordinary caretakers and their helpers and the director and his wife, anything we want comes in. You know, I try to throw them off balance, I say, "I need a book from Manalva, Gujarat State, India, printed in 1930, by next week." And it comes. [*laughter*] And anything we need to eat, anything we need at all, it comes. So we have no excuses except our own *alasya*.

You just don't want to do it. You don't really want to do it. That's the only thing that lies between you and becoming the Angel we talked about. You just don't really want to do it, whether it's meditation or yoga or studying a scripture or helping out with washing the dishes. There is no other excuse than you don't really want to do it. People do what they want to do. It's not that you don't have time, you just don't really want to do it, or you would make the time. We do what we want to do.

And so, *alasya* is the first great enemy to be beaten back. It continues all the way up to the highest stages of Buddhist practice. You will have to be fighting against your own *alasya*. There's a special kind of *alasya* that doesn't want to go higher. "I'm comfortable at the level of teachings I have now. I'm comfortable. I understand these teachings I've gotten so far. I'd like to sit here for awhile." You can't be like that. The minute you feel comfortable at a certain level, you have to move up to the next level. You have to fight your way up to the next level. People are waiting, people are hurting. We have to go to the higher teachings as soon as we are capable. We have to try to move up as fast as we can go with our body and mind.

There will be times when you try too hard and you move too fast and you hurt yourself, and then you have to get back up and keep going, but you can't have that kind of laziness, that is waiting, or doing some practice that you find comfortable, and not trying to stretch further. The higher practices are difficult, they require great faith. Many people's faith breaks at that juncture, but we have to try.

Antaraya: the key word, *antar* again means "to go between." *Aya* comes from a Sanskrit word, just the simple letter *i*, which means "to go." The ancient Indo-European root is *ei*, and it shows up in English as the "i-t" in "circuit," or "exit," and "itinerary," the I that starts out "itinerary," all meaning "to go or to travel." So *aya* comes from those roots; it's a form of those roots, so it means "goes between." *Barche*, the Tibetan listed here, means an interruption. "*Kho nga la barche mun che song*," in modern Tibetan means "this guy's a pain in the ass and he's interrupting my work." So *barche* means "interruption," an obstacle. It comes in a very important word, *barche me lam* which you know, means "the period of direct perception of emptiness," which goes on in an uninterrupted flow. Go ahead with the next verse please.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day One – Geshe Michael Roach

[Amber Moore: *Tat pratishedha-artham eka tattva-abhyasah*. And if you wish to stop these obstacles, there is one. and only one, crucial practice for doing do. (I.32)]

Master Patanjali, in the first of the four chapters of his work, describes the obstacles that can block our practice. He makes a long list. It's very close to the list of Master Nagarjuna in his *Suhrlehka*, which we talked about once over dinner together at Vajrapani Institute, if you ever remember. But the two lists are very similar. And he says, *eka tattva-abhyasah*: there's one crucial practice for stopping all of these obstacles. I'll tell you about the the word first, and then the practice.

I think the key word is *abhyasa*. That's made of *abhi* and *asa*. *Asa* we've had already, which means "to sit down" or "to work hard," which means to practice. And then *abhi* is the *abhi* in *Abhidharma* which means "higher" or "moving right up to the end" and it appears in the English word "epitome," E-P-I, and "episcopal," words like that.

Master Patanjali is saying, "Look, there's one practice that can stop all of your obstacles, even laziness." And my dear yoga teachers have also told me many times, when I'm struggling with my head about to collapse, "Look, do it for somebody else." And you can [*cries*] push yourself a little further, all the time, if you're doing it for someone else, if you're not just doing it for yourself. You can always push yourself, you can find energy and power deep within you, no matter what you're doing: meditation, study, trying to serve those crazy demanding retreatants, you can always find a little more power if you forget yourself and try to do it for other people.

Imagine how it feels to be able to see every single living being there is in the universe at the same time. Imagine how that might feel. There isn't anything more joyful than struggling, working hard, to serve all of them. There's nothing to compare with that kind of happiness. There's no single happiness available to a human being which is higher than working on that level. It's what all of us are meant to do. It's what you really want to do. It's no fun being a grubby selfish little thing. We all want to be a being who can serve countless others, just in a moment's time, in every moment. That kind of happiness overcomes every other obstacle. You'll never have any obstacle that you can't get over once you are working for all living creatures, once you can see them.



Okay, see you tomorrow. Don't forget you're a lineage holder now. You have to look it over again this evening. Do it the easy way, and it's the most powerful way, you know — go up to somebody here that looks nice, that maybe you don't even know, and say, "Where're you gonna be tonight? You want to have dinner together, you want to hang out?" And then just talk about these ideas. That's the fun way to review. Do it again tomorrow morning, and then we'll see you tomorrow afternoon.

Morning: Day One ☸ November 28, 2002
Winston McCullough

Good morning. Can you hear? Yeah? Okay. Thank you for coming, again. And we'll begin with the prayers. We'll do them in Tibetan this morning. The ACI way. And then we'll do a guided meditation together, which I'll introduce after the prayers.

[prayers: short mandala, refuge]

Thank you. We appreciate very much that everyone has come to be with us at Diamond Mountain. It's very kind of you, to be here and to take the trouble to come. We know lots of people come from long distances. Even from other continents, from the east and west coast, the middle of the United States, come to be in Arizona at Diamond Mountain for Geshe Michael's amazing teachings on Karma and Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra. So we appreciate very much that you're here and very kind of you to come, and please stay in our lives. You know, all of us? Let's stay together ok? Practice together.

We're going to start this morning with *tong-len*. A *tong-len* meditation. And so you can sort of adjust and get comfortable. We're gonna meditate for about twenty minutes together. As far as meditation posture, Kevin Warren's class this morning was amazing. Thank you for the class. *[applause]* And we're fortunate to have Lisa Schremp and David Fishman on Sunday. I think that with yoga practice, one thing is that it helps us to straighten up our back and kind of extend our back, and that's helpful in meditation they say. So maybe that's the most important thing of the posture. In terms of what we're gonna do a guided meditation about, the topic is gonna be *tong-len*, *tong-len*, which means giving presents and happiness and joy and love to others; and using compassion, with the heart of compassion, to take away the troubles and pain and suffering that others have.

This is a quote from Geshe Michael: "The yoga that we will be teaching to people will have *tong-len*, giving and taking, as its largest single component. The yoga that we will be teaching to people will have *tong-len*, giving and taking, as its largest single component. And I, [Geshe Michael] want to plant seeds in these core people. The ones who come and the ones who will teach." So we talked yesterday about the transmission of the lineage of *tong-len*, and so we're going to spend an hour or so doing a *tong-len* meditation and then talking about it a little bit, the meaning of *tong-len*. Why is *tong-len* so essential, the higher practices of Buddhism also?

So we begin with a focus on the breath. As Kevin-Ji taught us, count out, breathe out and then breathe in, make that one breath. And try to keep the mind focused somewhere in your body, on the sensation of the breathing. And leave the sort of scattered thoughts behind. We have time to have those thoughts later. And you may want to put your attention on the sensation of the breath as it leaves and then enters the nostrils, like two donuts. Feel the warm air going out and the cooler air coming in. Or you may feel it more sensitively somewhere in your diaphragm as you breathe. Try to use that breath as a machine, like as a natural tool to focus the mind. Bring the energy of your concentration onto the breath and let it ride on that breath, connect your thoughts and your breathing. Bring them together, combine them. And see if you can keep that focus, that concentration as you count three rounds of ten breaths, and then we'll begin.

[silence]

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

The first preliminary is to take refuge. All the great books say the same thing: *The Book of Proverbs*, Jesus' teachings, the Buddhist books — all of the Dharma that is taught. The last point that Geshe Michael made [in last night's talk], the way to really practice the spiritual path, the holy grail, is to get our focus on other people's happiness and taking away others' suffering. Refuge means understanding emptiness, and the big implication of understanding emptiness is that happiness comes from kindness and service and sensitivity to others. So take refuge in that truth, of emptiness and kindness.

[silence]

Then generate bodhicitta, ultimate compassion. Think of one person in your life who you love very much, who you think about all of the time and want them to be happy. Think about one challenge that they face. And think that you'd like to do this meditation and this weekend in order to gain the ability to help them. This is the purpose of your life, to help that person. Think that.

[silence]

The third preliminary is to invite your holy spiritual guide to come and sit right in front of you. It's just you and her or him now meditating together. Work on two parts: the first is in your imagination — the way they look to your mind's eye, their appearance. For that, first see their silhouette, the outline of their body. Then see their beautiful blue shining eyes, looking at you. See a twinkle in their eyes. They're smiling at you. They love you. They enjoy being with you. They're very proud of you and happy for your meditation. Fill in the rest of their appearance in your imagination. Work on that.

The second part is to feel their presence there. Feel the reality of a holy heart and mind and angel's body, that they're actually there in front of you. Feel that they're there with you as if you could reach out and hold their hand. Feel their love for you, that they want to teach you. So work on their appearance, clearly; and on their presence, that they're actually there. Later, they will instantly appear when you do this.

[silence]

And now interact with them. First is to prostrate to them. For us maybe this means to think of one specific thing that she has given to you, some holy knowledge, or some habit that's no longer in your life because of her kindness. Think of some specific way that he or she has helped you, acknowledge that, appreciate it and thank him.

[silence]

Your interaction with them continues. Hand an offering to them. It could be something physical, like a warm cup of sweet hot chocolate or a snack, or it could be a practice, some kind of goodness you did recently. Make an offering to them, see them reaching out and taking it, and it gives them great joy.

[silence]

Next is purification. Think of one very specific action that I did in the last twenty-four hours that I regret doing. Not because I feel guilty or am a bad person, but just because it's going to keep a certain habit in my behavior that I don't want. Think, go like a video tape, play through that scene, think of something that I said or I did or especially some critical thought I had about another person, probably a very small negative action. If you can, think of the kind of

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

world that that action will produce for me in the future. Decide that you don't want that thing in your world and now play through the same scene and watch yourself responding the way you would like. Don't let the mind wander. Make use of this preliminary. Be specific.

[silence]

Just as important is rejoicing. Think of one very specific of the thousands of small good deeds that you did in the last twenty-four hours, pick just one of the thousands. Play through the scene again in your mind. Think of who you were talking with, or thinking about, and make it very clear. Take a minute. *[silence]* Think that you'd like to continue that kind of action because of the result it will bring, the world it will create. Also, think about the admirable activities that you see many, many people are engaging in and rejoice over the goodness of all the people here. Again be specific: a particular person, that holy quality or action that you see. Try to think of five or ten specific people.

[silence]

Next preliminary is to request teachings. Of course pray that your lama will speak to you this afternoon as Geshe-la teaches us again, that our hearts and our ears would be open and sensitive, that we would absorb everything perfectly and that we would listen very attentively. Give Geshe-la all of our attention when he's teaching. And also pray that your holy guide will take the form of people around us today, many, many teachers here at the tea table, in the parking lot, as you're socializing. Look for your spiritual guide in the eyes and word of others. Ask him or her to be with you in that way.

[silence]

And last preliminary, ask your holy to guide to stay with you. The one thing that we cannot allow to happen *[pause]* is to be separated in our heart from our holy guide. So ask them to stay close, to stay near to you, always.

[silence]

We've completed the preliminaries. We're gonna do a *tong-len* meditation. If you'd like to take half a minute and adjust your position, this is a good time. Then we'll do a ten-minute meditation together. *[silence]* Take a position that you can hold steadily without shifting. Adjust your seat, get comfortable, and when you're ready go back to the breathing practice. The special thing about *tong-len* is that it unites the physical activity of breathing and the mental aspect of the meditation. It joins that energy of the body and our thoughts, so pay special attention to the quality of your breath. And this time as you breathe out, when you come to the end of your out-breath, very gently without forcing at all, very naturally, push just a bit more air out, really empty your lungs completely. Then as you breath in, as you complete the end breath, very gently just breath in a bit more deeply, a little bit more air in. As you do this, because the breathing is more deep, you can also extend the duration of your breath, another second or two as you breath out and then breath in. By this practice we're building a tool, we're making it strong, and then we'll use that that natural machine to practice *tong-len*. So first get that tool working well, make the breath long and deep.

[silence]

Also, focus on the duration of your breaths. Try to make the out-breath and the in-breath the same duration. One way to do this is to feel the pulse of your heart beating somewhere on your face. Maybe you would notice it on your lips or your eyelids or your ears. If not there,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

then maybe on your neck. If your mind is still and quiet you can find that pulse, and then count the pulses as you breath out and make the in and out-breath the same number of pulses, equal duration. Try that.

[silence]

Now as we begin the *tong-len* meditation, keep part of the mind focused on that slow, steady, equal duration breath. Keep that practice going as we do in {yoga asana} class and we'll begin *tong-len*. First with a heart of compassion developing, we decide that a major purpose of our life is to take away the unhappiness and causes for unhappiness in another person. Think of one specific person who you've seen in this tent yesterday or today, it may be someone you know well or it maybe someone who you haven't met, but think of someone who you noticed or you know that they have had some problem or are having a problem. Most important is to be very specific. Don't be general or fuzzy. Be very clear and crisp. Who is this person? First identify them and then identify the particular kind of trouble, pain or suffering that you see that they are having. Take a minute. We have to get this very clear and then the meditation will flow.

[silence]

Now picture the trouble that person is having in the physical form of some black goopy tar or black smoky substance spread throughout their body, like coursing through their veins or their nerves. Picture them now, maybe where they're sitting in the meditation tent, or where you saw them when you noticed their pain. Picture their body polluted with that suffering. Then use five or ten slow deep in-breaths and gradually pull all of that nasty stuff and concentrate it in the very center of their chest. Use the organic machine of your breath as a powerful tool to bring the suffering so that it's no longer spread throughout their body – bring it into a black like tar ball in their chest. Do that now.

[silence]

Once you've got the trouble concentrated in their chest in the form of a black marble or concentrated ball of tar, consider something and make a decision: I'm willing to take that person's pain onto myself and I'll carry their burden and I'll experience the trouble that they're having – whether it's a physical problem, mental, or emotional, circumstance. I'm willing to be in their position if, by doing so, they can be free. First ask yourself, "Am I willing to do that?" And then decide that you are willing. And now we're going to take their pain away in this *tong-len* practice. So again on five or ten slow deep breaths, the breaths should be silent, breath that nasty tar ball, bring it up out of their chest, up through their windpipe. Do this on a series of breaths, gradually. Bring it up, out through their two nostrils on several more breaths, pretend that you can see it coming towards you through space stretched out like a thin stream of black smoke. And then, once again bring it to a concentrated black ball, the size of a marble, resting right in front of your nose. Do that on several breaths.

[silence]

Once again, put your mind inside this person's heart and feel what it's like to be them experiencing this difficulty that they're having. It's not right that this beautiful person should have to have this problem. The purpose of my life is to try to take that problem away. Make the decision that you're willing to do that for them. There's only one thing that stops us from doing this practice, and that's our own self-cherishing. My tendency to just focus on what I need, my agenda, what's so important to me. This is what blocks me from caring about others.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

Picture that tendency to self-cherish in the form of a flame in the middle of your chest, near the back just in front of your spine. It's a half-inch high, very small, like a red and white flame. That represents my self-cherishing. Again be specific, think of three examples of how I tend to not really be sensitive to what others need. Think of a few specialties that I have in that way. My particular forms of self-cherishing. Be clear.

[silence]

And now we do the final act of destruction of the trouble the person is having, using several slow, deep, silent in-breaths. Picture that tar ball, again like a stream of smoke as you breath it in through your two nostrils. If you feel a little scared or hesitation to take that nasty stuff into yourself, that's good. It's hard to help other people. Decide that you want to do that. On several breaths, bring that tar ball again very small, to concentrate in your windpipe, just above that flame in your chest and let it rest there. Don't let them touch yet. *[silence]* When I say go, on one strong, silent, deep in-breath bring that nasty suffering tar ball down to touch the tip of the flame. The instant that they touch, see them both destroyed instantly, like a flash of lightning. Ready? Go.

[silence]

Then very important is to see that the flame of self-cherishing is destroyed and see that that nasty suffering black tar ball is also destroyed. And the only thing left is a little wisp of smoke going up, up, up, and dissolving. No more self-cherishing, and no more trouble for your friend. And then, see if you can feel your body experiencing some kind of transformation. See your body like not full of blood and guts but rather pure and perfect like an angel's body and made of light. Imagine that.

[silence]

Now, go over to where the person is sitting in the tent in your imagination. Be like an angel fly on the wall. They can't see you hovering above them but observe them and see them. All of a sudden, that burden is lifted from their mind. That thing they've been suffering from, that they've been worrying about, like this problem that won't go away, all of a sudden they feel free, and it's like magic, and they don't know why. That worry, that trouble is gone from their mind. See them like that. Feel their lightness, their happiness, and be happy yourself for being willing to take it away from them and freeing them.

Now, and this is really the fun part, now that they're free from that trouble and free to experience happiness and enjoy this weekend and enjoy their heart, enjoy their life, now on each out-breath, again slow and deep, on each out-breath at the very front, like a hood ornament on a car or a boat, riding on the crest of your breath, send presents to them. Send them on each out-breath, anything that you could think of, anything that would make them happy, maybe a warm pair of socks, maybe someone they'd like to play with telling them, "I love you." Maybe send holy beings to them, send them anything that would make them happy. It might be a silly little physical object, it might be some deep realization, it might be a special person. Try to be as generous as you can. Think of anything that would bring them happiness and take two minutes. On each out-breath send them some new object to give them joy.

[silence]

And now be very happy for the meditation you've just done. Mine wasn't perfect. I daydreamed a little bit. The visualizations weren't so clear. But we've all made a very good

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

intention and good effort, so be happy for your effort. Be gentle with yourself. Appreciate the practice that you're doing. See yourself as having a pure heart and good effort and good intention. That's what will bring us to enlightenment. Pat yourself on the back. And then invite your lama to come into your heart. Again, always appreciate them. Thank them for their help in the meditation.

Always appreciate them. Always appreciate your lama. No matter what they do, always appreciate them.

See them rising to the tip of your head, turning around to face the direction you face, getting smaller and smaller, the size of a thimble resting on the crown of your head. Build a special chamber for them, in the middle of your chest near the back. Fill it with flowers, and beautiful silks, and cushions. Invite them to descend down a thin shaft that's very soft and straight, gentle. It goes from the crown of your head to your heart. Feel them descend down that shaft coming to the levels of your eye, your eyes, your lips, your neck, your shoulders, down into that special place. Feel the wisdom and kindness, compassion that they have, and feel it spreading from the core of their being, filling up that chamber and then pouring out and filling up your holy body. Now make one last decision: I'm going to give away to another person, the good karma of this meditation. Like very wet cement, think of one person, who you would like to have get the benefits of your good intention of this meditation. Decide that you're willing to give it away and send out that good karma, that future happiness, send it out to that person who you love. And be glad for them too. Be happy.

[silence]

Ok, that's good. Nice job. And then relax. Get comfortable, ok? If you want to stretch a little bit, we're going to talk about *tong-len* for just a couple of minutes and then we'll take a break and then we'll come back and complete the morning class. Please be comfortable, you know? Adjust your seat. We have a long day of sitting and listening so be good to yourself. Yeah. Let's listen again to what Geshe Michael said last week about this practice of *tong-len* that we just did. Please say *tong* [repeat] *len* [repeat] *tong-len* [repeat] *tong-len* [repeat]. Ok *tong* means [laughs] yeah. *Tong-len* means giving and taking. *Tong* means giving, right? *Tong* means giving. Giving means with the heart of love, wanting to bring happiness to other beings, wanting to bring them the causes of their happiness, wanting to bring them special little presents, you know, wanting to bring them spiritual results of their practice, wanting to bring them special friends, wanting to bring a holy being to be close with them. It's like Chanukah, you know, or Christmas or something. It's just like wanting to lavish people with happiness. Giving them all the things that would make them happy. We did that first or second? Second. It wasn't so long ago. [laughter] Which did you do? Right, we did that second. So *tong* means giving, ok? *Tong* means giving. Sending out all the happiness, all the objects of happiness that we could to another person.

And *Len-pa* means what? You know. It means taking. *Len* means taking, ok? *Len* means, *Len* is short for *Len-pa*. It means taking. Taking means with the heart of compassion, in this case, with the heart of compassion wanting to remove the suffering, wanting to remove the trouble, the difficult circumstances, the discomfort from another person. That's *len-pa* ok? So *tong-len* means giving and taking. You notice that we do it in the reverse order right? From the name, *tong-len* means giving with with love, giving happiness. *Len* means taking away suffering.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

But when we do the *tong-len* meditation, we switch the order. Why? Because if someone is really suffering, it doesn't really help them, it doesn't really make them happy, to give them a milkshake or something. You know, they may say, "Look, I can't even deal with that. Let me tell you about this problem I'm having. I'm really sick. My body is really sick. I'm in this really difficult circumstance. The first thing I need is to have this suffering taken away, you know?" So logically, right, in real life, the first thing we would do if we saw someone suffering would be to try to take away their suffering. Once that's accomplished, then we try to bring them the sources of happiness, right? And so the order, the order of the practice is to first take away suffering from others. Once that's accomplished, then we bring them joy and bring them the things that would cause them happiness. Okay? And that's why we do the order that way.

And here's what Geshe Michael said about *tong-len*. Let's just read this again, okay? We want it to be really clear. This is probably for the next so many years of our mission together, okay? "The yoga that we will be teaching to people will have *tong-len*, as its largest single component. And I want to plant seeds in these core people, the ones who come and the ones who will teach." Okay? *Tong-len* will be the largest single component of *How Yoga Works*, of *Katrin*, of *The Tibetan Book of Yoga*, of the, I don't know, maybe the [advanced] eighteen course series, it'll surely be a core component. Okay?

I have read in an amazing, incredible, incomparable book very recently, that what makes yoga work is the last verse that Geshe Michael taught last night. Okay, ready Chukyi-la? but there was no last verse? [clap]

[Student, Chukyi-la: unclear]

Tak ma druk. "Don't do this to me," she says. [laughs] Right? Ya know, what was it? What was the one thing that will finally, that will remove all of the obstacles from this planet? What? *Doing it for someone else*. Let's all say that together. "Doing it for someone else." What? [repeat] Yeah, compassion right? The one thing that will remove the suffering from this planet, is to live for others' benefit. Master Shantideva said in *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, "There's not a single instant of suffering that didn't come from self-cherishing." Right? "There's not a single split second of happiness, that ever came from anything other than trying to help others, trying to bring happiness to others." And then he says, "What need is there for more words?" You know, what else is there to say? You know, you could talk on and on, and we will, right? [laughs]. You know, but that's the message of Geshe Michael's teachings, that's the message of Je Tsongkapa and the Buddha, that's the message of all the great spiritual traditions. Kindness and compassion towards others. We all know that. It's not like emptiness. Emptiness is hard. It takes a lot of study and thought and meditation and debate and all of that. Emptiness is difficult. *Tong-len*, compassion, kindness, caring for others is so easy to understand. You know, what need is there for more words? And Master Shantideva continues, "... and spiritual children focus on their own needs." "I don't like the way this is going! I don't like the way this was said! It's too this, it's too that!" Spiritual children, that's how I think. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas pay attention to others' needs. And what need is there to say anything but that?

So *tong-len*, practicing compassion to take away other people's difficulties, and practicing love and kindness to try to bring happiness and joy to others, is the very foundation of our practice. Sometimes in the holy precious yoga classes that we have the great privilege to be able

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

to take with special teachers, we hear that things like a constant awareness on the breath is a very important foundation of the practice. And other things... I have been taught by great yoga teachers and also in a great amazing, incredible, and incomparable book, that we'll all read and study together, that the true, the deepest foundation of all of the practice, whether it's yoga *asana* practice, or studying, like what's going through our mind while we're sitting in a class taking notes, or reviewing it with friends over breakfast at the tent-side or motel, or serving a meal or getting the sound system right, or doing the prayers... the one thing that should be running through our mind, constantly [he makes a breathing sound], the one thing that should be running through our mind is, "I'll take away your trouble, your difficulty, and I'll give you happiness." You know, that is the one thing that should be the foundation of all of practice. You know? So that's *tong-len*. Compassion and kindness you could say.

And what is *tong-len*? Where does *tong-len* fit into our practice in the steps on the path to enlightenment? There are two parts to developing ultimate compassion for others. The first is developing the intention to take care of others beings as if they were our only child, to develop that intention. The second half is to develop the activities of one who has ultimate compassion. You know, first is to develop the wish or the intention to be a bodhisattva. The second is to practice the six perfections. To actually get up off our cushion and go help people, right? Take the Bodhisattva Vows and work on living that way, to develop the activities of a bodhisattva. *Tong-len* comes in the first of those two parts. *Tong-len* is a practice in one way where we sit on our cushion and develop sensitivity and caring for others. And that develops the way of thinking, the way a bodhisattva thinks, ok? And that's where *tong-len* comes into the practice.

Geshe Michael taught a little bit about the results of our practice yesterday. It's okay to review a little bit right? [laughs] The last preliminary that we do in the meditation is to ask your lama to stay close to you, right? What's the strongest thing to make that happen? What is the way to keep your lama closest in your life, close in your heart? What?

[student: unclear]

Yeah, James-la says, "Practice what they teach." Okay? So let's do that. Do you remember, he mentioned, four stages of yoga? Four classes of the higher practices, and he mentioned the third, which is called "yoga." Right? He said the fourth was *anuttara yoga* which means highest yoga tantra. The third is called yoga . Do you remember what he said? What is yoga ?

[students: unclear]

Well, wasn't that where he said "reaching the angel?" Does that sound familiar? Reaching the angel. Yoga means, "joining with the deep essence of your practice," right? Reaching the angel. What does it mean to reach the angel?

[student: unclear]

Yeah. First is to meet them. Two-step process, right? First you meet the angel. And what is that like? Yeah, what does it mean to meet the angel? [laughs]

[student: unclear]

Yeah, first it means that, you know, I don't know, it maybe something like where gradually, very slowly, over months and years, as a result of good, sincere, heart practice, for a very brief episode, one day the veil sort of drops. You know, and we pass the ordinary world and we look in someone's eyes or as we're experiencing another being, just like there's a glimpse,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

like a momentary glimpse of, like we enter into a special kind of world, a special experience. And we see someone in a very different, like in a very holy special way. And then what happens?

[student: unclear]

Yeah, It disappears. Right? *[laughter]* The curtain goes back up. You know? And then you know you're late for the class, or whatever. This is what I've heard, that this is the pattern. It's a very brief, sort of fleeting experience of a special holy being or place. Okay? Salim-hla taught us about this eight months ago. You have that experience and then the curtain goes back up. You know? And our old karma starts creating our world again. But then if we continue to practice more and more nicely, deeper and deeper, that kind of experience becomes a little bit more frequent and maybe is a longer duration. You know? And gradually the world around us starts to transform. The things that were huge problems to us in the past, gradually the negativity of those situations kind of fades away. It dissolves. And then we go from sort of a ho-hum neutral experience of people in our life and objects and circumstances, into something that is more and more special. And we get the feeling that those around us and the circumstances of our life and even the objects in our world like the tent, and even our own physical body, something about it is like kind of pure and more perfect than we noticed before. You know?

And gradually we move into step two, the books say. Then we start to begin to notice, even ourselves, something about our own heart and or what we see, our understanding, our perception, and even our own physical body, there's something more special about those parts of us than we saw before. And so what did he say? First, yoga means to reach the angel. And first it means we get these glimpses of something precious and holy and special around us in other people and circumstances and objects you know. And then, after that we start to begin to experience ourselves in that special way. So how does *tong-len* fit in with that? What's the connection? Why do we practice *tong-len*? One way to illuminate the way that we should practice is to try to understand the result of the practice. Why am I doing this practice? What is this practice going to produce? What's the result, you know? And if we can be clear about that result like to reach and become the angel, that can inform how we should carry out the practice that we're doing. Okay? So with that in mind, we said we talked about yoga , reaching the angel, why do we practice *tong-len*?

[student: Isadora: Because you're clearing away obstacles by clearing those obstacles away to be able to perceive ourselves as the angel better [unclear] past karma.]

Yeah perfect. Thank you. Isadora-la says by focusing on other people's circumstances, other people's needs by practicing compassion, we're developing the causes for the result of our dharma practice, okay? So what is the result of our practice? Why are you here?

[student: unclear]

Yeah enlightenment. What is enlightenment? What does that mean? Did you ever see a Buddha? Did you ever see an enlightened being? *[laughs]* I mean, what is enlightenment? Yeah, ultimate happiness. No separation? Being awake? Freedom from suffering? Ah, Dara-hla says permanent cessation of all of your mental afflictions. That sounds familiar, from last night and all of Geshe-la's quiet retreat teachings. That was one of the main points of "To the Inner Kingdom." I mean, one way to answer that question, what is it to be enlightened? Ah, there's four parts right? Four *kayas*. Four bodies of a Buddha right? One is *to see* – Geshe-la said last night didn't he? – one is to see, and then he paused. One is to *see* all sentient beings.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

To have a direct yogic perception of all sentient beings, to see all existing beings. To see the way that they exist, their ultimate reality, their ultimate nature. That was one part I think. Second, Gail-hla said, would be to see that you are helping them get out of suffering. All sentient beings in all states, to see that you are bringing them out of suffering. I think they call that the *nirmanakaya*.

And then also what's the other part of enlightenment? Yeah, changing bodies. Changing you could say your own body, your own heart, your own thoughts, the bodies and hearts and minds of those all around you, the place that you're in, the words that come out of your mouth, the way you're living your life, your activities. All of those things are full of joy and every object that you look at, whether it's another person or yourself or your own heart, your own body, it's perfect and pure and holy and brings you great joy and happiness. Everything you lay your eyes on brings you great happiness. Okay? This is called the enjoyment part of a Buddha paradise. Right? So how does *tong-len* fit into this? You know that's a very approximate description of enlightenment: the wisdom that sees emptiness and sees all objects. Okay, that's called like the truth body> The emanation body, the *nirmanakaya*, that reaches out and helps all sentient beings. And the enjoyment body, the blissful *sambhogakaya*. So how does that fit in with *tong-len* practice?

[student: unclear]

Yeah, perfect. James-hla says, perfectly, you're actually practicing, you're doing what a Buddha does, you're practicing what a Buddha is, you're pretending to be a Buddha okay? That's called, in one way, the result path, right? It's like a kid with a poster of Michael Jordan, right? You know, he loves basketball, an eight-year-old kid, so he puts his poster up on the wall and goes around telling everyone what? "I'm Michael Jordan. I'm Michael Jordan. Watch this..." You know, dribble, dribble, spin, spin, jump, from twelve feet in the air dunk, I'm Michael Jordan. What's he doing? What's that all about? Yeah, visualizing, practicing, you can say pretending. We're practicing *dak-pay nel-jor*, pretending that we are the goal, the result. Now is that some kind of silly fantasy that an eight-year-old kid does? What do you say if you see a kid doing that, and you have a good heart toward them? Do you go up to them and say, "That's ridiculous, you're not Michael Jordan, go do your homework," [laughs] right? What do you say? In other words, is *tong-len* a realistic practice? If that kid keeps up that practice, what's going to happen? Yeah, he's gonna get really good at basketball. But is he going to become Michael Jordan?

[student: unclear]

Yeah, perfect, Isadora-hla, perfect. If his name was Michael Jordan in the first place, he's gonna be Michael Jordan. Right? Or you could say he's gonna become the *next* Michael Jordan, or you could say he's going to become whatever his vision and his dream of whatever he practices in the morning when he wakes up...he looks at that holy image, which is what he wants to become. Michael Jordan, wow! Magical holy being. He can soar up through the, he can push down off the earth, soar up into the sky and put that ball right down through the center hoop, you know? Amazing! Like, I want to be that guy, you know? So everyday he practices that, he visualizes that and then he becomes that. And maybe he becomes the next one, maybe his name is different, maybe he doesn't look exactly like Michael Jordan, that's not really the point. That's not what he wanted in the first place, right? He wanted to like fly. He wanted to soar

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

like Michael Jordan. You know, so he wanted to be like Michael Jordan in that way. You know, he wanted the general qualities of Michael Jordan, and he practiced seeing himself in that state and then realistically he will become that, if he keeps it up daily, if he works on it for years in a very consistent way, very purely, he will become that thing.

Have you ever had, have you personally had the experience in your life, and maybe after this weekend think about this a lot, have you had the experience, can you remember being a kid and dreaming about something? You know, maybe like when you were in first grade, you couldn't wait to go to sleep, because you wanted to play through this fantasy, or you used to go off walking in the woods and you used to just think about this thing. Have you had this experience? And then do you see something in your adult life that's connected to that? You know, maybe it's not exactly the same thing, not like the exact same circumstances and everything, but that theme, dreaming about that theme... produced something in your adult life. So I think generally, *tong-len* is a practice that works that way. Okay? Yes?

[student: unclear]

Oh yeah, what was the fourth part of an enlightened being? You could say the essence body of a Buddha. Geshe Michael mentioned "essence" yesterday. In fact "es" kept coming up in the Indo-European didn't it? Do you have that in your notes? We'll talk about that after our break, which we'll take in just a minute. So a couple quick points about *tong-len*. We can't teach *tong-len* in one hour. But this is an encouragement for all of us to follow up ...the mission we got yesterday ...to pursue the practice of *tong-len*, pursue the teachings, work on it again, over and over...want to make very clear *tong-len* is the very foundation of what Geshe Michael is teaching now.

We use our breath, it's called *truln-dek*. *Truln-dek* means a machine that lifts, it's like a crane machine, that when you're building a building that has multiple stories, first you build the first floor and then the *truln-dek*, the crane, lifts the building materials up from the first floor up to the second floor and then once you're at the second floor you can create that second story of the building and then the machine keeps lifting and building sequential stories of the building. And they call the breath *truln-dek* and that's why when just before we did the *tong-len* practice, we got sort of clear, we practiced it. It's like oiling the machine. It's like Ben-hla has been teaching us to oil the joints of our Bobcat loader. It's like getting the machine all primed.

And by the way, if you don't like "machine," like a metal, mechanical... it's like a natural machine, maybe it's more like a tree, the way that all the nutrients and energy comes up through the roots and up through the trunk, you know? It's like a natural organic machine. Our breath is that. And part of the *tong-len* practice is getting very clear and experiencing a deep, slow, steady breath. This is on the menu for Geshe Michael's verses this afternoon, I think. We're expecting that he'll talk about this in some detail. So when you practice *tong-len* it's important that the breath is a central part of the practice and that as we're doing the visualization we don't lose that physical part of the practice, which is the strength of our breath. Just like in yoga, *asana* practice right? So that's an important component of *tong-len*. Another thing about the breath is that in yoga class we're taught a method where stress or even possibly physical pain, mild physical pain or challenge or stress, we *intentionally* introduce that into our system, don't we?

In the practice of yoga, like when Kevin-hla brought us down to our toes and then we tried to reach a little further, right? And some of that is a little bit uncomfortable. We don't push

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

ourselves to the point where we damage or hurt ourselves. That's called a misdeed you know, in our system. But we intentionally make ourselves uncomfortable. And then how does the breath relate to that? We try to keep a slow steady breath in the midst of tension or stress, right? Ah, a very similar experience is Tibetan debate. Have you seen this? In the monasteries someone comes up, and then the defender, the one who has to give the answers in the debate...sits there very calmly with a slow steady breath, a centered mind and the attacker jumps wildly all over the place and claps their hands loudly in their face and challenges them. Well, that attacker is your yoga teacher, okay? But you know that attacker is your *asana* practice. In other words, it's just the same isn't it, intentionally introducing stress into my system, like, "What's he going to say? Where is he going with this one?" And your mind has to stay clear and calm and focused and your breath steady. The third situation — which those two situations are training or preparation for — is real life. You know, outside of these controlled simulated experiences of a yoga class and Tibetan Buddhist debate. If I could say it like that. In one sense, it's just like real life where someone comes up and says something that I don't like, something that I consider unreasonable...or just any little thing that's irritating. Like yesterday I have these socks on, they're these wool socks, and I thought I was all prepared you know...but they're not...they're not so good with these sharp itchy things that stick into your feet, right? *[laughter]* So all day, I had this, it's not like I wanted to scream but I had this very low level irritation because these little things were poking into the bottom of my feet.

Sometimes it's mild like that and then maybe a few times a day there's sort of a major stress that's not intentionally introduced into our system. Something happens and our mind wants to fly off...we lose our composure. What happens to our breath? *[breathing heavily]* It gets rushed and forced and we feel a little bit as if someone were strangling us. We get this feeling of tightness in our chest. Our muscles get tense. Your face gets this thing tight thing right here. Your mouth gets clenched, and you get this little scowl or something, your brow furrows, like this right? And you're stressed, you know?

And then if you're practicing yoga, or you're practicing debate — which we're doing now at Diamond Mountain by the way, we do these debate classes — the practice of yoga, *either* of those yoga practices, generalizes into your walking around life and you say, "Oh yeah, wait a minute, I've been practicing this. I can stay calm. I can practice being gentle to this person, I can practice not criticizing." I can practice seeing what's stressing me as a great teaching for me, because it's allowing me to grow up, to become more mature, to have the capacity, in other words to help other people, because if I get irritated at little things and I'm going around every day being irritated and self-absorbed, then I'm not available to reach out and help others.

And so we practice yoga in one way, we practice *tong-len* to keep a steadiness in our walking around life. And that helps us to keep morality, collect good karma, practice strongly. And we reach the goals of our dharma practice. I think there's a lot more to say about *tong-len* but time is short, so let's take a break and we'll come back and talk about the other half. So take like a five or ten minute break and then come back. Thank you.

[silence]

We're going to begin again now. So a couple of more comments about *tong-len* and then we'll talk about the other half of this afternoon's topic. One request during the break was that we quickly review the meditation, what the visualization part of the meditation is. So let's do

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

that. A first step is to, and of course you can't write while you're meditating so if you want to take a few notes, basically we need to do what Geshe-la requested which is to go through the *tong-len* class. You know the full class, the full practice with someone who has that lineage. And there's a lot of great detail, in it. The ACI extension course binder, the *tong-len* extension course is one of the most amazing things on the planet. There's about sixteen or eighteen readings and they are some of the most powerful beautiful readings that exist. So I encourage everyone...even if you've done the *tong-len* or gone to a *tong-len* weekend...take the time to read through those, really beautiful. For example, the thing we said about *truln-dek* is from a very special book by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra, who is a great teacher in our lineage, and comes from Sera Mey. And we'll be studying his books in the future, Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra. Thanks to John Brady-hla and others. And there's another by Trijang Rinpoche, Khen Rinpoche's root lama. Those are readings seven and eight and they give an explanation of that crane machine which is an important part of the practice. And there's just many, many amazing readings in the *tong-len* course so please complete that assignment from Geshe-la, and please focus on the readings as well.

The visualization itself goes like this. You start with the breath. The way we did, making it very deep and strong and slow and steady. Try to make the out-breath and in-breath of equal duration. And then you picture a person who is having some kind of a trouble. The readings in the binder describe that if we're beginning *tong-len* practice, we can focus on ourself. And you can think about myself in two hours and my right ankle is going to be hurting a little bit and then you can visualize that you take away the pain of that person who is me, two hours in the future. And then you can do the same taking practice on yourself like a week from now, then ten years from now, then on your deathbed. Like that. Take away all of the suffering of yourself, even into future lives. And then next go to someone who you like, who you enjoy, who you care about very much. It's nature, the reason we do this at the beginning is because it's natural for us to be kind to our self and to those we like. It's easier for us. It's more natural so we start like that to get good at the practice and then we gradually turn that *tong-len* meditation to someone who we're neutral about like the cashier at the grocery store, who we've never really met before and we visualize a problem that that person is having and we take it away from them. And then we go to someone who irritates us, or who we have a problem with and we see a bad quality in them, and then we take away any kind of difficulty or challenge that they have.

So we picture the person, we picture the problem that they're having in the physical form of some kind of black nasty stuff and we can think of it like smoke, black smoke, or some gooey nasty tar kind of stuff that spreads throughout their body like in their veins or their nervous systems, throughout their body. And then on a series of in-breaths, you see we're using the in-breath when we take away another person's suffering, on a really slow and steady...not like that *[gasps]*.... So picture that I have a problem, and it's all this black yucky stuff throughout my body — on one in-breath you draw it from my fingertips to here, you know and my toes up to my knees, and then on another in-breath, you bring it into my torso, another in-breath you bring that nasty stuff into a little like marble right back in the middle of my chest. You do that on maybe five in-breaths, more or less. What is the out-breath doing? The out-breath is not the machine that's doing this practice now, because it's the in-breath that's doing it. I don't recall hearing the lamas or the scriptures answering that question so just Winston's opinion to be clear

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

is...what I do on the out-breath is I say to like reassert your intention, like I need to breath out because now I need a strong in-breath to take away that stuff more powerfully. So the out-breath is sort of like a pause and maybe you can reassert what your intention or motivation is.

And then the next step is that on a series of in-breaths this little black marble sized thing in their chest...you breathe it out and you can see it like a stream of smoke now, so it's not concentrated now. It's stretching out, it's coming up their windpipe and out their two nostrils. And then you breathe it from their nostrils out towards yourself as if you're pulling it to you...like you're pulling someone with a rope up from falling down, up off of a cliff, I'll take that pain away from you. You know? And so just on a series of in-breaths you bring it towards you in a stream and then you see it concentrated right here, hovering right in front of you, like the size of a thumb-nail, resting right there. Now it's a concentrated nasty little ball and then you go to your heart. Picture a very small flame about half an inch high right in the same place in the center of your chest. That represents me being petty because someone doesn't do some little thing the way I like them to do, I don't like the way they said that, I wish I got the first whatever, you know...first bite of that san...whatever. It's this self-cherishing tendency that we have, and be very specific. Think of my specialties, my special versions of self-cherishing. Identify it. Make it very clear. And then go back to that ball that's hovering in front of you, and breathe it in on a series of in-breaths and bring it down through your wind-pipe. Then let it rest right above that flame.

And now the final act is about to occur so be real clear. Take one very sort of extra deep out-breath. So you're getting the machine all ready for a big act. Then on one slow, silent, powerful in-breath, bring that black ball down to touch the flame of self-cherishing. And it's important the scriptures say to see that it totally is destroyed, instantly. Khen Rinpoche said that it's like when you turn the light on in a room. It's just instantly. It's not like a process of gradually melting away, it's instant. Instantly, it just destroys, like a flash of lightning. And then the flame of self-cherishing is gone and that person's suffering is gone.

When does it come back? *[laughter]* Why does it come back? Good question. *[laughs]* Yeah, why does the self-cherishing come back? Fran-hla save that for just a second, and that's going to be the next question. So to finish the visualization, then you see this, what used to be that nasty suffering, little black ball and that little white flame, both of them join and they're both destroyed. And then all you see is like a little wisp of smoke dissolving up and then it's totally gone. So their suffering is gone and my self-cherishing is gone. And guess what... that is extremely realistic. You know, the intention to take away another person's problem will destroy *their* suffering and will get rid of *my* self-cherishing. And if we practice this long enough, if we practice it over and over again...over months and years...if we practice it long enough, well enough, it will destroy the suffering of others and it will destroy our own self-cherishing, which is our suffering...you know it's the cause of our suffering...and it's what makes us feel bad about ourselves when we look at our own heart. Isn't it? Okay, so then there's the question...where is John Strauss-hla? There's your cue *[laughs]*.

[student: unclear]

Yeah, so John-la says, "I understand how this practice of *tong-len*, developing, building compassion in my own heart, in my own mind...do you see how this would dramatically change your life...I mean if practiced over time? Like the meditation we did this morning, itself twenty

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

minutes...it's not going to make a major change, it's not because nothing can be changed with twenty minutes of effort alone. But if we practice this consistently, like anything else, over months and years, our heart will change. Geshe-la said something really, really beautiful on class six or seven in the Lo-jong course fourteen. He said that a normal person thinks about themselves and their own needs maybe ninety percent of the time, something like that. And very rarely do we really sincerely focus on what someone else wants. And then he said that to dramatically change the world around you, to dramatically change the level of happiness in our own life, we don't have to go from ninety percent self-cherishing to ten percent self-cherishing. He said we only have to go from ninety percent to eighty-five percent. He's says, "That's like a fifty percent increase." [laughter] You know, right? That's gonna dramatically change the world we live in. It's gonna dramatically change how we see ourselves and how we see those around us. In other words he is saying, you don't have to become Mother Theresa or something like that. You just have to make a significant shift, like twenty minutes every morning of practicing *tong-len* for example.

Or bringing *tong-len* into your *yoga asana* practice. As you're doing *yoga asana* breathe in, "I'll take that person's problem." Breathe out, "I'll bring them some kind of happiness," like they can touch their toes now. Breathe in, "That person's back soreness, I'll take that problem. I'm willing to have a sore back." Breathe out, "They'll feel good about how the class is going for themselves." Wouldn't it be cool if during our hour-and-a-half of yoga practice, we had that on our mind? That's what Sharon-hla and David-hla in New York taught us. Set your intention. Do your yoga practice, do everything for others. What would it be like if we did our yoga like that, instead of thinking, "I wish I could get into that position," or, "I hope people notice that I can do this thing," or "I hope people like the shape of my spandex or something." [laughter] We think about those things, and I wish I could achieve this.

And what would happen if we could practice *tong-len* for twenty minutes everyday for the rest of our life and we could gradually train ourselves to think, "Oh it would be so neat if that person could feel comfortable and get the benefit of that practice." And if we just stop thinking about the things we think we need for our self. So back to John-hla's question. We can understand how practicing *tong-len* definitely would change our experience of the world and our experience of ourselves, but what about the person who is a thousand miles away and who we're imaging, and we're sucking out that nasty stuff and we picture it that way and we want to take away the arthritis for example from someone who lives in New York. And so we breath that in and try to take it away from them, and we pause and we say, "I'm willing to have my hand like this, if they could not have that pain and if they could do the things they want to be able to do with their hands, I'd be willing to experience that if they could be free." So what does it do for them?

You know the scriptures answer this very clearly. I think it's reading thirteen in the *tong-len* course. I might be off by a couple [laughs]. I think it is. We just studied this in Lake Tahoe. And I think it's Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra, Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra. They say that us sitting on the cushion picturing that we're taking away the suffering of another person, is not helping that person directly in the moment. Right? And you know that's true, because when you get up off the cushion and you call them, at least usually, they don't usually, they don't tell you, "You wouldn't believe what just happened! My back has been hurting for twenty years

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

and all of a sudden it stopped hurting, about twenty-five minutes ago!” Usually that kind of thing doesn’t happen in the world we live in.

But what happens is that as we do this practice and we live the life of *tong-len*, you see it’s like when we come to a place like this and we go to these classes and in different places, there’s always this special feeling because it’s not that this place is self-existently, inherently, from it’s own side, a good, powerful, holy, pure place. If you have the experience of Diamond Mountain or and the other places where you practice and study, if you have the experience that those people and those places are special and holy, it’s because you are bringing some kind of purity and goodness to this place. And what makes this place feel special to us, is that everyone is bringing all the goodness that they’ve been practicing for generations and centuries into this tent. And so it just feels incredibly precious and holy. So the point is that the way we can change the world is by changing our heart, you know, like from the inside, right? From the inside and then that affects, it gives us a capacity to influence others. And probably the most powerful teaching, in fact Geshe Michael said more powerful than the words of the teacher is the influence that people have on us. Like while we’re getting a cup of tea, while we’re talking with people. And you see people practicing and so someone who is really practicing *tong-len*, like Salim Lee Hla for example, if you have the privilege to spend time with him, it will dramatically change your life, because of the purity of their practice. And then the world really does transform, on the outside. And that’s how.

And then they say, “How do Buddhas really help people?” It’s that same huge question about emptiness and bodhicitta. How do Buddha’s help people really? Mainly by teaching them. And teaching doesn’t mean holding the microphone and talking. Teaching mainly means how we live our life and how we influence people. People seeing our developing good intention. And that has the most powerful influence on people, doesn’t it? The good qualities that you have for whatever reason, the good fortune of being attracted to goodness and a spiritual path, can’t you look back in your life and see that those came from people who influenced you? Can you think of someone who encouraged you to goodness? That’s how teachings really occur. So *tong-len* does affect people on the outside, but not in one way that we might think. It happens over time as our practice improves. And you can read that. It’s very, very clear in the scriptures. Okay, any other comments or questions about *tong-len*?

[student: unclear]

The question is that it is really hard to genuinely feel another person’s pain and to have the intention to want to experience it myself so that they could be free. I mean, that’s a hard thing. And it’s just like trying to sit down and play piano at the beginning and play like some complicated piano sonata. It takes practice. So just like these visualizations when you pictured your lama, did you see her or him? Was it really clear? Did it feel like they were actually there for real? No, or I mean, maybe. It takes a lot of practice. It takes working on that everyday, right? So we practice *tong-len* just like we practice dance or *yoga asana* or music or anything. It takes thousands of sessions, frankly. It takes doing it every...that would be three years right? Doing it everyday for twenty minutes, for three years, something like that. Yes?

Student: “If you find it hard to practice, that’s because of self-cherishing. When I did this practice the first time over four years ago, they handed out English translations and I thought the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

Indian printer got it all wrong...it couldn't possibly be that I'm supposed to take all the bad and give all the good, it had to be the other way around." [laughter]

Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, so it's like it goes against a natural instinct that I have. Yeah so it is hard.

Student: "I was so caught up in my ignorance, I couldn't believe it wasn't a misprint."

Yeah yeah usually we want to do the opposite. Right? You know I want to take the things that I like and I want to give the other people the bottom of the barrel or something.

Student, Ruth: "Well but also in terms of how it works, like [unclear] but how does it affect the other person, so if you've ever been the other person, like I'm sure everyone who has, like you're really suffering and you're explaining to someone why you're suffering or you don't even need to explain it's so obvious, and they are willing to at least maybe share that with you and it's really sincere that they're really there for you...and you suddenly feel very different."

Yeah, so Ruth-hla is saying that when you know that someone is really carrying your burden or having compassion for you, that experience of having a special friend like that can really transform you. Like directly, or a stranger.

[student: unclear]

Can you practice *tong-len* on yourself? Taking yourself as the person who is suffering? Yes definitely. And they say that's the place to start with *tong-len*. You can take yourself as the person who is suffering and sort of picture yourself as a different person. It is sort of interesting that we're supposed to practice exchanging self and others and they say try to see that you actually... This word *dak shen nyamje* means to see me and the other person as exactly the same, and once you do that, only when you do that, can you then take care of them just as if they were you. Because you feel like they are you. And then someone argues with Master Shantideva in course eleven, and he says, "But that's silly because if they touch the stove it doesn't hurt me. Their neurons don't extend into my body so I can't feel their pain. Master Shantideva, what're you talking about, that's not possible." So one response to that is, "So can you feel the pain of that person two hours from now (which is you)?" If I'm going to touch a stove in two hours can I feel that pain right now? Yes or no? No, so why do I identify with that person so much? See, it's the same point. It's just a habit of thought. Like I'll spend ninety-five percent of my energy taking care of the future Winston right? Taking care of the things that I need. I can't feel them, I can't see them...I can only imagine them. There's another person standing right there who I can even see, it's like they're more real. So why do we make this distinction? It's just an interesting thing. Yeah?

Student: "[unclear] ...who were very generous individuals, and when they do this particular version of *tong-len*, because they are tremendously generous, they cannot generate a flame of selfishness and they had students complaining that they felt overwhelmed with this black tarry stuff that they couldn't burn away...and that is what I told them [unclear] and catalyzing the black tarry stuff into flames of love and sending it out, so I don't know if that was an okay version but it was the only way I was able to [unclear] very generous people..."

Yeah, when you read the scriptures in the *tong-len* course sometimes that flame represents self-cherishing and other times it represents the ignorance that sees things as self-existent, even like maybe a subtle tendency to see things in the wrong way. Which is a whole other story about emptiness and so I think anyone other than a fully enlightened Buddha would

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

have a good basis for practicing *tong-len*. And another thing to say about that is that there are other practices and visualizations that we do that sometimes require that we suspend a certain way of practicing in order to do like a purification, which *tong-len* is, in a sense. So sometimes you have to sort of suspend a certain way of thinking and practicing in order to get the benefit of a purification.

We're out of time basically so I just want to mention one more thing about *tong-len* and then talk about emptiness in thirty seconds [laughs] okay? I was really hoping to talk about the Mind Only School, but it didn't happen, maybe next spring. Okay, last thing to say about *tong-len*, and by the way this is just like the briefest, just touching on the points of *tong-len*, so you have to study it and get into all of the beautiful details. There's also a practice in *tong-len*, in fact several of them that you could call "walking around *tong-len* practice," in addition to the practice where you sit on your cushion and do a nice slow concentrated *tong-len* in ten minutes. And by the way with that one on the cushion you can do three ten-minute episodes of *tong-len* or you can do one long one, or you can do a bunch of shorter ones, whatever fits your kind of, whatever's comfortable and works well for your practice.

There's another way of practicing *tong-len*, which you could call *chu lam kyi neljor*. Please say *chu lam [repeat] kyi neljor [repeat] chu lam kyi neljor [repeat]*. Do you remember that? It's from Second Sight. It means like *chu lam* something you do throughout the day. So *chu lam kyi neljor* means *neljor* — we talked about that yesterday...a yoga ...a practice of practicing this *tong-len* as you're walking around, like as you're driving down the road, walking down the street, cooking dinner, whatever. *Chu lam kyi neljor*. And it goes like this. It's much less detailed and probably in a way less precise. It's not an extensive visualization I mean. But as you're walking out of the temple, as you're making tea, you just notice people around you. And you say, "Oh, that person looks cold," and you go [breathes in] and you think, "That person looks cold, I'd rather me be cold and they won't be cold." You say, "Oh, I bet that person would enjoy a cup of tea." And you're way away from the tea table and so you go [breathe out] there's a cup of tea for them. And you go from like zero point zero zero zero one percent of your day thinking like this you know...up to one percent of the day thinking like this. So how many breaths are there in a day? Seventy-two thousand, we had to ask! [laughs] What about when you're upset? So in other words you just shift the ratio. Most of what rides on my breath is, "I hope someone admires something about me, I hope I get what I want, I hope things happen when I want them to happen, I hope the line is empty to the port-a-potties, I hope this person..." Like I'm basically walking around thinking about myself and I'm breathing also...and those thoughts are riding on that breath, see? And there's some subtle kind of destruction that's happening inside of me because of thinking like that. And so this *chu lam kyi neljor* with *tong-len* is practicing making a few more breaths each day this practice of *tong-len*.

And you can do it while you practice *yoga asana*. You can do it while you're just walking around. And it's not an extensive visualization. You don't picture the flame and the black stuff and all of that, you just breathe out and you go, "Happiness for this person. I want them to be happy." You breathe in, you say, "It seems like they have this problem." We don't even know, but you just imagine it. Caring about them is what changes us. So you just let those thoughts ride on, if it's seventy-two thousand breaths. What if we just did ten or twenty or

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

thirty or a hundred or five hundred breaths like that, out of all the breaths of the day, and then just do it more and more.

Again, think about the result path. What is a Buddha doing all of the time? One thing is that she is taking away the suffering and giving happiness. So what's going to make that happen? Is someone just going to come and bonk us on the head and we're going to be up in a cloud with a joy stick directing happiness and creating. "Jing, you're happy now, problem gone. Jing" What are we going to do to get enlightened? Are you serious? Do you really think that you could reach enlightenment in this lifetime before you die? And if so, what are you doing to make that happen? Are we creating the causes for that? So there's a walking around practice. There's also a precious verse from Lama Chupa, that you can read in reading four and other readings of the *tong-len* course that starts out "and then my high holy lama, Lord of all compassion..." and you can recite that as you walk around through the day or drive. So that's *tong-len*. Gail is reminding me that we're out of time so I was planning after the break to talk about the other half of Geshe-la's verses for this afternoon, but just to mention, that the second half of the readings for tonight are going to be about breath, breathing and maybe something about *tong-len*. We don't know. We're sort of anticipating what Geshe-la's teaching.

The first half is going to be about the wisdom that perceives emptiness and the content of the verses anyway draws our attention to two objects whose emptiness we perceive. One is just called "objects." Meaning things, like physical objects, or situations, or circumstances of our life. The other object whose emptiness we perceive is called "subjects," meaning states of mind. You can think of it in terms of your five heaps, which make us up. We have a physical body, which is like an object that's the first kind, it's a physical object. And then we have feelings and thoughts and consciousnesses, which is the subject side. You see? So there's objects that we perceive and look at and then there's subject states of mind. Both of those categories of existing things lack an inherent nature of their own. Neither one of those things has any reality from its own side, the Buddha taught. And therefore if we can gradually change our karma we can create the causes to see those objects as blissful enlightened objects in a Buddha paradise, and secondly we can collect the causes to see our own thoughts, our own heart, our own realizations as being the thoughts and realizations and compassionate heart of an enlightened being because neither of those two things has a nature of its own, from its own side. And that's kind of a quick summary of possibly some of the things that Geshe Michael is going to talk about.

What any of that means, you have to study some of the following subjects, to get a good foundation for it. One is the Diamond Cutter Sutra. These are just some tips, supplementary study, to supplement what Geshe-la may talk about this evening. The Diamond Cutter Sutra talks about the emptiness of an arhat's mind. That's the second kind. That's a subject state of mind.

Master Shantideva in course twelve first talks about the emptiness of the whole person, and then he talks about the emptiness of the physical body and then he starts talking about the emptiness of the rest of the heaps: the feelings, the discrimination, other thoughts, and raw awareness. And he breaks each of those down. He breaks physical matter, the first kind, the objects, down into the tiniest, tiniest atoms and establishes that even like a little atomic particle, which is supposedly the thing that makes up our physical world, that atom itself is a label that

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Two – Winston McCullough

we're placing on smaller parts. So you have to go and study that and I think be very clear about that to get the benefit of his teachings tonight.

And then Master Shantideva moves on in course twelve to I think the mind, feelings and thoughts and he says that in the same way that atomic particles are the raw data that our projections project onto to produce the physical reality in our world, in the same way, instances of awareness stretched over time are the raw data that our karma forces us to label like five seconds of happiness or five seconds of pain or five seconds of realization. The raw data in both cases has no reality from it's own side. Ah, the thing we're looking at, is what it is because of our past behavior. And our past actions always force us to see in all of those examples something consistent with what we've been to others or what we've done in the past. So in that sense, physical objects, situations, as well as states of mind are all karmic projections. They're all creations of our mind that our past actions are the causes of. They're the products of our past karma. So please go to course twelve and study that. Course thirteen also describes that process, especially *chi jedrak*, and so you have to get a good teaching on *chi jedrak*, and request that. That's a good thing to ask for.

And then course fifteen talks about especially the Mind Only school presentation, which Geshe Thubten Rinchen said will bring you up through the first half of tantra, the Mind Only School understanding, and up into *dzok rim* and it will get you through a good bit of *dzok rim* if you get that Mind Only school world-view. And then you need a little shift to get up to *prasangika* to reach enlightenment. So it's good, really good to study that. And if you want to study more about subject states of mind you can study class twelve of year two-thousand, Geshe Thubten Rinchen's teachings, a thing called *yong su tsulwa shi* and *yong su shepa shi*, which means the "four analysis" and the "four understandings." That's a very, very precious teaching about the emptiness of subject states of mind. Okay, so those are, that's just to point out some sources in ACI material for us to study about emptiness.

So I just want to thank everyone for coming again. And thank you for all of the goodness that you bring — it's just amazing. And thank you for sharing your kindness by coming and lets all have...be very open to Geshe-la's teaching and make it the central thing for us. Let's get the benefit of his teachings. Give him all of our attention tonight.

[Prayers: short mandala, dedication]

Afternoon: Day Two ❁ November 29, 2002
Geshe Michael Roach

Now one of the retreatants will lead us in a meditation.

Ora Maimes: Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep but we shall all be saved. In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised, incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.

[silence]

Ora: On the way to God, the difficulties feel like being ground by a millstone. Like night coming at noon, like lightning through the clouds. But don't worry, what must come comes. Face everything with love as your mind dissolves in God.

[silence]

Ora: The great sea frees me, moves me, as a strong river carries a weed. Earth and her strong winds move me, take me away, and my soul is swept up in joy.

[silence]

Ora: Eye has not seen; Ear has not heard; nor has it dawned upon our human imagination what things God has prepared for those who love him.

[silence]

Ora: The minute I heard my first love story, I started looking for you, not know how - not knowing how blind that was. Lovers don't finally meet somewhere; they're in each other, all along.

[silence]

Ora: Something opens our wings, something makes boredom and hurt disappear, someone fills the cup in front of us- we taste only sacredness.

[silence]

Ora: I think someone's going to lead us in a chant. Thank you.



Ruth Lauer *[chanted]*:

Om... Om...Om... Om...

Asato ma sat gamaya.

Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya.

Mrityor-mam amritham gamaya.

Lead me from the vulgar to the holy
Lead me from corruption to hospitality
Lead me from worry to generosity
Lead me from irritation to reality
Lead me from poison to honey
Lead me from self-interest to humanity
Make me move correctly

Om...

[silence]

So today's a very holy day. It's the day of the year that we celebrate as the birth and enlightenment and passing away from this world of Je Tsongkapa. It's such an important holiday in our tradition that in Mongolia in the old days, everyone's birthday was counted from today. So everyone would have birthday parties today and they would throw away their old birthday.

I'd like to speak a little bit about Je Tsongkapa. He's my hero. His life is an example for me, and I hope for all of you. He was born in eastern Tibet near what is now called Kumbum, in 1357. At a very young age, I believe it was five years old, he took his first novice vows from the Karmapa of the time. He studied with his local teachers for about ten years and then he decided to seek out the greatest wise saints in Tibet, and he started to walk to Lhasa, the capital. It can take six months to walk to Lhasa, but he didn't go straight, he wandered around all of Tibet as a teenager. He sought out the greatest holy beings and he sought teachings from each of them.

In the seventeenth century there was a set of paintings made of his life called *Tsongka Gyechu*, the eighty illustrations of Tsongkapa, and they've been expanded over the years to I think 200 and more, and it's in a set of fifteen paintings. We have small reproductions of these paintings; I think they are up on the walls of this tent. And you can look at them later, every time you see someone with a red hat, pandit's hat, teaching a young bright looking monk with no hat, that's Je Tsongkapa in his student years.

So he's wandering from eastern Tibet to the middle of Tibet, and great teachers of the Kagyu lineage and of the Sakya lineage are training him. He stopped at a monastery that had been the seat of Buton Rinpoche. Buton Rinpoche assembled the holy books of Tibet that were brought from ancient India: four-and-a-half thousand texts. He organized and directed the putting together of these *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*, our holy books. *Kangyur* means the speech of Lord Buddha, translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, and *Tengyur* means the commentaries written on the speech.

Buton Rinpoche was a great, incredible figure in our lineage. Buton Rinpoche also undertook to organize all of the yoga exercises and breathing exercises that were in Tibet at the time, and he wrote an extraordinary treatise which includes sections of over sixty different yoga exercises, *asanas*, and also breathing, special breathing exercises, and he organized this into a book which we call *trulnkor*. *Trulnkor* means "machine," and in those days machine meant wooden gears and wooden sticks driven by ropes on pulleys, and he saw the *asanas*, the postures, like that. Je Tsongkapa missed Buton Rinpoche. His power, his influence and his teaching were just about finished by the time Tsongkapa arrived, and the monks at Buton Rinpoche's monastery trained Je Tsongkapa in these teachings.

Then you'll see in the paintings, tiny little courtyards. Je Tsongkapa is debating other students of his age and older, the students of the masters he studied with. This is a very essential part of our lineage. It's very similar to the idea, *satsang*, where you sit and have an opportunity in the evening to have questions and answers from a holy guru. But in this form of question and answering, we meet with our fellow students and we ask each other questions. Especially things we're not sure about. Or questions we have.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

This has two important functions: one is, obviously, to clarify the things we're not sure about, and secondly, it prevents the great disease of jealousy and competition between fellow students which can ruin a lineage in a teaching. So it's very much a custom in our lineage — in our modern world, it would be like sitting down, maybe with someone you're slightly jealous of, a fellow student, or someone who irritates you, and say, "What did you think about that thing he said, you know, about that line?" And then you listen to the other person and you thrash out the truth. This is a very powerful method to make your heart pure, to be a good student, to be good with your fellow students.

In the monasteries of the Gelukpa order, our Dalai Lama's lineage, we have formal debating, often twice a day, almost every day in the evening, after the meal, and then it can go quite late, sometimes *sempe damcha* can go all night, but we have formal questioning and answering of each other in a very exciting way. I think you may have seen movies of monks jumping around and dancing and screaming questions at each other. I hope to see this tradition be carried on here at Diamond Mountain in the future. It's incredibly powerful for learning to think clearly and learning to defend what you know from people who are questioning you in a very hot way. And it's a lot of fun. It's a joy. We have to do it.

So you'll see many pictures of Je Tsongkapa, learning from his fellow students, trying to overcome the obstacles that can come up between peers. Then, Je Tsongkapa reached Lhasa. He began studying with two major teachers: Jetsun Rendawa and Lama Umapa. Lama Umapa was special. He as a young boy, as a sheep herder, had visions of *Manjushri* — *Jampalyang*, which is the angel of wisdom, emanation of all enlightened wisdom.

Je Tsongkapa came to study with Lama Umapa, and he said, "Can you show me how to see this angel?"

And Umapa said, "Your mind's not clear enough yet. You haven't collected enough goodness yet."

And so Tsongkapa was frustrated, but he tried harder and harder and he said, "I have a lot of questions about emptiness, could you ask Manjushri for me and you know, sort of tell me what he says?" And Lama Umapa said, "That would be all right."

And so there was this strange period of his life when Je Tsongkapa was asking questions to Lama Umapa, and then Lama Umapa would transmit them to Manjushri and he'd get his answers back.

Then comes a day when Je Tsongkapa has his first direct contact, his first direct classes, his first direct instruction from Manjushri, and this scene we've sort of blocked out on the painting. You can see Manjushri is thrusting a sword of wisdom into Tsongkapa's heart. Professor Thurman, holy being, put this picture on the front of his book about how to interpret the Buddha, *Drang nge*, and it's a very beautiful picture to use.

Then came a time when Je Tsongkapa went to study with a Lama named Kenchen, and he had heard about this lama. He had written letters requesting instruction and, walking down the road to his house for the first time, the Lama comes out and there's this extraordinary scene. Je Tsongkapa cries out, "Vajradhara!" — the Buddha in his yoga, tantric aspect — "is standing in the doorway!" And Kenchen looks at Je Tsongkapa and sees "Manjushri! You've come to my house!"

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

So their minds are pure enough to see something higher in each other. That one really believes a tantric deity, the teacher of all tantras, standing in the doorway, the other shocked that Manjushri has come to his house. This scene is in the *thangka*, you can see it, it's also blocked out.

This teaching's supposed to be about emptiness and karma in the Yoga Sutra. Master Patanjali speaks much about both of them. That's what, in my mind, makes it such an extraordinary treatise, really. And we're not going to get heavily into that until Part Two, which is at Easter. So it's like a TV show that says, "Tune in tomorrow," which the advertisers like.

But I thought this is a good place to talk a little bit about it. I think in our modern world, the idea of emptiness is very much misunderstood. It's a very terrible mistake. I've seen many books describe emptiness as some kind of nothingness or some kind of light, some kind of Buddhist belief in the meaninglessness of everything, or the nonexistence of everything, or some kind of illusory thing. These are very wrong and very bad, because people miss the meaning which can help them so much. So just in this scene of Kenchen meeting Je Tsongkapa, you can easily describe emptiness.

I hope you will always remember that little scene. If you go home and someone says, "You heard the Yoga Sutra?"

You say "Yeah."

"And did he talk about karma and emptiness?"

And you say, "No, he said that's next time." [*laughter*] And then, "But he did mention about these two guys. One in the doorway, and one on the road, and he said that's all you need to know about emptiness and karma."

The point is very simple. Is Je Tsongkapa a Buddhist monk, or is he a tantric deity? Does he have his head shaved, or does he have this long, beautiful black hair? Is he wearing the traditional robes prescribed by the *vinaya*, or is he wearing silken beautiful soft cloth wrapped around his golden body?

This is the meaning of emptiness: he's neither one. Those of us who are stuck in the realm of normal would think about this story, that someone who's really a plain monk was seen as a holy angel. And then others of us would cling to the idea that really it was a holy angel all along and he was just showing himself as a monk. But the truth is that he's neither one, and that's emptiness. Very simple. From his own side, Je Tsongkapa is not a monk, and he's not from his own side a holy tantric angel. He's not a monk appearing as an angel. He's not an angel pretending to be a monk. He's neither one. This is his emptiness.

Now here's where karma comes in. If you're the Kenchen, and you're standing in the doorway, watching this figure approach your house, and if you have good karma seeds in your mind, in Tibetan called *bakchak* or *duje*, in Sanskrit called *vasana* or *samskara*, if you had good ones, absolutely pure ones in your mind, then you will perceive this figure as a tantric angel. If you don't have such good seeds in your mind, but still the best seeds in the universe, you'll say that's Tsongkapa walking to your house.

So what's really out there walking towards the house? Just a figure. Just a figure.

"Yeah, but is it Je Tsongkapa or Manjushri?"

It's just a figure. What you see only depends on the purity of the seeds in your own mind. That's all. If we all had absolutely pure seeds today, if we had served others selflessly,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

then we would be in heaven. You would be seeing me as a tantric angel, I would be seeing you, or hearing you, as a tantric angel, and that would be the end of the story.

That's such a wonderful place to be. We will all reach that place. That's the only goal and meaning of the Yoga Sutra, and all the Sutras that were ever taught. Please remember this part. Try to look at the thangka. Try to remember. This is our goal. Je Tsongkapa is trying to teach us what the goal is, and that's what emptiness and karma mean. Never forget it.

Je Tsongkapa went on to teach a lot. He started to attract thousands of students. One of them later became His Holiness the first Dalai Lama, Gendun Drup. Those of you who studied the ACI courses, we use his commentary for all the Abhidharma materials: "How Karma Works," and also, "Death and the Realms of Existence."

Then Je Tsongkapa, after collecting a large number of disciples and it was getting a little out of hand, as it does, he said, "It's time to settle this down. You have to work on your own practice. The teaching is enough now. You've had enough teaching now." So he said, "I'm going into a long retreat."

And he took seven disciples, and the texts are very sad, they say a thousand monks were standing, crying, waving goodbye.

I've blocked out the scene on the thangka, it's up on the upper right hand. You can see Je Tsongkapa teaching a few disciples in a courtyard. He went into a long retreat in a place called Okah. When he came out later, he began to teach the secret teachings, spreading them widely. And in Mongolia especially, and in Tibet, there are many great books by him of the secret teachings. We've put up one thangka of Je Tsongkapa in his yogi's aspect. He wrote a book called *The Book of Three Beliefs*, to describe the yoga exercises, asanas, and special ways of breathing. I'm hoping we will be able to organize those teaching into sort of a half-hour program that people can do as asanas, yoga exercises. And he traditionally taught it with *tong-len*. *Tong-len* is a special breathing exercise for taking pain away from other people and giving them happiness.

Je Tsongkapa described the higher teachings like those as "riding on a tiger." You can see he's here: riding on a tiger. The idea is that these methods, yoga, and breathing and special meditations, and other secret practices are very fast, like a tiger. You can get quickly to the goal of seeing anyone as a true deity. But like a tiger, it's a dangerous ride, and you must be prepared properly. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says, "*Yatha simho gajo vyadhro shakedvashyah shanaih shanaih*" [HYP 2.15], or "It's like riding a lion, it's like riding an elephant, it's like trying to tame a tiger, you have to go slow, slow" [laughs] "*Shanaih, shanaih.*"

You need a seatbelt; that's the eighteen courses. That keeps you on the tiger and not in his mouth. "*Anyatha hanti sadhakam.*" "Otherwise the practitioner can be killed," is the end of the line. You can get great problems. If you're just exercising you might hurt yourself slightly. If you're trying to do the breathing exercise without your seatbelt, you might just get a headache, or get a little wacky, and it takes proper training. You must have proper training. And, it takes a good heart, and we'll speak more about that. But, if you want to help other people, it's the fastest way. A tiger is so strong and fast.

There's another scene on the thangka; it's in the lower right hand corner, you can check it. There's a little procession going on. Someone's carrying, by tradition, a bunch of sticks of

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

incense in a bundle, and they are inviting a holy being or object to the house of Je Tsongkapa, and we're going to talk about that later. But I think it's good to catch a look at it.

Je Tsongkapa taught the first Dalai Lama. We owe Je Tsongkapa all of the extraordinary fourteen Dalai Lamas. This sixth and the fifth Dalai Lamas are especially important, as far as the Yoga Sutra. The fifth Dalai Lama trained with the ancient order in Tibet called the *Nyingma*. He is unique, up to the present Dalai Lama who has also done the same thing, in openly training with the ancient order, which is very strong in the yoga exercises and breathing.

He had a minister. His main minister of state was called Dese Sangye Gyatso. Sangye Gyatso was an extraordinary man. Great in astrology — which is not the jokes you read in the newspaper — it's a deep science, because the movement of the stars and the sun and the moon reflect your channels. The condition of your inner channels dictates the movements of the very planets and stars.

He was also one of the first Tibetans to understand how important it is show people in paintings great spiritual practices, and in the *Lukong* Temple, where the Dalai Lamas would sometimes go to meditate, near a small lake, outside of the palace of Potala, it's believed that Dese Sangye Gyatso directed the painting of many of the yoga exercises and special breathing techniques with instructions, and it's understood that the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, also meditated there and practiced, using those illustrations.

In between the fifth and the sixth Dalai Lamas, Sangye Gyatso ran the country of Tibet for twelve years without telling anyone that the fifth Dalai Lama had passed. And people were dressed up to sit on a throne, and no one came close, and so for many years he very ably ran the country because of a political problem.

The sixth Dalai Lama, His Holiness, was a very unusual Dalai Lama. He wrote extraordinary love poems — that's what he's most known for. And they seem to be ordinary expressions of his love for various pretty girls throughout Lhasa, but if you read them carefully and if you have the right training, he is actually describing many of the holy practices which can give you the transformation of your body in the same way that the yoga *asanas* and breathing techniques do.

So we can celebrate today, really, the birth of the lineage of the Dalai Lamas, and we are [*cries*] extraordinarily and uniquely blessed to have in our world a being as extraordinary as His Holiness, who has reached out to all people, all traditions, who has ignored criticism from all sides. In Tibet, among the Tibetans, he is sometimes strongly criticized for embracing all traditions and all faiths. We are so lucky to be able to claim such a person as the leader of our lineage.

There's a big debate going on: "Is the *Yoga Sutra* a Buddhist book or a Hindu book?" Holy Lama Khen Rinpoche, who works for others twenty-three hours a day, and then watches a baseball game for... [*laughter*]...an hour, which is an important skill for all of us to learn — to work hard, work your heart out for others, and then take your good rest. It's a holy example for us. I used to sit and eat popcorn with him and watch the Yankees or the Mets, and there would be these commercials and they would argue about, "Tastes better, Less Filling." [*laughs*] It's about a beer, Miller beer, and someone would say "No it's tastes great," and the other guy would say, "No, you don't understand, it's less filling," and they would scream back and forth on the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

screen. And we would laugh and watch them, and the debate about the *Yoga Sutra* strikes me as very similar. It's just good to drink.

But...[*laughter*] It reminds me of the diamond business. We had five major diamond buyers — I was one of them, and two were Indians: very, very sweet, holy, spiritual beings. You have had the honor to meet, some of you...[*cries*] Sri Dhiru Shah and Kishan Gandhi, and they were two very religious and they joked a lot but they had very deep spiritual beliefs. They said they didn't believe in anything, but they do. I believe one of them is in retreat now.

Ahud Cohen and his brother Yoham Cohen, and we used to sit around and sort the diamonds together. They came to New York twice a year for conferences from Belgium, Israel, Bombay: Mumbai.

The way it works is somebody comes in from Belgium, Antwerp, or Mumbai, with a huge parcel of diamonds, maybe fifty thousand stones. And then, we all break them down into little piles and we sort them out with these special tweezers and eyeglasses. And the way you make money is you take out all the worst stones, the yellow ones and the broken ones and the ones with black spots, and you send them to back to India and you say "You idiot, I don't want these stones! *Kuhdim, kuhdim!*" This is — a nice to way to say it would be "garbage." The rest of the stones you divide into the best quarter, and then three-quarters are normal stones.

The best stones are accidents. The Indian sorters got tired: they're overworked, they threw in these beautiful pure white crystals by accident. You take the accidents out, then you call up "BB&B." "BB&B" is "Bailey, Banks & Biddle, Jewelers since 1832." [*laughter*] Not kidding. You can find them in Vogue. Full page ads in Vogue. They only really carry the best diamonds, and so you'd offer them to them and make a lot of money. And then that would cover the cost of maybe the three-quarters which you sell maybe at cost to "Zales Diamond Park." This is a wholesale outfit.

BB&B, "Bailey, Banks and Biddle, Jewelers since 1832," [*laughter*] is a British, very, very haute couture British firm. And then Zales Diamond Park is a typical New York — you know, screamers, discount operation — who throws a bunch of borderline stones into a ring and sells it very cheap, but it looks big. And Zales was in New York and BB&B had their American offices in Texas, and I used to take the diamonds over to Zales to sell.

And the buyers, all five of us, we'd go out for pizza, cause that's the only things that Israelis and Jains and Americans can eat together. And we would argue about these two jewelry chains. You know... The Indians would say, [*heavy accent*] "But Mr. Michael," [*laughter*] "this Zales is going to go under. You can't sell people *kuhdim!* People don't want stones which have black spots and chips on them, yellow... We shouldn't be selling to Zales. They will collapse, we'll get stuck with million dollar deficit."

And then the Israelis would say, [*another heavy accent*] "Oh, you don't know what you talking about! It is Zales who's making ze money. Zis stupid B&BB peoples, who wants a little tiny diamond which is pure white? They are not wanting, they're wanting a big stone! [*laughter*] This is America! The people's wanting a big stone!" [*laughter*] And we would have these horrible arguments with each other.

And these two chains attack each other. If you can believe it, at the time they had fifteen hundred stores between them. And Zales would set up a store in a new mall, like Tucson, and then BB&B would set up another store on the other end of the mall. And then they would attack

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

each other in the television ads and radio ads. You'd see a woman at her bridal shower, and she's wearing her engagement ring, and an older woman would come over and look at it and say, "It's really very beautiful, but it's really too bad your husband couldn't afford a BB&B ring. But I'm sure you'll be happy." [laughter]

And then Zales would retaliate with an ad, but now the old lady comes up and says, "Ooh, it's so white and so small!" And, "You know you could have had twice as large for the same money at Zales. You're husband didn't know, I guess."

And they would attack each other like this in the malls; they would punch it out, and in the TV and the radio and in the magazines.

So one day, Zales closed the office in New York. They sent me a letter that said, "Now send all the diamonds to Texas." And I said, "This is odd." And I checked the addresses, and they were the same as BB&B. So me and the buyers, next meeting with the boss — holy Chakasmvara Ofer Azrielant — we're sitting around.

I said, "Ofer, there's a problem. This address is wrong. We're sending diamonds to the same address as BB&B."

And all the diamond buyers turned and looked down the board table to Ofer, and he says, "It's no mistake. It's the same company."

And the Israelis turn, and the Indians turn, and I turn, and we say, "Your're telling us that BB&B and Zales are the same company?"

He says, "Sure! They've always been the same company!" [laughter]

"But they attack each other in the ads."

"Oh no, that's Marvin Zales."

"Who's Marvin Zales?"

"Oh, an old Jewish diamond dealer, eighty-five years old, out of New York, this old big bald guy. And he came up with this idea of two stores."

"Why do they fight with each other in the malls?"

He says, "Oh you don't get it, you guys. You put an ad on TV attacking your own store, then half the people watching want to go out and buy a diamond from BB&B, and the other half defend Zales, but both halves go out and buy a diamond." [laughs] "Don't you get it? He's covered the whole market!" [laughter] "He's raising people's interest through the conflict and the excitement of this battle between the two stores. And he sits there and rakes in the money from fifteen-hundred jewelry stores."

Don't you know that the Hindu and the Buddhist tradition are the same? Don't you know it's probably Marvin Zales up there? — he's passed away. Lord Buddha debated the Hindus. The Hindus criticized Lord Buddha. It raised interest on both sides. People defend with all their heart Buddhism and others defend Hinduism, and others defend Christianity, and Judaism, and maybe it's one big guy — running four different stores. [laughter] And the conflict raises excitement and interest. You get everybody into the action. Not everyone's going to sit and read Sanskrit and Tibetan. A lot of people are too shy to sing their hearts out in a *kirtan*, in the Hindu chanting. So these wise holy beings, they design something for each of us and they try to get us defending our store. It's a very brilliant approach.

So it's a funny question to ask if the Yoga Sutra's Buddhist or Hindu. Scholars have written convincing arguments on both sides. The point is that it can lead you to a place where

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

you see your fellow students as angels. I don't mean that you pretend. I'm not talking about that. I'm not talking about some smiley thing where you say, "Oh the lady who irritates me up in the other row is a tantric angel." I'm not talking about that. I'm saying, there will come a day when she turns around and reveals to you what she is. And we need to study the Yoga Sutra for that day to come.

I'll say a few words about Sanskrit and then we'll take a break, and then we'll start.

It can be very powerful to study books in Sanskrit as well as Tibetan or English, and I'd like talk about why. The first Dalai Lama himself — Gendun Drupa — in his commentary, *Tarlam Selje*, to *Abhidharmakosha*, he says, "Every single enlightened being on whatever planet they appear speaks in the Sanskrit language." What people hear is another story. We believe, by tradition, that people hear their own language. But His Holiness the first Dalai Lama says it's important to plant the seeds in your own mind for being able to speak in Sanskrit when you become enlightened. That's one important reason to learn some Sanskrit, even just the key words that we've been talking about.

Secondly, our language is derived directly from Sanskrit. I want to describe to you how that happened, so you will remember. It's easier to remember things in Sanskrit because of the marriage between our two languages: English going back to Sanskrit. I want to tell you the historical idea, and then I'll tell you the real one.

In 1786 in Calcutta, Sir William Jones, at the Asiatic Society's meeting, made an observation. He said people, the British, were just beginning to study Sanskrit seriously — we owe them a lot in that way — and they came to this extraordinary realization that Sanskrit and Greek and Latin were all related somehow. Many of the words were the same, and if you studied it closely, you could see patterns.

He said, "I propose that these three ancient languages have come from an even more ancient language. And since the area in which these languages have spread is both southern Asia and Europe and over to America, then I propose that we call this ancient language Indo-European."

And nowadays scholars have spent well over two hundred years studying this idea, and it's now quite clear that all of the languages, from India over to Iceland and as far south as Persia and as far north as Russia, have all come from one language: Indo-European.

It's believed by modern scholars that there was a tribe called the *Kergun* that lived in the area of the Black Sea, which happens to be the exact area of the *Kalmyks* — Mongolians. And five thousand years ago, this tribe was very aggressively moving in all directions. And their ancient language, Indo-European, reached India, and became the basis of all Indian dialects: 250 languages in India, and Sanskrit, the mother of all Indian languages.

From Sanskrit comes Pali, which is the religious language of all the Buddhists in Sri Lanka and in much of Southeast Asia. Then it reached into Iran and became ancient Iranian and Persian. And we still have words in English which have come from Sanskrit through Persian and Iranian. Farther west it became, in a Hellenic branch, Greek. Greek was born from this language. Farther west it became the Italic branch: French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, have all come the same mother as Sanskrit. Farther north it became all the Germanic languages: German, all of the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

Scandinavian languages, the Dutch, and then Icelandic, and Yiddish. All derived from the same mother as Sanskrit.

Across from the British Isles, a huge territory of Europe became Celtic speaking. There were two branches of Celtic: Continental Celtic, which was an ancient language of most of Europe, and then what's called *Insidder*, or Island Celtic, which became old Irish, and then middle Irish, and then modern day Gaelic, which has two branches, Welsh Gaelic and Irish Gaelic. So really the language of our Irish brothers and sisters also came from the same mother as Sanskrit. Further north, the Balto-Slavic group, Czech, Polish, Russian, all the languages of the Russian area, have all come from the same mother, Sanskrit, and its ancient language.

So you see, we all have a deep, unconscious connection to the ancient language of Sanskrit. When you hear it spoken, when you try to study it, it triggers understanding deeper than you... that you may not even be aware of. That is a historical presentation.

If you meditate a lot, deeply; if you do the higher practices which open your channels, like the yoga asanas or breathing practices or other secret practices; then you begin to hear what's called, in the yoga tradition, *nada*. The process is called, *nada sphotadeva* — the *nada* breaks out — the sound breaks out of your channels; you begin to hear the sound of your inner being. And this sound was heard by all people through all times and became language itself.

Language all derives not from words that we choose to describe objects; language is a very gross and rough expression of beautiful inner selves which are happening within us all the time. And in this sense, Sanskrit and its mother, Indo-European, are all expressions from within your own mind, from within your own channels. It is the song of your own thoughts flowing through the channels.

Even the letters of Sanskrit, the *devanagari* alphabet, which came to Tibet, are reflections of the physical shape of the channels within you. That's why these letters look so attractive to us. That's why Tibetan and Sanskrit letters feel so beautiful to us. And the more you meditate, the deeper you go, you can start to see that all languages come from the same language, even the languages which are not considered by scientists to be part of one mother language, like you could say Hebrew or Chinese or Mongolian. If you study them deeply, even the African languages or the American Indian languages, if you meditate deeply, if you learn to hear inner sound, you can easily see the source is the same for all languages.

I look forward to the day when this is clearly written out in rules as Indo-European has been written out, but I think if you have a strong background in any language, like Mongolian or Hebrew, Chinese, I think you can, if you listen inside, you can start to see the patterns and they are, they can be expressed in formal rules of linguistics. So really all these sounds of all language is coming from one language. Sanskrit is very close to that ancient language. So Sanskrit sings to us and it's an important thing to study.

The last thing to say about that — if you go up to somebody in this audience and you say, “What comes first? The thing, or the name we give the thing? What comes first? Things or the names for the things?”

And you say, I mean if you're just a normal person, you say, “Of course the thing comes first. The name comes afterward.”

And you say, “Well, why do you answer that?”

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

He says, “I mean any kid, their mom shows them some new thing... I mean, my mind’s on pumpkin pie, say... And the kid comes in and there’s this warm, fragrant, brown, flat, round thing, and it’s their first pumpkin pie, and mom scoops a spoonful in their mouth with some whip cream”... (Oh, that was really good, caretakers...) [laughter]

And, the kid — they don’t like the look so much at first, but once they get a taste of it, they say, “Oh, wow! What’s that? For future reference.” [laughter]

And mom says, “That’s called pumpkin pie.”

So you put this name on this brown, round, fragrant object, and that’s how we think of language, all language — the word comes after the thing.

The ancient books, including the *Yoga Sutra*, which starts out a line: “*Shabda artha pratyayanam itaretaradhyasat.*” (III.17) — it’s a beautiful section — say that, no, the word comes first. I think this is what the Bible means when it says, “First there was the Word.” The ancient books say that the word came first.

“What do you mean, the word came first?”

Words are sounds that we connect to pictures in our mind. When the kid connects the word to pumpkin pie, he’s actually got a small, perfect, little picture, a shining perfect picture in his mind of a pumpkin pie, and then he connects that sound, “Pump-kin-Pie,” to that picture, and then real words are pictures. The sounds you hear with your ears or in your thoughts are only reminders of the pictures.

This is Bill Gates’ *Windows* theory with icons. The idea is to reach a deeper level of a person’s mind where we are operating not with words, not with command line, but with pictures. And these are really the essence of all words. All words are really the pictures in our minds. There’s a picture of a brown, beautiful, fragrant thing in every person’s mind who ever eats a pumpkin pie. That picture came before the pie. That picture comes before the first pie. You see the first pie because that picture is being projected from your own mind.

“That doesn’t make much sense. I mean how can you have a picture of a pumpkin pie in your mind before you eat a pumpkin pie?”

It comes from your past life; you have eaten pumpkin pie before. This picture you have from your past life, you can call it *vasana*, *bachak*; *samskara*, *duje*. It’s a karmic seed. You have seen billions of pumpkin pies. You hold that picture in your consciousness; it rises to the manifest consciousness, and then your mind presents your own mind with a pumpkin pie. The word came before the pie. The word created the pie. Your karma is creating every single object around you. You have to remember that the Bible is right when it says, “First, the Word.” The word came first.

“Well, where did the first pumpkin pie picture come from?”

There is no first picture.

“Well, then there’s no beginning.”

That’s right, there’s no beginning.

“But how can there be a cause? How can there be the first thing that ever caused everything?”

That’s your answer. There is no first cause.

“But how can there be a beginning? How can you have a beginning if there’s no cause for the beginning?”

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

Don't be foolish; don't be naive; don't get stuck in your old worldview. There's no big bang, the world didn't start when some guy snapped his fingers, because that guy had to come from somewhere, and the bang had to be banged by an earlier bang. [laughter] All science says that things must have a cause before them, and then the same science says there was a first cause. It's patently ridiculous. It's a direct contradiction of science's own beliefs. I'll repeat it, just so you can hear it: everything has a cause, except the first. [laughter] It's crazy. I mean a Tibetan would just laugh: "I don't understand, and you... What are you saying?"

"Oh we've broken apart the secrets of the universe; we can blow up cities; everything has a cause. We experiment, we find the causes, we make the results."

"So how did the world start?"

"That didn't have a cause." [laughter]

"Oh, I see. When you can't figure it out, you say it just doesn't have a cause."

It's crazy, but it's the foundation of all of Western civilization, this belief: there is no first cause, because there can't be a thing that does anything if there's no energy before that. You've always had pumpkin pie.

"What's that got to do with me? I don't care if the word came first. I want refreshment pictures!"

The idea is there are objects which we have a very dim recollection of, or we haven't had a perception of yet. I can say a few of them. Maybe one would be treating others as though they were ourselves. One would be emptiness itself. One would be the idea that the person sitting next to you is truly a tantric angel who could lead you to heaven or paradise. These are ideas, these are objects for which our pictures are not clear. Those pictures, if they have ever been in our mind, are not very clear. The idea is to draw those pictures out and make them reality.

And when I say things are pictures, I don't mean they're less real. That's a big mistake. You stand in front of a moving taxicab in New York City and tell me whether that picture breaks your legs.

The great wisdom of ancient Buddhism — Arya Nagarjuna — is that things are pictures and things absolutely work, and that's reality. So it doesn't mean that nothing matters or nothing works. Of course you can eat a pumpkin pie. Don't be stupid, don't be silly, don't be some dreamer about illusions and things like that. We have a real world to deal with, it's made from our pictures. We have to fix it.

And the beauty of Sanskrit or Tibetan is that those words are already there. The idea of going over these words together, learning words for things we don't know, is that the word will come first. You learn a word like *nirvana*, you learn a word like *asana*, and then you create the thing to match the word. So it's extremely powerful to study the ancient sounds, because they will create the actual reality. That's the real reason we're working with Sanskrit here. We are learning new words which, when they become strong enough in our minds, will become the real objects.

If I say the person next to you is a tantric angel, you have those words: "person," "next to me," "tantric angel." That creates a seed in your mind. Later, it will grow. Later, the object will be created from the word. So we are stuffing our minds with holy ancient words for things we'd like to have around us, like refreshments, and please have some, and then we'll start with the Sutra.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach



So we'll begin the Yoga Sutra again. I think we have to catch up a bit from yesterday, and I'd like that the next line be read. I think it's *karuna*.

[Ben Brewer: *Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha duhkha punya-apunya vishayanam bhavanatash chitta prasadanam*. You must use compassion. (I.33b)]

Here begins the description of the one single antidote for all your problems in trying to meditate and practice, especially on the first two of the five paths. And of course some of you will recognize these as the four immeasurables. In Tibetan, they're called *tseme shi*. These form a crucial part of our secret practices. Those of you who are practicing *Vajra Yogini sadhana* will recognize it as one of the eleven yogas.

And *karuna* is only one of the four. But the point is, if we can develop *karuna*, then we won't have any obstacles in our practice. Everything will go perfectly. If I have to judge from my own motivation as I study or do *asanas*, yoga practices, or other practices, oftentimes I'm having worldly motivations. I'm hoping people will be impressed by what I've learned. I'm hoping people will hear about me not talking and sitting in my meditation yurt. I'm hoping people won't hear about all the times I blew up at Christie or had other problems. And I'm hoping that people will think I look trim and fit ... [laughter].

There's a strange thing that happens with the inner channels. The higher practices are meant to clear them, make them whole, make them flow freely. This has a direct effect on our capacity of wisdom and compassion, but when we do things for what our teacher here called vulgar motives, earlier today, then it actually has the opposite effect. For example, if you are practicing a yoga exercise, and instead of focusing your mind on your breath or on some kind of holy thought, if you are aware in a corner of your mind that your muscles are growing or you're looking thinner, then the place where you focus your mind, the channels in that exact same area start to jam up. Wrong motivations actually hurt you.

People get hurt in a yoga class — they don't know why, their knee hurts or their back or their neck. It's because the channels below the skin and below the bones and nerves have knotted up. One of the main reasons is poor motivation. You can avoid all these problems if your motivation is wanting to help other people. And it's hard, you have to check in with your mind every few minutes as you meditate or study or teach and make sure you're still trying to serve others.

Karuna is the first of the four... sorry, second here... It comes from an ancient root Sanskrit, *kirr* — “k-i-r-r,” you can spell it this way. Double “err.” And that comes from the Indo-European root *krau*, and it means to cover or protect something. It shows up in two very funny English words: “Crypt,” the “c-r” comes from *krau*, and in “grotto,” as being a protected place, like in a cave. The “g-r” comes from the “k-r” of *krau* and *karuna*.

The Tibetan is *nyingje*. *Nying* means “heart.” *Je* means “the lord.” *Karuna* means compassion, and it's the lord of all holy thoughts, the lord of your heart. This is the same *je* that we use in front of Je Tsongkapa's name. *Je* means “Lord” Tsongkapa. And it's the same *je* in *dorje*, which means the lord of all stones, and that's the Tibetan word for diamond, or *vajra*.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

Nyingje or *karuna* is the constant desire to take away the pain of other people. I tell you frankly, most of us would help a person in pain. If a person was in an automobile accident and we came by, we would stop and get out and try to stop their bleeding. If one of our friends was sad we would try to make them happy again. But the highest form of *karuna* is to look upon all humanity, and all creatures on this planet — all of them are in the same situation, all of them are suffering, all of them are caught by certain powers which will kill them. All of them are wrapped up in energies which will tear away from them every good thing they ever had. So ultimate *karuna* is to try to find a way to stop these powers, to turn back these energies.

There's a beautiful practice, ancient practice, called *tong-len*, giving and taking, where we use our breath to take away the pain of other people and give them all happiness. It's like an ultimate *pranayama* practice. It can be very powerful to do your meditations and to do your yoga exercises as you do *tong-len*. It is one of the most powerful of all practices. If you have to say what distinguishes the yoga exercises in Tibetan tradition from perhaps others, it is that throughout the time of the exercises we are trying to take away other people's pain even while we breathe.

I think it would be good to train people in this kind of practice. It has been, by tradition, secretly, quietly passed down, but as we said yesterday, when twenty million people suddenly begin to practice ancient techniques of ultimate purity called yoga, then I think it would be very beautiful to share these methods with anyone who may be interested. Not to push them on people who have no interest.

And that's part of the idea of traveling around the country, perhaps after retreat. I want to repeat that everyone is welcome to come. You need to get ready an old car, that won't break down. You need a little food money. We'll share. You'll need to learn to dance or sing. Part of our plan, as we visit each city, is to speak to very small groups: maybe two, three, five people in a bookstore, say, and if anyone's interested talk to them about these ideas. And maybe plant seeds for future places, centers where people can learn them.

But when you say ultimate *karuna* is to take away the pain of all living beings on this and every other planet, which each of you will do. Sometimes I think, me, I tend to lose sight of the little *karunas* you have to do to get to the big *karunas*. So I think we need to have specific, worldly, minor kindnesses, and service that we can do for others around us. It's very painful to see a Buddhist, an American Buddhist or Western Buddhist, who is studying higher *karuna*, but who sometimes seems to do something very unkind to others around them. I know I do this. And so I thought during our trip together, we could in the evenings, give talks, perhaps if anyone's interested, and during the daytimes we could visit nursing homes or hospitals or prisons, people who are lonely or suffering — more than the rest of us — and we thought we could sing for them, or perhaps we could do small beautiful dances for them, or teach them simple yoga techniques to make them feel better, like older people. And so that's part of the plan.

I think we'll be going in a big circle, visiting many cities. If there's a city you particularly like and you have other commitments that don't allow you to come for the whole time, it would be very wonderful if you could drop in to one or two cities that you have a connection to... I mean, people are already telling me, "I want New Orleans," or "I want Santa Cruz, I want the mall in Santa Cruz." And other desire realm blisses... [laughs]. And that would be wonderful.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

So maybe... I think Holy Lama John Stillwell is organizing that or some of his people helping him, and you can get a rough schedule of what cities, and you're welcome to come and help us.

You're gonna need to know the *Yoga Sutra* well. There's a wonderful, incredible ballet master called George Ballanchine. He was the greatest figure in ballet for fifty years. He said, "When you go to buy a ten dollar thing at the store, you put a hundred dollars in your wallet."

And the ballerinas would ask him, "What's that got to do with the pirouettes?"

And he'd say, "Your role in Swan Lake calls for five pirouettes in a row, across the stage. I want you to practice fifty." You take ten times more than you need.

So if you're going to give a half-hour talk to a few friends in a Barnes and Noble's, if we get there, then you should have all your Sanskrit ready — even if no one ever asks you, you should have all those lines of the *Yoga Sutra* ready. You should have the ACI courses in your back pocket, meaning your mind, and you should be ready to answer any kind of question that might come up. And I can assure you that the one you didn't think of is the one that will be asked. [laughter] So we have to prepare at a level ten times deeper than what is needed.

Which brings me to *tong-len*, breathing practice, Giving and Taking — I don't know if anyone has spoken about it yet — if they haven't, they will. But I would like to humbly request each person here who wishes to learn this practice in the next six months, before Easter. I don't mean if you're a Buddhist, I mean anyone here who wants to help other people, you don't have to tell them which jewelry store it comes from. [laughter] But, I would like to ask that you learn the extraordinary *pranayama*, breathing practice of compassion, which has been passed down through the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. There's a book and there are instruction tapes, and I would like to ask each person also to meet with another person who can teach it to them privately, in person, because a true lineage comes from heart to heart. *Karuna*, here, is half of that practice, and you'll learn more about it.

Next verse, please.

[Judy Brewer: *Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha dukkha punya-apunya vshayanam bhavanatash chitta prasadanam*. Learn to keep your feelings in balance, whether something feels good, or whether it hurts. (I.33d)]

The key word here is *upeksha*. It consists of two parts: *upa* and *eksha*. *Upa* comes from the ancient Indo-European *upo*, and came into the English words "up" and, "above." And so it means "over or above." or "to a high degree." *Iksh* is a verb "to see" related to a noun *aksh*, which means "eye." That came into the English words, "eye," because the e-y is really *auge* of German "the eye." It came into the word "ocular" because the "o-c" is the "a-k" in *aksh*. It came into the word "ogle" [laughs] and the "o-g" is from the ancient "a-k" and the "i-k," and also "optical." So it means "to overlook something."

And what that means is, whether something is painful or pleasant, particularly in regard to our practice, that we maintain equanimity, we maintain a balance of feelings. There are practices which you have learned, there are teachings which you have had which you really enjoy and which you connect with right away. These are probably not the ones you need. There are other practices which you are not very interested in or don't sound very exciting to you. They sound like hard work maybe. And we tend to avoid them. I can think of logic and debating:

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

when holy Lama Khen Rinpoche taught it to us, I hated it. I didn't connect with it at all. He encouraged us to go home to our rooms and work hard on it, and so simply out of respect I worked on it very hard. And slowly my distaste for it became a very deep pleasure in it. And it balanced out my training. Left by myself I would have ignored it.

I think you are the same. Probably some part of the practices, which are all important, you can't do them very well or you're not very interested in them. Probably that's because you are deficient in that part of the practice and probably those are the practices you should drag yourself to and make yourself get good at them.

So in our daily practice, *upeksha*. Between *sukha* and *duhkha*, in this case. We had *sukha* already. It means "what feels good to you." *Duhkha* means "what feels bad to you." The *kha* part is the same, perhaps coming from an ancient "wagon wheel hole," and then *du* comes from *dush*, which is a verb which means "to spoil," and those both come from an ancient prefix *dus*, which means "bad."

That came into Greek as *dys*, and you see it in the words "dysentery" and "dysfunctional," and then later in English words, "d-i-s," like "disrespect." So it means something bad, a "bad wagon wheel hole" that doesn't run very smoothly.

In the Four Immeasurables, of which this is one, it refers specifically to learning to act with equanimity to people we like and people we don't like. I often try to make the distinction. It's not that you should try to pretend that the person you don't like is doing something nice. It's not nice. Someone criticizes you unfairly, someone actually does you harm — I think it's naive to say this is something nice. It's not. Equanimity is running on a higher level. If everything around us is created by words, if everything around us is created by seeds in our own mind, then the people you meet who hurt you are creations of your own words, your own mind. Can you then voluntarily use a different word: "nice guy." No. Calling him a nice guy is not going to change him. They're hurting you.

The point is to try to stop the source of the person. We must get to the source. They are hurting you only because you hurt someone else. I will say it a million times — if you hang around enough, you will hear it a million times. Right around the nine hundred ninety nine thousand nine hundred and ninety ninth time, it will dawn on you. Someone will attack you, personally, painfully, and you'll look at them and open your mouth and suddenly you'll close it and say, "If I'm kind to them, perhaps those seeds will be stopped."

And that's the whole method of Buddhist practice in a nutshell. That's the real meaning of equanimity. It's not to pretend that they're pleasant. They're not pleasant. It's that if you could be pleasant back to them then the seeds to see unpleasant people would begin to go away in your own mind, and you would walk up to someone's house and they would step into the doorway and you would see a tantric Angel. This is the real yoga. This is real tantric practice.

Next line please.

[Kedron Brewer: *Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara-asevito dirdha bhumiḥ*. Your practice must be done correctly, for then a firm foundation is laid. (I.14C)]

Thank you. The key word here is *satkara*. *Sat* is a participle of the verb "us." It simply means "to be." And "to be" means "to be true," and so *sat* means "truth." In the chant which a

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

holy being has done for us each day, you hear the words “*Asato ma sat gamaya.*” It means “may that which is not true in me become true.” So *sat* means “truth.”

Kara means “to do.” It’s the root of the word *karma*. The Sanskrit is *kir*, you can spell it as “k-i-r.” And the ancient Indo-European root is *ker*, spelled “k-e-r.” Most *k*’s show up in English as what we call hard “c” sounds, and so we get the word “crescent,” meaning “something which is growing, a moon which is growing, or being made.” We get the word “increase,” the “c-r” means “growing.” And sometimes the C becomes soft and you get “cereal” — the “c-e-r” comes from *ker*. All of them coming from the same root as *karma* meaning “things which grow, things which are growing, things which are being made.”

So *satkara* means “done truly.” The Tibetan word is *kurti*. It’s an interesting choice that the ancient translators used, because *kurti* means something like “to do something with great respect.” For example, we are always asked to show teachers *kurti*. So it means that we should do our practice with great grace and beauty and respect for the practice. We should do it properly.

Satkara means, “do your practice in the right way.” It’s a very simple meaning here. When you learn anything at the beginning — it could be yoga exercises, it could be something like ballet, it could be meditation, it could be doing retreats — you should try to do it correctly, absolutely correctly, the way it was taught to you. Don’t take shortcuts, don’t do it sloppily, don’t do what we call end-gaming, meaning you want to look like you’re doing it at the end but you’re not really doing it — in a yoga posture or in your spiritual life.

Keep everything very, very short. If your meditation is five or ten minutes a day but it’s powerful and done absolutely correctly, then you will become a great meditator. If you meditate sloppily for an hour, and your mind is wandering, you will never overcome that problem. It will become deeper and deeper in you. So don’t be shy, don’t be embarrassed. People ask you, “How long do you meditate?” You can say, “I do five minutes, but I do it god-damn right.”
[laughter]

And your yoga or other practices should be the same. Do them right at the beginning. The speed will come later; the endurance will come later. But do them absolutely correct, according to what your teacher has taught you. Don’t try to also avoid the details which your teacher has taught you. It may hurt a little at first, it may seem unnatural at first, but do it exactly the way they taught it to you. Do it slowly, do it for a short period of time. Then a firm foundation is laid.

The Sanskrit word here is *bhumi*. I put this word partly because it so often comes in Tibetan prayers. “*Om vajra bhumi ah hum,*” when we start the Mandala offering, and the bodhisattva *bhumis*. It means “the ground,” it means “the solid basis of all things.”

The ancient Sanskrit root is *bhu*. The ancient Indo-European root before that was *bheu*. It is the word “to be” and the word “to become.” The “b-e” comes from the same root. It’s kind of fun to trace how other words appear. The “b-h” changes to “p-h,” the “u” changes to “y” in Greek, and the word “physics” comes from *bhu*. In Latin the “b-h” becomes an “f” and the word “future” comes from *bhu*. The word “build” comes from this same root. We have to build a strong foundation — do things right, even if you look silly to other people, even if you don’t look very expert yet, and then you will become a true expert.

Next line please.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

[Sarah Brewer: *Tato dvandva-anabhighatah*. And there will come a time when differences no longer harass you. (II.48)]

The word “differences” here is *dvanda*. The root is *dva*, which means “the number two.” So this word means “two two:” “two twos.” The ancient Indo-European root is *dwo*. The “d” changes to “t” by the time it gets to English and it’s the word “two,” the number two. In Greek it becomes *di*, as in “dipole;” it comes into Latin as *bi*, as in “bicycle,” because the “t” drops out and the “v” becomes “b.”

This is the line two lines after the line in the Yoga Sutra which tells you about the yoga exercises, the *asanas*. And it’s saying if you do these exercises and they help your meditation, which is one line later, then you will be able to overcome differences, which is the second line after the original. In your daily practice, this again refers to discriminating between practices which you enjoy because you’re already good at them and you don’t need them too much, and practices which you don’t enjoy, which you should be working on.

But there’s a much deeper level. As we will learn later today, maybe a little later, I hope you don’t mind — we might have to stop this section also and continue it tomorrow — but we tend to dualities, we tend to differentiation. This fact is reflected in the channels which run within our very bodies, the subtle channels. Running down the core of your body is a central channel, what’s called the central channel; we’ll talk more about it later. On each side of it are two auxiliary channels and those two auxiliary channels are pretty much the source of all our trouble. They create an effect on the mind of differentiating between different things. Even the distinction between say, male and female; even the distinction between say, the sun and the moon and night and day; and especially distinctions between “I like this and I don’t like that,” “I like him. I don’t her” — these can all be traced to the actual physical makeup of our bodies. Yoga is meant to address those channels and soften their influence and eventually remove it altogether. And then we are not making painful or troublesome distinctions between people and events.

Does this mean that we should try to ignore things that are bad, and not think about them? Does it mean that we should just try to reach some space where everything can collapse around us and we can see people die and get old and suffer and not mind? Of course not. Enlightened beings don’t reach some kind of lack of distinction where they’re no longer worried that you are dying, getting old, suffering, losing the ones you love — of course not. It refers to the method by which we stop these evils. So the ultimate difference here is the difference in our very being, which doesn’t understand why these things are happening to us, and we’ll speak about that later on in the Sutra.

Next verse please.

[Mercedes Bahleda sings: *Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara-asevito dirdha bhumiḥ*. You must cultivate your practice, over an extended period of time. (I.14a)]

Thank you. This is another part of the same verse. The key word here is *kala*. This is the *kala* in *kalachakra*, if you’ve heard of that — “the wheel of time” — and it means “time.” It comes from a Sanskrit root, *kal* and that, in Indo-European is *kel*, and as we said, “k” becomes

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

“c,” and you can find this in the word “accelerate,” the *cel* is the ancient *kel*, which means “to go fast over time,” and probably the “c-e-l” in “celebrity,” which means that frequently over a space of time, this person comes to a place, which came to mean “famous.”

His Holiness: sweet, incredible, glorious Dalai Lama often says, “We can’t expect miracles in our practice.” You don’t stop billions of years of negative thinking in a few months of practice.

We’re here for the long term. The human psyche is extremely difficult to change. Those of us in three year retreat can tell you that [*laughs*]. I mean I think we’ve all realized that, now as the time grows short, it’s like chipping away at a brick wall. Even three years in silent retreat is not enough to really change, in a major way, all the inner obstacles and problems we have, so we have to work over the long run. We have to have endurance, patience. Don’t be upset if you don’t see miracles happening right away. They will happen but we need to work hard and patiently.

I saw a beautiful quotation by Swami Vishnu Devananda. Somebody asked him, “How long does this *sadhana* take to work?”

He said, “Could be ten hours, could be ten days, might be ten months, could be ten years, could be ten thousand lifetimes.” Then he said, “But we don’t really have a choice, do we? We have to try, we have to start, and it could take time.”

It’s not to say that you won’t have major breakthroughs. Those of you who are here, you are special people even to be interested in these things. You have extraordinary seeds in your mind. You will be able to waken them very quickly in this lifetime.

Next verse please.

[John Stilwell: *Bhuvana jnyanam surye sanyamat*. Turn the combined effort upon the sun, and you will understand the earth. (III.27)]

It sounded like John Stillwell, I’m not sure. But any of you who have ever taken an ACI course, they wouldn’t exist without this person. [*crying*] You should know it, you should appreciate it.

This is the verse where Master Patanjali begins to describe the inner channels. We said there are two inner channels which cause a lot of problems. Roughly you can say that within one of them flows our thoughts of anger: negative thoughts, jealousy. Inside the other channel flows our thoughts of desire: wanting things.

Surya refers to the channel in which anger flows: jealousy, envy, hatred, competitive thinking. It’s on the right side of our bodies. It’s called *surya* which means “sun” — its nickname is *surya*. *Surya* comes from an ancient Indo-European root — I have to think to get it right — *sahwel*, and it means “sun.” In some languages the ending remains “l,” as in Latin, and *sol*, “the sun” or “solar” comes from that. In the Germanic language the “l” changes to “n” and you get “sun.” In Greek the “s-e” drops out and you get *hel* which becomes “helios” for sun, and it’s in the English word “heliotrope.”

The word *jnana*, which means, “if you focus the combined effort on the sun then you will understand the earth,” is the word for “to know” or “to understand.” The Sanskrit root is *jnya* (long a). The ancient Indo-European root is *gno* and that’s why the English word “to know” has

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

a “k” in front of it, *know* comes from that. The word “recognize,” the “g-n” comes from *jnana*, and many, many other words. The word “I can do it:” “I can” comes from the “g” and the “n” that becomes the hard “k.” “I ken,” *ken* means “I know how, I know how to do.” So all of these words come from the ancient word, *jnana*. You know it in *prajna paramita*, the perfection of wisdom.

Bhuvana, meaning “earth,” is the same root as *bhumi*, and we already talked about that.

So what does it mean, “If you focus on the sun, you can understand the earth.”? Combined effort means the effort of your two meditative states and your understanding of emptiness. These are the opening, from the opening lines of the third chapter of the Sutra. First the master explains what focus means, then he explains what meditation means, and then he explains that you should use them combined with an understanding of emptiness.

Of course none of you will ever again think that emptiness means nothing. It’s just that the guy walking down the road is just a figure, blank figure, and then what you see — tantric Angel or Je Tsongkapa — depends on your own seeds. So if you focus this kind of knowledge on that channel running within your own body, then you will be able to understand the earth.

The fact that we don’t understand that the things around us are coming from our own seeds, in our own minds, that fact runs in your right channel. That misunderstanding runs within your very body. So now you can start to get a feel for how powerful the physical yoga exercises are meant to be. If you can assume certain positions which affect the channel on the right, you can actually develop a stronger understanding of the reality around you. You can stop misunderstanding your own reality, because anger and misunderstanding are running in the same channel.

When Master Patanjali is talking about the earth, he means the objects around you. Those of you who studied with Lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen, holy Lama, understand this as the division between the emptiness of the person and the emptiness of the parts of the person.

Anyway, the bottom line is that external means can be used to affect a channel and then the thoughts running in that channel can begin to become more pure and holy. This is the whole meaning of the physical exercises of yoga. This is enhanced by breathing exercises like *tong-len* and by the four immeasurable thoughts. Kindness affects that channel very deeply. So it’s kind of exciting — we can work on this channel from the inside and from the outside. Inside you work on it by being kind to others, with your breath you work on it through compassion breathing exercises. And then with the physical exercises, which are much less effective, you can actually loosen up this channel. And then that has a vibration or effect on the kindness. So you’re working from both ways and the effect is growing bigger and bigger.

“If the inner methods are so powerful and if the yoga exercises, by comparison, are so gross and rough, why should I bother about these external methods?”

Usually when you’re getting close to a spiritual breakthrough, you’re at like eighty or ninety percent of the breakthrough, you need the last ten percent to take you over the top. That’s the idea behind the physical exercises. You must work at the channels from the inside through the four immeasurable thoughts, *karuna*, compassion, and the others, equanimity. You must work on them with your breath, through the giving and taking exercises.

And then the gross physical exercises will take you over the top, the last ten percent. They’re the least efficient; they take more time. It’s much easier to work through the inside with

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

a few minutes of true compassion than with an hour and a half a day of yoga on the outside, but if you use them together, it's extremely powerful. They vibrate against each other, and the channels begin to open. This is the whole secret of the higher tantric practices. We are actually trying to develop our kindness and compassion through our physical body.

Next verse please.

[Joanne Stilwell: *Nabhi chakre kaya vyuha jnyanam*. Turn the same effort upon the center at the navel, and you will understand the structure of the body. (III.30)]

I'm not gonna speed up, let's just go — we'll take a break after the next verse. You'll feel a little chilly. Those of you doing *tsechu* ceremony tonight, I strongly urge you to do it short. Do the *tsok* ceremony only, get a good rest, look at your notes; this is very pleasing to *Vajra Yogini*, I would guess.

Nabhi chakra. *Nabhi* means “navel,” the belly-button. One of the ancient roots is *nob*, which came into English as *nav*, “navel.” Another root for this word is *neb*, and that came into the word “nebulous” and “nimbus” cloud, and they all mean some kind of a flowering or mushrooming idea, which is. . . your belly-button sort of mushrooms out of your body in sort of a flower, the image is of a cloud opening up or a flower opening up, bursting. “Bursting out” is the root meaning of *nabhi*.

Let's talk about *chakra*. This come from the word *kir* that we already had for *karma*, *satkara*. In Sanskrit and in other ancient languages, when you want to say that something is happening over and over again you just repeat it, like *dvandva* or *chakra* — *chakra* is really *krkra* or *kirkir*, and it just means “a wheel is turned again and again.” It's “doing again and again and again,” *kirkir*. It's called re-duplication in Sanskrit. It happens in English in the word “circle.” The *cir* is just one *kir*; the *cle* is just another *kir*.

Circle and *chakra* are exactly the same words, and the word “cycle” and other words like that. These are places in the body where the subtle channels cross each other; they cross over. Some books describe them as crossing over; some books describe them as twining around like vines. Some books describe them as pressing in on both sides of the main channel, in the shape of a bow-and-arrow bow, and not crossing. But it doesn't matter how you describe them. A *chakra* is like an intersection where the channels have tied each other up. And then side channels will sprout out from its sides like the spokes of a wheel. So if you look from the top you will see a central channel going down and spokes radiating out from the center where the energy tie-ups are. Therefore it's called a *chakra* or a wheel.

This is the first place where the Master Patanjali mentions the *chakras* or the tie-up areas of the channels. And he says if you can focus your wisdom and meditation on this energy center at your navel, then you can come to an understanding of the *kaya vyuha*. You know the word *kaya* from *dharmakaya* and *rupakaya*, meaning the bodies of a Buddha. Then — this is a difficult one in Sanskrit — Panini says it comes from *chi*, and we have the English word “cheetah,” the animal, from this root. There's a more ancient root, called *kwei* in Indo-European. *Kaya* means something that you “build up” or you “put together.”

When this ancient root came into Greek language, the “k” dropped out, the “w” changed to “v,” the “v” changed to “b,” the “b” changed to “p,” and it became the word “poem,” which

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

means a composition or something put together. So the word “poem” comes directly from the root for *kaya*.

I won’t go into much detail, but when you are first born, when you are first conceived — and this is very important for issues like abortion — that the channels begin to grow when the first cell is formed. When the egg and the sperm meet and the first cell forms, there’s already a sentient being — there’s already a person, because the cell is growing around the first tiny spot of consciousness, called *bindu*, or *tigle* in Tibetan, and from there the body begins to form.

The body: the skeleton, the blood veins, the nervous system, all the branches, are actually forming around the channels, the subtle channels. The subtle channels are more like made of light. If a person dies and you cut them open you will never find them. They are physical, but they are a made of a substance which is very similar to sunlight. Physicists are still arguing how light can go from the sun to the earth. They are very concerned about how it could even happen, because it cannot be explained through particle theory.

So these inner channels form, and then your bones, blood-vessels, and nerves form around the shape of the inner channels. The major bones in your back, for example at the top of the back, at the base of the neck in your spine, the bones in the base of your backbone down near your hips, these major lumps of bone are actually forming around tie-ups in the subtle channels. That’s why the bone forms there. That’s why, as you get older, it’s typical to have pain in the base of the neck or in the lower back. It’s actually a deterioration of the jamming of the channels in those two areas. When you hurt your back, it’s actually due to the increase of the problem in the channels.

So it’s important to understand these things if you want to improve your health or teach other people to improve their health — but also if you want to create a body of light in yourself and in others, it’s important to understand how you have to influence these channels, how you can open them up.

One more verse, then I think we’ll take another break.

[Andrea Lemon: *Chandre tara vyuha jnyanam*. You will understand the arrangement of the stars if you turn this same effort upon the moon. (III.28)]

What does he mean when he says “stars?” What does he mean when he says “moon?” Let’s start with moon. The Sanskrit word is *chandre*. The ancient Sanskrit root is *schand*. The *sha* or *sa* sound often drops off going to other languages. The ancient root is *kand*, and this shows up in English in the word “candle.” It shows up in “incense,” that’s why incense is spelled that way. It shows up in “incandescence,” the “cand,” and it shows up in “incense,” “incendiary.” Anyway, they all mean “to shine brightly.”

They are related to an ancient word *skey*, which came into the English in the word “scone,” which means “a bright, wonderful thing.” [laughs] It’s one of the joys of Ireland. I think. And those are words that come from the same root.

Chandra, as you could guess, refers to the left-hand channel, which is normally cool, meaning the negative emotions that are more cool than anger: for example, desire — desire for food, desire for sex, desire for fame, all of these thoughts would be running in the left-hand channel. On a deeper level our wrong ideas about our own selves, as opposed to outside objects,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

which is on the right channel, are all running through the left channel. All our wrong ideas about where we came from are running in this left channel. Our own wrong ideas about our own mind are running in our left-hand channel.

Mind is often referred to in the yoga texts as *bindu*, “consciousness,” “drop of consciousness” or *tigle* in Tibetan. And the word *tara* which means “a star in the sky,” is a code word for “drops of consciousness.” So that *tara* here, the word “star,” means that misunderstanding about our own mind, about our own selves — it’s a code word.

I like the word *tara*. It comes from an ancient root *tir* in Sanskrit, which means “to cross over.” You see the meaning in the Tibetan translation *gyukar*. *Karma* in Tibetan means “star.” *Karma* in Sanskrit means karma [*laughs*], and then *gyu* means it’s running across the sky, stars that course across the sky in a certain pattern. So *tir* means “to cross over” or “to burst through.” And the Lady of Liberation, *Droma* or *Tara*, with a different accent, is this woman Buddha, fully enlightened Angel who helps take people across the ocean of suffering. So her name is *Tara*.

The ancient Indo-European is *ter*. It shows up in a lot of words, the word “through” comes from this because of “breaking through.” The word “thrill” comes from this because it used to mean “to drill a hole.” The word “nostril,” “t-r” comes from this because of the hole through which you breath. All the words that start with “trans,” “transit,” “transport,” “transportation,” the “t-r” comes from “crossing over,” the same root as *tara*.

But the word I love the most is “nectar.” *Nec* means “death,” as in “necrophilia.” *Tar* means “it can take you across or away from death.” There’s another root called *mirt* in Sanskrit, and when you say “deathlessness” in Sanskrit, it’s *amirta*, “no death.” That word comes into English with “mortuary.” And really that was my hope in begging our holy teacher to come and chant for us each day. Because this chant is an ancient chant and it contains the word *amritam: mrityor-mam amritam*. It means “may our death become deathlessness.”

If you really understand the channels, how to work with them, then in one lifetime, you can overcome the physical death and become a holy Angel who can travel to all planets, all stars at the same time and serve others. I repeat — I’m not shy to repeat it — it’s what you dream for, it’s what all of us dream about. It’s what’s really your goal in life — to serve all living creatures. It’s our deepest desire.

So if you turn your wisdom on this left-hand channel, you can understand why and how to change yourself, your drop of consciousness, into an Angel. And again, the most powerful method is compassion, from the inside, and breathing with compassion, with *tong-len*, and then supplemented by the very useful exercises on the outside.

I’m sorry to go long. I would like to finish more of the Sutra today. We might all die tonight; we don’t know. I always do this to you. I’m sorry. I’m not as bad as Khen Rinpoche [*laughter*] and neither of us comes close to Lama Zopa [*laughter*]. His Holiness always stops exactly at the right moment; he’s so wise. But we’ll take a break and then we’ll do a little bit more, okay?



Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

Okay, before I forget, I wanted to say, if there's people who can't sing or dance or drive [laughs], you still very welcome to join us wherever you can, any part that you can. There'll be lots of hard work to do, I think, like poetry reading or story reading or for shy people, sticking up posters and things like that.

Next verse, please. We'll stop in half an hour; diamond dealer's promise. [laughter]

[Ted Lemon: *Dhruve tad gati jnyanam*. Turn the effort upon the polestar, and you will understand their movement. (3.29)]

Thank you. *Dhruve tad gati jnyanam*. This is one more verse about the inner channels, all in code. Sometimes it's called diamond language, *dorje tsig*. It was meant to prevent people from reading these texts who hadn't got their seatbelt ready.

Dhruve means “the north star” — you can say “the polestar” — but more specifically, the giant axis that runs through the whole universe and from around which the stars turn, from our perspective. It comes from an ancient root *dhir*, which is also the root for the word *dharma*. This root has a basic meaning of “to hold firmly.” And in Tibetan we say “*rang gi ngowo dzinpa'i na chu*, which means “dharma is called dharma because it holds its own nature.” And “*Nya solme solwey na chu*,” which means “dharma holds you back from pain of the lower rebirths.” And that's why *dharma* is called *dhir*, *dharma*.

The ancient Indo-European root is *dher*. I really like this one too. In Latin “d-h” changes to “f” and becomes the word “firm,” also the word “farm,” because of the ground being firm. The word “firmament” and the word “throne,” meaning “a firm place for a person to sit:” “t-h-r” comes from “d-h-r.” But I really like another root that came from this, called *deru*, which means something very *dhir*, something very firm, and that became the word for “tree,” because to the ancients a tree was one of the strongest and firmest things in their world. That word became the word “true,” and so the word “truth” comes from the same root as *dharma*.

This is a code word for the axis running up and down our own physical body, the central channel. In Sanskrit there are about ten different words for it — *sushumna* is one. And this channel is the beautiful channel. It is in a state of constantly being choked off by the vines of the two other channels wrapping around it at the places called the *chakras*, and it chokes the movement of our own thoughts within the central channel. When we die, for a few seconds those channels release their hold on the central channel — we have an experience which is very close to the direction perception of emptiness — and during the direct perception of emptiness the central channel, for a brief period at the beginning, opens wide full.

Tad gati jnyanam — *gati* means “the going.” You know this word from the mantra in the Heart Sutra: *Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi soha*. It comes from a triple root: *ga*, *gam*, and *gach*. The ancient Indo-European word is *gwa*, and that's the root of the word “to come.” Its sister root is the word “to go.” Sometimes the “g” drops off, the “w” stays at the front and it becomes the word for “avenue,” “a place where you go.”

When Master Patanjali says, “You will understand how they move” or “how they go,” he means if you can train your meditation upon the central channel, understand its true nature, you will begin to grasp the movement of the drops of consciousness that he spoke about in the verse before — the stars.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

There's a lot more to say about how we open up this channel. It is one of the main goals of the higher teachings. It is one of the main goals of the yoga exercises. We're not allowed to speak that much about it openly, to large groups. You have to have a ticket to that show. It's eighteen courses [laughter]. I'm sure you'll start getting it ready, and it's just because you won't, probably, succeed if you don't have the right background and training.

Next verse please.

[Michael and Bonnie Moore: *Duhkha daurmanasya-angam ejayatva shvasa prashvasa vikshepa sahabhuvah*. The mind flies off, and with that come pain in the body; unhappy thoughts; shaking in the hands and other parts of your body; the breath falling out of rhythm as it passes in and out. (I.31)]

Thank you. In this verse, which comes from the first chapter — we're skipping back to the first chapter — Master Patanjali describes eloquently the connection between our physical body and our breath, and the inner channels. I think you can think of it as five levels — sometimes they're called *kosha* or “inner-sheaths;” sometimes it refers to the sheath of a sword, within sheaths, meaning layers within layers like an onion. You can think of five layers. We seek in the higher practices to address all five layers. The outer layer is the body and we address it through the physical exercises, the *asanas*. The next layer down, which the body rests upon, is the breath, those physical energies like food and rest and concentration which sustain our bodies. The next level down, the third level, is the inner winds which are running in the inner channels. These are physical subtle winds upon which our very thoughts ride, and those thoughts represent the fourth level. Below all of them, at the bottom level, the last layer of the onion, is the seeds in our mind, you can call them “world seeds.” They create our world in the way we spoke about earlier.

But in this verse, which you don't need a commentary for really, Master Patanjali is trying to point out the connection between our thoughts and our breath and the inner winds and the outer appearance of the body. If you get afraid, then those thoughts start to rush through the channels. They disturb the inner winds which are tuned to the breath, that disturbs the body. If you keep it up long enough you get an ulcer or a heart attack. And all of these are run by the inner seeds, which are planted by how we treat others. So how we treat others is at the root of everything.

To talk about the words, briefly — *vikshepa* is one of the key words here. *Vi* sort of means “jumbled up,” “turned around.” You find it in the word “wire” meaning “something that you can bend around,” and other English words. *Kshepa* comes from a root in Sanskrit, *kshp*, which means “to get agitated.” It comes from an ancient Indo-European root *kavep*.

Sh often changes to “w” and you get “k-w-e-p.” From this comes the word “to covet,” which means “a sort of thought which will disturb your mind.” The word “vapor” comes from the “v,” the “w” and the “p,” meaning “wildly moving smoke.” And the word “cupid” comes also from this root, meaning “a person who incites emotional agitation.” The *cup* comes from the same root. And he's talking about disturbances of our practice, of our meditation.

I think *daurmanasya* is another key word here. We had the *dus* already in *duhkha*, meaning “suffering,” “a bad wheel hole.” It becomes “dour.” *Manasya* comes from the root *man*,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

which has a basic meaning of “to think.” And *men* is the Indo-European root, which shows up in English in the word “mind,” “mental,” “maniac,” [laughs] “mania.” “Balletomane” is a person who is crazy about ballet, and words like that. “Mnemonic” comes from that.

I like one word especially, the “m-n,” it becomes *mmentva* and then the “n-t-v” transforms to “m-u-s-e,” “muse,” and to “music.” So the word “music” comes from the word “mind.”

I think that’s all the key words, is it? We’ve covered the others? Okay. But this verse is important because it is where Master Patanjali reveals the connection between our inner winds and the health of our bodies, and that’s why we can work with our bodies and change the winds, and also work with our thoughts and changes the winds from the inside. It’s shown in our reaction to strong emotions, when the breath starts to go quickly and the hands start to shake.

Next verse please.

[Michael and Rani Dunn: *Bahya-abhyantara stambha virttir desha kala sankhyabhih paridirsho dirgha sukshmah*. Keep a close watch on the breath; outside or inside, stopped or being exchanged. (II.50A)]

I think as you may know, Master Patanjali, in the second chapter, outlines a program of eight specific activities we can do to purify our minds and the channels and become a Angel who can help all beings. These eight parts are called *ashta-anga* which means “eight parts,” and then the word *ashtanga* is the combination of those, meaning “the eight part practice.” After introducing the physical exercises, which is the third of the practices of the eight limbs, then Master Patanjali introduces breathing exercises, or what we call in Sanskrit, *pranayama*. In Tibetan it’s called *lung jong* which means “the training of the inner winds and breath.” So in this verse he begins to introduce some of the methods of proper breathing.

The whole point is very simple. If the breath at level number two is linked to the inner winds at level number three within our channels, then if we could slow or calm the breath, then the inner winds would be forced to slow within the channels, and because the thoughts are linked to the inner winds, it would calm our thoughts. In an extreme case, you could use special breathing practices to actually influence your ignorance and your inability to perceive reality, so that breathing exercises, although they calm you down, are ultimately meant to address the very root of all suffering of mankind within a human being’s body.

The key word here is *stambha*. Naturally, breathing practice should address how you exhale, how you inhale, and then the breath can either be moving or stopped. *Stambha* means “stopped,” and *virttir* means “moving.” It can either be in motion or it can be frozen. *Stambha* means “frozen hard.” In Tibetan it’s *rengpa*; you have it in the Vajra Yogini praise: *Om mukje rengje mongje kun le nampar gyel*, and it means “to freeze in place” or “to stop something.”

The ancient Sanskrit root is *stambh*, and ancient Indo-European is *stembh*, and from that we get the word “tree-stump” and “a stamp” meaning something that you stamp down, and “stampede” and words like “staff” meaning a strong staff, meaning frozen, staying hard in place, propping up things.

Again, I can’t go into great detail, these are practices that require your seatbelt. The point is that by properly working with the breath, we can actually trigger things like compassion,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

kindness, and the direct perception of emptiness. When the winds flow fully in the central channel, the breath can even stop. This is obviously something relating to the body of light, which we will eventually have. It has no inner organs, no lungs, hearts, stomach. It doesn't require food or even breath.

Next verse please. We'll stop in about ten or fifteen minutes.

[Susan Stumpf: *Bahya-abhyantara stambha virttir desha kala sankhyabhih paridirshito dirgha sukshmah*. Observe too the place in the body, the duration and the count. (II.50)]

He's still talking about *pranayana*, using the breath to control the inner winds, and thus affect our very thoughts. He says we should watch where the breath goes within our bodies. *Desha* is a specific word for "area of the body" but it can also mean "country" or "outer area." The word *Bangladesh* means "the *desha* of the *Banglas*, meaning "the land of those people." The Sanskrit word is *diksh*. The old Indo-European root is *deik*. We find it in a lot of English words for pointing to an area, like "indicate," and the word "digit," as in "digital revolution," means "a finger" or what you use to point with. We have ten digits.

The very word "to teach" is the same root, the "k" becomes "c-h," the "i" becomes "e-a," the "d" becomes "t." It means to point the way to someone. Also the word "predicate" which is shortened into the word "preach." So all of these words come from the same root as *desha*.

And it means as you become more advanced in your breathing and other meditation practices, you will learn to direct both your physical breath and your inner winds to specific areas of your body, to enhance the flow of the thought winds, and eventually transform your very body. Even in the physical exercises of yoga there are times when we are breathing into different parts of our lungs, as a sort of a similar training, and you can be thinking about sending power of your breath to parts of your body where you have pain from aging or accidents.

He also speaks about *kala*, meaning how long you take your breathing, whether you take slow breaths or fast breaths. We spoke about that word already. And then he talks about *Samkhya*, which means "the counting," how do we count the breaths. I'll say one thing about counting which is very important for you to remember— in the higher teachings it's very auspicious and it has a deep affect on your whole being if you think of your breaths as being counted from the out-breath first, and then the second half of the breath is the in-breath. So normally when I say "count your breaths," you will breath in and then you'll breath out and you'll count that as one. But when we practice the higher teachings, and I'd like you to do *tong-len* this way, the out-breath counts as the first half, and the in-breath is the second half. And this has a special affects on our inner channels.

I thought the word *Samkhya* might be good to mention, because there's a strong connection between yoga practice in India and the ancient *Samkhya* philosophy, which grew up alongside of Buddhism. They were called *Samkhya*, and this is a whole different meaning of the word, because they counted twenty-five major forces or energy in the creation of the world. So they were called "the Numberists." So *Samkhya* means "number," but it also refers to the Numberists. *Sam* means "together." It comes into the Indo-European is *kom*. That comes into English as *com*, "together," as in "committee" or "computer," meaning "to come together." *Kya*

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Two – Geshe Michael Roach

is an ancient word that means either “to see” or “to tell” or “to be revealed.” It comes from a very strange root, *sekw*. And that comes into English in the word “to see” and “sight,” that’s why the word sight has a “g,” and it comes into the word “to say,” which is related to the word for “saga,” or a long tale, like today’s teaching.

Next verse.

[David Stumpf: *Bahya-abhyantara stambha virttir desha kala sankhyabhih paridirshito dirgha sukshmah*. Long and fine. (II.50C)]

Long and fine are two more descriptions of the qualities of the breath that we need to cultivate. If you start to be aware of your breath as an exhale followed by an inhale, rather than an inhale followed by an exhale, you will find that it’s easier to draw your breath out if you exhale it almost like a sigh from your throat, or even lower. This is a special way of breathing that has an effect on your inner channels. If you make your exhales as long as you can, even as you meditate or do yoga, the inhales will take care of themselves, and they’ll get slower and longer. As your inner winds and thoughts become more pure, your breathing becomes more and more fine, more and more subtle.

The word *sukshma* is a long story, but basically it comes from words related to water drops or pinpoints, meaning “something very subtle.” The thoughts within the channels and the inner winds, are often called *sukshma*, or *tramo* in Tibetan.



Okay, so the deal is you are the lineage holders; you must teach other people. This holy knowledge can save people’s lives. It was designed for that, which means you have to go home now, have a modest meal, and talk about the different verses with your friends. This is the most powerful way to review. Tomorrow before class, again review. Then all of the knowledge will stay with you. If you miss a single review, it probably won’t stay with you and you might lose an opportunity to save another person’s life.

Those of you again who have a special ceremony tonight, I strongly encourage you to make it very brief and get a good rest. It’s a custom to offer a thousand butter lamps on Je Tsongkapa’s birthday, today, and I think there’ll be some lamps offered. I’d like to specially thank the people who were involved with getting those lamps for us. It was a long task to bring them from India, special butter lamps, and there’s a group — I believe, I’m not sure — in California who took care of all of the trouble and expense of that, and I’d like to thank them on all of our behalf. Have a good evening and rest well please.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Morning: Day Three, November 30, 2002
John Stilwell

Normally when we start we do a simple breathing meditation where we count twenty-one cycles of the breath, but we can't just do a simple breathing meditation anymore, can we?

[laughter]

Let's meditate first and then pray. If you can, get comfortable. We'll do breathing meditation just to settle the mind and get centered and ready.

This time when we're doing our breathing meditation we need to be aware of first, the duration of our breath. Be aware that your exhalation and your inhalation are of equal duration and that when you exhale you squeeze out the last bit of air. Let the inhalation just come naturally. Be aware of where it is you're breathing from. Try to breathe from your diaphragm. And you want to be breathing, of course, through your nostrils. In counting, start with an exhalation, and then an inhalation completes a cycle.

Be aware of the quality of your breath. Is it coarse? Is it subtle? Is it fine? So being aware of these things now, let's do our breathing meditation. We'll do a round of twenty one breaths. Just be aware of those qualities of the breath, the sensation of the breath. And if your mind drifts and wanders, then go back to one and start over.

[silence]

Okay, we'll begin with a few prayers.

[prayer: short mandala and refuge]

This is my opportunity to say to everyone, great to see you again. I wonder if you can just give me an indication of who is new or relatively new to Buddhism? If you just put your hand up so I can have a sense of things. Well... too bad! No. *[laughs]*

[laughter]

I also want to say please feel free to jump in. And if there's something I'm saying or that we're talking about that doesn't make sense, particularly some terminology or something like that, please do just jump in. Put your hand up and jump in, say, "What are you talking about?"

And now I have to issue my caveat which is: I'm no great scholar, but I'm going to give you my opinion. So I encourage all of you to think about what I'm saying and not just believe it! *[laughs]* It may be true, maybe it's not, but I'm very happy, very privileged to share with you what I've been fortunate enough to hear, or know about.

I thought to start by talking a little bit about energy. Since we're starting to talk about energy, I wanted to try to qualify a little bit about the difference between crystal energy and, you know, other energy. Scientific energy, channel energy, that kind of stuff.

We all know that *The Times* is the ultimate authority on all matters, right?

[student: unclear]

Winston says it doesn't necessarily follow. *[laughs]* He's a logician. I may have troubles up here. Anyway, I cut this article out of *The Times*. It was in *The Times* a couple of weeks ago. Being scientific creatures we, of course, all consider *The Times* to be reputable. I do. They're pretty good. So I'll read you excerpts from the article entitled, "The Universe Seems So Simple, Until You Have To Explain It." It was in the science section.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

It says, “The ordinary matter in the universe, astronomers say, is engulfed in clouds of dark matter of unknown composition or origin, which in turn is engulfed in something called dark energy. Moreover, physicists say, there may be other dimensions to our own universe, curled up all about us. Something’s happening and we barely have a clue what it is.

“What is energy? It’s a simple question, but like any good question, ultimately unanswerable. It’s kept philosophers and scientists in a spiral of speculation, ranging from earth, air, fire and water, to atoms, to tiny, wriggling strings which is today’s favorite.

“According to the dictionary, energy is the ability to do work, to boil a pot of water, for example, or lift a space shuttle to orbit. But that ability is easier to perceive when it resides in a compressed spring, ready to propel a pin ball on its haphazard journey, or a speeding baseball, than when it lurks in empty space, as do many of the familiar and unfamiliar force fields of physics.

“Of course, mass itself is energy. According to modern physics the particles of matter, like electrons or protons, manifesting themselves as waves or lumps in invisible fields extending through space. That makes matter an energy, the Janus faces of a primordial Something. Call it the Ground of Being. Without energy, there would be no motion, no way of defining the passage of time, and no life.”

My point in reading it is to emphasize that the concept of energy is well accepted in our society, culture and in science. Just as it is in Buddhism. And scientists say, “Well, the best we can do right now is that you’re all made up of a bunch of wriggling strings.” This is kind of gross to me. But, in Buddhist terms we speak about energy as subtle stuff. The most subtle stuff. And for me that’s about as close enough an approximation or definition as we can really get.

As you all know, it’s really a question of what kind of concept, idea and construct we can put on something that we’re experiencing, or that’s happening, or that exists. So we call the really subtle stuff “energy,” “Subtle energy,” “coarse vs. subtle energy.” And in Buddhism when we talk about channels and chakras, we’re talking about the most subtle stuff, the most subtle energy. Geshe Michael pointed out that we are founded upon a subtle basis, a subtle energy, and that it begins when we’re conceived. Consciousness or awareness resides in the womb. Cells start to form. And the cells form around the energy that exists there, the very subtle energy, and it builds upon the very subtle energy. The very subtle energies form pathways, branches, which our body actually forms around. We are human beings because our bodies have formed around a particular energetic structure of two arms, two legs, et cetera. And the reason we have two arms and two legs is because the energetic channels went there, and the coarser physical energies formed around that.

On a subtle level, as Geshe Michael pointed out, we have three major branches, which are in the torso, running in front of the spine vertically. There’s a central and a left and right column, you could say, and you can use the analogy of wiring. Like in a house, you’ve got wires running through the house. That’s where the energy runs, it runs over the wires. The bigger the wire, the more energy it passes. The smaller the wire, the less energy it passes. The bigger the circuit breaker, the more capacity it has. The smaller the circuit breaker, the less can be put through.

Plumbing is another good analogy. Plumbing is an analogy I’m going to use today. It’s a little more useful because in plumbing things are moving through the pipes. You have fluid moving through the pipes. It’s a little easier to get a handle on. So you’ve got your pipes and

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

you have your central large one and then a smaller left and right ones, and many others which go out from your arms and legs, and... everywhere. Many, many, many of them.

And they're called channels in Buddhism and they contain 'stuff'. There's stuff flowing through them. For us humans they're mostly filled with crud, unfortunately. Think of your shower tub if you never cleaned it. Think about what your drain would look like if you let all your hair go down there and all the other stuff go down also. It would be quite cruddy and plugged up. This is, unfortunately, the fact of your inner body. Of your subtle inner body. Our pipes are full of either beneficial or good energy, or harmful negative, clogging energy -- crud.

Our goal is to get the good energies and the good stuff flowing and to get rid of the crud and crap that's plugging up the pipes and constricting it and preventing it from functioning properly. As Geshe Michael pointed out, your thoughts move with your energy; your thoughts ride on your energy. Your mind and your subtle energy are inextricably linked. They always move together. One doesn't move without the other moving.

So hopefully somebody will ask the question "Where does the crud in my pipes come from?"

And the answer is, *[laughs]*, somebody's pointing to their head. Yeah, it comes from you *[laughs]*. You, unfortunately. Just like when you take a shower, you're flushing your crud down the pipes. As you go about the process of living your life, you are filling your pipes with crud. And you fill your pipes with crud in the form of your thoughts, your words, and your deeds. The unfortunate fact of the matter is that you are killing yourself. No one else is doing it except you. You are filling up your pipes with crud and garbage to the point where they're choked and they can't function anymore, and then your coarser energetic body stops functioning too. And that's the end of the story for this body.

Because our channels are choked and filled with crap, we experience physical and mental suffering. All of the physical and mental suffering we experience is a result of our channels being mucked up. So our goal is to get our inner energies to move freely and when you do that, then you begin to have physical and mental well-being. And it increases and it stays. If you are able to fix your inner channels so that they're not choked off, so that they're not full of negative crud, then you no longer have pain, you no longer have aging, you no longer have death. You have an increased happiness, you see. So this is the basic idea.

You have some idea that when you feel good physically, you generally feel good mentally, right? This morning's yoga class is an excellent example. We did an hour and a half of wonderful practices. Thank you. You just did this beautiful hour and a half of working on your physical body. And as a result, on your channels, your more subtle channels. And you got up going, "Wow, that felt good, that was really nice. Oh yeah." So there's a real correlation between how you feel physically and how you feel emotionally and mentally. And there's a reason for that. The reason for that is they're all based on the same stuff, your channels.

So this is what Buddhism is all about. This is the purpose of Buddhism. Every level of Buddhism, every aspect of Buddhism, every teaching of Buddhism is designed to clean up your channels. And I have to tell you that we're all extremely fortunate because these teachings are not generally given until you've put in twenty or thirty years of effort to prove that you're worthy. And Geshe Michael has freely and openly presented the material to us.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

I can't help but be struck by his presentation yesterday of Je Tsongkapa's life. Je Tsongkapa spent many years teaching thousands of people, and then everybody started getting a bit unruly and out of hand and it got to be too much of a scene so he left and went into retreat. Does that sound familiar to anybody? *[laughs]*

[laughter]

And then, when he got out of retreat, he widely taught and spread tantra. Seems a little familiar, doesn't it? Because Geshe Michael is a Lama and has asked me to teach on this, I feel like it's okay to talk about these things, which are actually quite strictly regulated in Buddhism because of the safety belt issue. So anyway, every sutra teaching you'll ever hear is designed to fix your channels. Every tantric teaching you'll ever hear is designed to fix your channels. Meaning your subtle energetic being. This is really the basis, this is really the ground, this is really the foundation. All of Buddhism is based on it.

I want to pick up with the last verse that we did yesterday evening. I've been asked to teach five or six chapters from "How Yoga Works" and the corresponding root verses to give you a preview and a warm up of what Geshe Michael will cover later today. So I went through and picked out some of the points from the chapters in the book that I thought were relevant to review a little bit with you. The last verse was II.5, "long and fine." And as you recall, that was about the breath and your breathing practice. A goal was to have your breath be very subtle, very long and very fine. Geshe Michael talked about the fact that there are outer practices to fix your channels, your energetic pathways, your subtle energetic pathways, and there are inner practices to fix your subtle energetic pathways. And the breath is a tool to work on your channels, and to begin to go into deeper and deeper places in your subtle body.

What's another outer practice to work on your channels? Hatha yoga, yoga asanas, right? Why is that the case? As he pointed out last night, your physical form develops around your subtle body, your channels. And so, as a result of bending and stretching and aligning your physical form, you are bending and stretching and aligning the corresponding inner channels. And you're beginning to work on them from the outside. It's like if you have clogged up pipes, it's working on the pipes from the outside. You bang on the pipe a little bit, trying to shake the stuff loose. Shake it, rattle it. See if you can't get the crud that's inside to loosen up and flow out, to free the blockages. So the purpose of all outer methods of working on the channels -- most breathing practices, especially coarser breathing practices, as well as hatha yoga, yoga asanas -- is to work on your channels and your pipes with outer methods.

And all outer methods are aimed at releasing the good energies that are choked so that they can flow freely, and especially flow into the main central pipe in the middle of your torso, in front of your spine. That's the general idea.

Now the first verse for me to cover is...You probably have your book, it's in your book. The first verse is, "They do so through a balance of effort and relaxation, and through endless forms of balanced meditation."

The purpose of doing the poses is to bring about a well-being that stays. It means health, happiness: mental happiness, physical health, emotional happiness, and ultimately, meditative realizations. This is what this verse begins to address: yoga, yoga asanas, breathing, all of these things work on the pipes from the outside.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Now we've got to start to look at other means, and meditation is another means. When you're doing your yoga asanas and your breathing practices, it begins to clean up your channels, working on your pipes from the outside. If you're a plumber or if you've ever tried to unplug your drain, it's much more effective to pour a gallon of Drano down your plugged up pipe than it is to try to rattle it and bang on it, right? Doing physical practices, doing physical asanas, are very useful. And I find that they begin to get things moving a little bit. For me anyway they warm things up and get some movement and get some activity going.

Geshe Michael pointed out last night that the yoga asanas help boost you over the top and do the last ten percent of the work that you need to do to clean up your channels. Personally I also find that they're good for the first ten percent too. I don't know if any of you have tried, but if you've tried to sit down and meditate it can be very difficult to do. Either your body is not ready for it, and you're stiff and sore, and you have a hard time sitting, or your mind is very active and undisciplined and it doesn't want to be still. So I also personally find that doing yoga asanas and breathing particularly, puts the mind in a place to enable meditation and facilitate meditation so you can get the first ten percent of your progress going too.

The purpose of the asanas is to make us healthy and strong, to clean the channels in various ways. Then when we begin to sit down to meditate, and as the verse says, there are many ways. What does it say? "Endless forms of meditation." Of course, if you're going to meditate, what's the first step? Assuming the posture, right? What's the correct posture?

[student: unclear]

I heard "point posture." "Seven or eight point posture"? Eight, with the breath. There you go, we have scholars here.

[laughter]

There was some famous yogi that said "Just by sitting down and assuming my posture I accomplish more than most meditators in their meditation." Remember who that was? Marpa? I don't remember. Marpa...

I'll take your word for it. We'll call him Marpa. The point here being that if you sit in a proper meditation posture, you're aligning your channels and working on your channels. Working on your channels, properly or effectively, from the outside can be better than doing a crappy job of working on your channels from the inside. So what is the correct posture? Quickly... seven points...hmm?

[students: response]

Straight back. Head centered, shoulders level. Eyes slightly closed, pointing down. Palms placed appropriately. Lips touching, tongue resting gently, breathing from the nose. Legs: left leg up, if you're in half lotus, Anne says. Did we get them all? Elbows slightly away from the body. I think we're at more than eight, but...

[laughter]

The idea is that sitting properly in the eight point posture of Vairochana works on your channels from the outside and begins to have an effect on your channels. This is the first aspect of meditation. When you're in meditation, then you're doing the inner practices to work on your channels. Subtle breathing works on your channels from the inside. Coarse breathing works on your channels from the outside. When you begin to do subtle breathing – breathing which is very refined, very refined and soft, and almost like when you're sleeping – then you begin to work on

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

the channels from the inside with the breath. And this is an aspect of meditation also, working with your breath in meditation. Working on your channels from the inside is like trying to blow out the pipes. If you've got plugged up plumbing, one thing you can do is use some pressure to blow them out, in addition to Drano, which we'll come to later. Drano is later. So I have to ask you, "What produces the crud in your pipes?"

[student: response]

Your thoughts, and mental afflictions, of body, speech, and mind. Yeah. What does Abhidharma say? *Le le jigten natsok kye*. "Your world and everything in it is created by karma."

What does that mean in practical terms? In practical terms, your thoughts are pure, raw karma. In practical terms, it means your thoughts are the basis of everything. Everything that you say or do follows your thoughts. First you think, then you speak, then you act. So your thoughts are your raw karma which are also the basis of verbal and physical karma. You can collect karma in body, speech and mind. Each of us has a little generator which we carry with us, which is our mind. And we're like little factories. Unfortunately, our factories are mostly putting out pollution. Every thought you think all day long is generating energetic effects, and is producing energetic output, also called karma.

All of us are carrying these factories around with us. And unfortunately, our factories are spilling massive amounts of pollution into our rivers. Our goal and our job is to clean it up. We have crud in our pipes because we spend most of our day dumping sand in them. And gobs of goo, blackness, dirt and garbage. In the form of our thoughts, in the form of our speech and in the form of our actions.

Any practice that ignores the effect of your mind is not a true path and not a true practice. There are plenty of practices out there that talk about "energy, crystals," and what not. But, unless they're directly and specifically addressing the fact that your thoughts are the source of the content of your channels and your being -- your body and mind -- then it's an incomplete and inadequate path. The thing that you have to be most aware of and most concerned about is what your own personal generator is producing all day long. And your mind is your generator. The goal in Buddhism is to fix your generator and your factory so that it's putting out beautiful stuff, rather than garbage and crap. The environment already has enough problems. Fortunately/unfortunately, all of the crap you produce stays in you. All of the crap that you produce is contained within you and your body.

But then guess what? How about the world around you? It's a projection of you and your mind. All of the crap you're producing doesn't only stay in your body, it also manifests as the world around you. And we're going to talk more about that later.

This is why vows are so important in Buddhism, and in spiritual path and spiritual practice. If you look at the structure of vows in Buddhism you see that you start with basic vows, Pratimoksha vows, avoiding the ten non-virtues. Agreeing to restrain yourself and refrain from coarse negativity, coarse non-virtue. "I won't kill." Well guess what? If you kill someone, it's a very coarse, crude action. There's a very coarse, crude negativity associated with it. It's about as crude and coarse of a negative, violent thing that you can do, right?

Then the Pratimoksha vows go through all of the most basic negativities that we engage in. Killing, stealing... stealing is very coarse also. You go, "That's mine." Sexual misconduct also is very coarse and very crude in its content. And the same is true of all the ten non-virtues.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

And then after you commit yourself to an ethical way of life and following vows, you engage in trying to restrain yourself from dumping cyanide into your rivers and just having unbridled carbon emissions into your air. After you've fixed that stuff up, then you move onto the next level of vows, which are bodhisattva vows. Bodhisattva vows address a more refined level of negativity. Bodhisattva vows address how you treat others, not only in coarse negative ways, but in more subtle negative ways. Do you help someone when they ask for help? If you don't, it's a more subtle negativity, but a negativity nonetheless. Do you look out for others' well-being, or do you only think about yourself? Start to work on the fact that you've reduced your CO₂ emissions and see if you can cut them out, if you want a pure environment. So this is the idea of vows.

And then after you've become very good at your bodhisattva vows and you've cleaned out your mid-level negativities, then you've got to work on your much more subtle negativities, and on producing greater goodness. More and more good things, and more intense versions of them. And so there's the next level of vows: tantric vows, where you are focusing very precisely, very subtly and very specifically on doing good and restraining yourself from negativity. Especially your view. Tantra is all about your view; how you look at the world, how you think about and relate to the world.

This is the idea of the vows. The vows help us, guide us through cleaning up our garbage, from coarse to subtle, with the understanding of the idea that it's all about cleaning up your channels. Your channels are polluted by your own personal little factory of your mind. And the only way you'll ever get enlightened and the only way you're ever going to clean yourself and your world up is by cleaning up your mind and your channels.

Which brings us to our next verse which is, "Use kindness, it makes the mind bright and clear, as pure as water. It gives the same effect as releasing and then storing the wind of the breath." (Verses I.33 and I.34)

Here we start to address working on the channels from the inside, which is more powerful and more effective than working on the channels from the outside, and this is about how you think. What does your factory put out? Your thoughts are the basic raw materials produced by your factory. You know, your generator. So what are your thoughts throughout the day? Meditation is a way, an opportunity, to sit down and consciously, clearly and specifically direct your thoughts in a way that you want to, without distraction, without diversion and to just set time aside to say: "Okay, I'm going to sit down and beneficially focus on what I'm thinking about and what I'm producing and how I relate to the world, and how I relate to my life."

And here we get into *tong-len*. As the prior verse said: "There are endless forms of balanced meditation." And we're talking specifically now about *tong-len*. It's the practice that Geshe Michael said is going to be the main focus of the physical asanas and other mental practices. Why is that? Because we want to choose thoughts that are going to shoot down our central channel, to blast and blow out the negativity and crud that's residing there. We want to choose thoughts which are of the appropriate type, and nature to break out the blockages from our central channel. It's much more effective to work on your channels from the inside. It yields the same results as working on the channels from the outside, but with a lot less effort.

We want to work on the channels in a way that we are generating thoughts which are the most effective and powerful possible to clean up our crud and our blockages. Why is *tong-len* so

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

powerful? Why is *tong-len* the one for us to use now? “*Tong-len* ties the breath, which is the closest sister of the inner winds, with what is nearly the most potent good thought of all, and it sends those two things, combined, in direct attack upon the essence of the choke points that make us sick and unhappy.” (I copied that from the book.)

[laughter]

I’ll repeat it: “*Tong-len* ties the breath, the closest sister of the inner winds, with nearly the most potent good thought of all, sending them combined, in direct attack, upon the essence of the choke points that make us sick and unhappy.”

So what is “nearly the most potent good thought”? Compassion. We talked about it last night. Geshe Michael talked about it last night: wanting others and ourselves to be free from pain. And this is nearly the most powerful good thought. And it attacks what’s almost the most powerful negative thought that chokes your channels, which is selfishness, by then giving all of your goodness and good things to those that need them in meditation. Using your mind.

[student: unclear]

So *tong-len* generates nearly the most powerful good thought and uses the thought and breathing to attack what is almost the most powerful negativity in your channels.

[student : unclear]

Oh, I wondered if anyone would ask... *[laughs]* What’s number one?

[students : unclear]

You’re all in the ball park, you’re all on track. You’re all on target. The worst thought which blocks your channels and causes every single form of pain that exists, both physical and mental, is the root of selfishness. And it sees things as being the opposite of how they really are. It’s a way of thinking that turns everything around. The verse is: “We misunderstand our world. Things that are not themselves, seem to us as if they were.” (Verse 2.5d). Seeing things the opposite of how they are, seeing them as self-existent, is the way of thinking that turns things around. And this is the single worst negativity that your mind produces in your channels.

We’re going to talk about it a lot. So you have to ask, where does this tendency to see things as the opposite of how they really are come from?” Geshe Michael pointed out last night that you’re born with it. Your mind is a continuation of your prior mindstream and your prior mindstream is permeated by this way of seeing everything wrong -- both yourself, and the things outside of you. You’re born with it. And because you’re born with it, because from the very first moment of conception you have this corrupt wrong way of seeing and experiencing everything that exists, your body forms and your channels form accordingly. And you are born with, your body forms with, the choked and crud-filled channels and with a limited, suffering human body and mind. So Verse II.6 – “selfness.” Geshe Michael calls it “selfness.” “Selfness is where the strong impression, of someone seeing something and the something someone sees makes it seem as if each one were itself.” Let’s do it again: “Selfness is where the strong impression,” okay, so you’ve got a strong impression “of someone seeing something,” right? So you see something, “and the something someone sees makes it seem as if each one were itself.” You have the thing being perceived and the perceiver.

The basic idea is that someone thinks they really exist and the thing they’re seeing really exists. What it is referring to here is the fact that we misapprehend two broad categories of things: us and the world around us. As Geshe Michael pointed out last night, this is the single

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

worst thought that our mind produces; the absolute worst thought that our mind produces. The absolute basis for all negative karma is seeing ourselves and the things around us as self-existent. Seeing them opposite from the way they really are.

If you get really good at keeping your vows and cleaning up all of the negative crap produced by your generator, i.e. your mind, you still have to clean up the subtle crud that it's putting out. Which is thinking that you really exist the way you think you do, and thinking the things around you and outside you really exist the way you do, if you're a normal human being.

So we have to talk about reality, and how things really exist. There are two levels of reality. Verse I.2 says, "Yoga is learning to stop how the mind turns things around. What does it mean, "the mind turns things around"? Things seem the opposite of the way they really are. Yoga is learning to stop that. Yoga is learning to stop seeing things as self-existent. That's the purpose of yoga. The physical asanas are a partner for working on the goal by knocking on the pipes from the outside. And it helps to fix your energy and your thoughts on the inside. From inside the pipes. So the goal is to stop the thoughts that see things existing the opposite from the way they really are. Which is the ultimate source of all the pollution in your channels, all of your pain, all of your suffering, all of the crud and crap in the world.

To really do the last bit of cleaning of the factory, putting the final scrubbers on, to reduce your emissions so that you have pure product you're putting out, the best thoughts possible are: seeing the world the way it really exists, and seeing yourself the way you really exist. Ultimately, right? We have to talk about what that means, to see how things really exist ultimately.

There are two levels of reality. There are many synonyms for each. "Conventional reality," "apparent reality," "the world around us." This is the first level of reality, the first way of perceiving things. It's what a normal person sees and experiences through their senses in the normal course of life. We look around and we see a tent. We look around and we see bushes, heat. Everything that you perceive with your senses and mind is normal, apparent, conventional reality. Things don't ultimately exist the way you normally perceive them on the conventional, apparent level. The conventional reality that we perceive is like a veneer, really.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. That's ultimate reality. Ultimate reality is how things really exist and there are many synonyms for ultimate reality. What are some of the synonyms for ultimate reality?

[student: unclear]

"Emptiness" is one. Any others? "The Tao," someone said. "Totality," someone said. "Thusness" is a synonym. "Suchness" is a synonym, "is-ness" is a synonym. "Emptiness," "ultimate reality," "the Big Kahuna." *[laughter]*

We're representing an idea here, a concept, something like that: a lack of a concept. We'll talk about it. I personally like "the pure totality of existence." That's kind of what resonates with me. You can use whatever label works for you. The point is that you understand what it means. A good analogy for me to think of is water because we're talking about pipes and things flowing in the pipes. So let's go with the water thing. I think of it in terms of being in a vast current and floating around in this vast current. And you can see the things that are floating on the surface of the water. But then there's the current which is below the water and all of the things below the surface which you can't see.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Conventional reality is analogous to what you see on the surface and ultimate reality is analogous to what's under that surface, out of sight. It's the most important part. Just as we learn what's under the surface of the ocean and spend great efforts to do that, we need to learn what's beneath the veneer of conventional reality, apparent reality. So that poses the question: what's behind the veneer? What's really there?

[student: unclear]

Holy Ruth was saying that in the Yoga Sutras and in yoga there's this concept of seeking that which is unchanging, seeking that which doesn't change, and if you can find a thing which is unchanging, then that is truth and that's eternal and that's what equates to all those synonyms. In Buddhism, we have the notion that there are changing and unchanging things. And most things are changing. There are a number of things which are unchanging. For example space, as a frame of reference, as it holds anything, is unchanging. I can take this glass and put it in this space. The frame of reference didn't change. It's unchanging and always has been and always will be. So in Buddhism we define a number of unchanging things, and an unchanging thing in Buddhism is defined as something which is not affected by causes. Anything which has a cause is changing. Anything which does not have a cause is unchanging. An unchanging thing can't be caused.

The question was: could you define truth as unchanging? It's a matter of your terminology, really. You could say truth is unchanging. But then again when you say truth, how are you defining it? Is it a concept? For example, we in Buddhism consider emptiness to be a truth of a sort; we consider ultimate reality to be a truth of a sort. And we say that as long as this glass exists it has its ultimate reality. But when this glass goes out of existence – it gets pulverized, say – the glass no longer exists, and therefore it no longer has ultimate reality associated with it. So we have things which are a truth but which come into and go out of existence.

Where were we? What's behind the surface, that's where we were. What's really there? Nothing has any absolute identity, right? If you ask, "What's really there," you would say that nothing has an absolute identity. Well, what do we mean when we say it has no absolute identity? What I mean is that it's a function of perception. If you say, "Nothing has an absolute identity," you have to keep in mind that the word "identity" is tacked onto the end. Everything is a function of perception.

We believe in science, right? We're science lovers. Well, experimental scientists now tell us that it's not possible to conduct an observed experiment in an absolute way. The observer affects the outcome of the experiment. So experimental science, our society and culture are now even telling us that the perceiver affects the outcome, every time – documented, proven, by science. *[laughter]*

Buddhism has been saying it for a long time, and science will now say "That's cool, that's okay." So we believe science, right? And science tells us a lot about different things. Unfortunately, we're very selective about what we believe and what we remember that science tells us. For example, science has in many different ways shown and proven to us that the world is a bit wacky. Our perception is a bit wacky. It's not what it appears to be. For example, are you sitting still right now? I mean mostly. You're not. You're moving at a hundred and eighty four miles a second or an hour, or whatever it is.

Ven. Phil: [unclear]

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

“Relative to,” as Venerable Phil points out. Exactly. Everything is “relative to,” you see? And we in our normal everyday perception forget that aspect of it. We completely tune out the fact that everything is relative. Everything is relative to your perception and how you’re conceiving it. We don’t sit here thinking, “Yeah, I’m moving a hundred and eighty four thousand miles an hour, phew.” Are the clouds moving? Or are we moving?

[student: unclear]

The mind is moving. Oooh, somebody is on the ball back there. *[laughter]*

The mind fluctuated, the mind moved. Let’s stick with conventional appearances for the moment. Conventionally speaking we say the clouds are moving. I don’t know what’s true. How do you factor in a hundred and eighty four thousand miles an hour, with a cloud that’s going a little slower. I don’t know.

[student: unclear]

Or a little faster, depending on which way you look at it. So we tune into what’s convenient and what helps us feel like we really have a handle on it. That’s our gig, we go around saying, “I’ve got this figured out. I understand it. I know what’s going on. I’ve got a definite hard and fast, concrete understanding here. I have defined everything. I have nailed it down. I’ve got a handle on it. It all fits, it all works. I’ve got a working system.”

Well guess what? The working system is messed up and the working system we’ve got is not a true, valid working system. The system by which we live doesn’t work. What we think are causes, aren’t real causes. The evidence is all around us. Science tells us that we’re in flux, right? Depending on what year you took science class, you’re either an assembly of atomic dots, an assembly of atomic waves, or an assembly of wriggly strings which is ninety eight percent empty space. Well, it’s a little unsettling to sit here and go, “I don’t understand how I can be solid and ninety eight percent empty space.”

I mean I still don’t get it, even from high school science until now. But we just discount the things that science empirically documents for us that are incongruent with the way we see the world and that don’t support our worldview. And we say, “Well, that didn’t quite fit the picture, so never mind, I’ll just ignore it.” We see the world according to a very narrow perceptual ability, which is a function of a limited mind and a limited set of senses. No things really appear the way they are. Nothing exists only one way.

I would ask you: Is it a good thing to be locked up in prison, a physical prison, to be behind bars? No? So we have a “no;” how about “maybe”?

Exhibit one... From prison inmate #00A2630 at the Great Meadow Correctional Facility.

“Dear Friends: Until not long ago, I thought a prison to be a place with no benefit at all. Normally it appears to be a place of punishment, where one is not free to do what he wants and is not able to fulfill any of his worldly desires. After studying the first three ACI courses, I have perceived prison completely different. I see that by not being free to do what I want, I was stopped from creating more bad karma.

“By not having a lot of things to do, available time was given to me to think about what meaning this life can have. About renouncing the worldly desires. I did not have to put any effort for it, because the worldly life has renounced me. *[Laughter]* By understanding emptiness and karma intellectually, I can see now how one can be misguided and take the downfall if he’s attached to the worldly life of worldly pleasures.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

“In prison, one does not have to worry about a place to sleep, food or paying bills. It’s like a monastery for one that wants to practice Buddhism, or in a place of suffering for one that is attached to worldly pleasures. It would have been a place of punishment if I would not have come in contact with these teachings. I don’t love it, being in here, but seeing its benefits makes me not hate it either. By continuing to practice, I believe I will see things more clear and I would not mind being here or anywhere else.

“I meditate about two hours or more a day. I’ve memorized all the memorization assignments, The Prayer of Lama Devotion, The Thousand Angels of Heaven Bliss, all the verses of the Seven Ingredients, the verses of The Source of All My Good. I’m doing review meditation on the outline of the Lam Rim. I start with going for refuge, thinking of the wish. I go over the verses of the Seven Ingredients, offering the mandala, prayers of Lama devotion centered on Je Tsongkapa. This takes about thirty minutes. Then I do the review meditation on The Source of All My Good, thirty minutes more. I do this two times a day and some days, three times.

“In my spine, sometimes a pleasant feeling moves up to my neck and the back of my head. I like the feeling but sometimes it’s so good that it breaks concentration. *[laughter]* I believe this is happening because of the meditation, so I will continue to try to reach good concentration. Anything other than that is a waste, I believe. I thank you for all your help. My gratitude.” Et cetera.

[Applause]

It’s a very beautiful letter and a very sweet letter, and even prison is neither good nor bad. Being locked up behind bars is neither good nor bad from it’s own side. Someone who went in thinking prison was bad now has a better practice than most of us and is collecting much more virtue, probably, than most of us. So you can’t say that anything, even being locked in prison, is good or bad. It’s very much a matter of interpretation. And that recalls the verse that was read on the first day, Verse III.39b: “And they realize that the body is a prison.” We’re in no different a situation than he is. We’re in a different prison, and as was said, you’ve got to break out. You’ve got to get out of your prison, and he’s found a way out of his.

Unfortunately we’re not often able to find a way out of our prison. The prison of being human with this body and mind and all the attendant dissatisfactions and sufferings is harder to get out of. But it is possible and it is do-able. It’s not really a matter of saying, “Well, you can think of it one way, or you can try to think of it another way.” I really see the color red. I mean, for me, red is red. I can imagine that prison wouldn’t be so bad. But you can’t just imaginatively change the way you perceive all of things in the world. You perceive them the way you do. And every being has a different perception about any given object.

You can take any number of objects and scientifically demonstrate that they are not any one objective thing, right? Can red be green?

[Student: “Yeah, to a color-blind person.”]

To a color-blind person. Can one object be two things to two different people? Yes, science proves it. I mean, what more do you need? But if you need more, I’ve got a lot of examples! *[laughter]* I was sitting outside with my Odwalla juice, with its colored pink cap, and bees kept landing on the cap. And it wasn’t even open yet. I finally realized that they were attracted to the color, like humming birds, they’re attracted to the color. They associate color

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

with food. It's just a piece of plastic to me and to them it's food. It's not that they're pretending. It's how they validly perceive it according to their senses.

There are endless examples; think of a hammer-head shark. It's got an eye over here and an eye over here. How is it assembling the exact same information and surroundings that we see when we're snorkeling underwater? It sees a totally different thing. It's looking in two opposite directions and it's mind somehow assembles that into a picture of its reality.

Think about all the creatures and beings that exist that don't even relate to the world through their visual capacity. There are beings that see things in infrared, like ticks, for example. What is this world to them, only seeing infrared, if that's all they see? Or beings that relate to the world through radar, like bats. What is this environment for them, using radar? There are beings which are photosensitive, that live in the ocean, that don't have any of the same senses that we have, that don't have eyes, that don't have ears. There are people that don't have eyes, who don't have ears. There are people who can't feel heat and who can't feel cold. There's evidence all around us that things don't exist just one way.

But we think that the one way that we perceive things is the one and only correct way that they exist. We perceive something and we say "My perception, my one personal perception, is the only way it exists and it's the right way that it exists." Proof of it is everywhere in the scientific world and of course in Buddhist scriptures. This view is the source of every problem in the world. Every single problem that exists in the world and in your body is generated by this attitude that things only exist in one way, and it's the way I see them right now with my mind and my senses. It's very arrogant, really, because our mind and our senses are extremely limited in what they can perceive.

We create our reality according to how our mind processes the information we receive through our senses, as do all beings. We get stuff through our five senses and then our awareness, our mind, processes it into something.

I was sitting in retreat a little while ago and trying to meditate when I heard this buzzing sound and it's like bzzzzzzz, very furious buzzing. I go, "Uh-oh, I recognize that sound. That's the sound of a fly caught in a spider web." Spiders rule the insect world. They're everywhere! You can't get rid of the suckers. *[laughs]* So I'm sitting here in my meditation going, "Alright, there's a fly stuck in a web. Now obviously the spider's going to liquefy that sucker pretty quick, and if I help the fly then the spider's hungry." I'm sitting here with this conundrum going, "What do I do? Do I help the fly, keep the fly from being killed? Do I let the spider have some food, or prevent the spider from having some food?" I'm sitting here going, "Oh man, what am I supposed to do now? I can't help them both." And then I realize, "Oh yeah, that's wrong view. I'm supposed to be thinking that everyone, every living being is my holy teacher and meant to teach me something."

So I thought, "Okay, these are my holy teachers and I'll just get up and check it out and have a look and see what they're intending to teach me." I got up from my cushion and I'm looking around and I can't find a fly or a spider web. Finally I noticed on the outside of the window in a corner crack of the frame there was a mud-wasp building a nest. Its wings were vibrating against the window and he was very angry and it sounded just like a fly in a spider web. So I'm sitting there for five minutes going, "Oh, that spider, that fly, that spider web." *[laughs]* There wasn't even one there!

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

So now I ask you to take it a little bit deeper. Is it possible that there was a spider, spider web and a fly there? And that perhaps it shifted and turned into something else, is that a possibility? Yeah, coulda been.... You say, “No, come on, things don’t work that way.” Well, the issue for us is that everything is based on subtle energy, including us, and coarse energy, which is in flux. I like to think of it as being in flux. And stuff manifests, stuff arises, stuff goes out of existence, and all of that’s caused.

Everything has a cause in Buddhism. In Buddhism we say it’s extremely conceivable that something could arise or pass out of existence in an instant. That’s how normal life works and that’s how miracles work. So from a Buddhist perspective it’s just as conceivable, if you’re having correct view, that the spider and the fly dilemma just disappeared, you know, passed out existence and turned into something else. But we’ll get into it, we’ll come back to that.

Sheep are another great example. We’re in a car driving down the road in Spain and there’re sheep everywhere and you put your arm out to pet them and they’re fine. But if you open the door and step out of the car, they all run away. We talked to the locals and they say, “Yeah, they can’t recognize a person if they’re in a car.” Their mind cannot put together the information in a way to recognize that it’s a person even though they’re being petted. You see? The in-puts they’re getting aren’t translated into “dangerous human being” or “dangerous creature that you have to run away from”.

I was looking out the window when I was meditating and there was this big matte green thing. And it was beautiful and soft looking and a little sparkly. I recognized it as a big leaf, and I saw this little sparkly glittery thing in the middle of it and I said, “What’s that? That’s weird, that doesn’t belong there. How can a leaf have a little diamondy thing in the middle of it?” I looked closer trying to figure it out and finally I went, “Oh yeah, it rained last night. That’s a drop of water sparkling in the sun.” It’s another example of how your mind takes the information and tries to put it together.

You’re at home alone in your house, your apartment, and it’s dark and you hear noises, and there’s creaking. Something’s moving, you know, it’s like -- eeerrrrr -- and you are in bed going, “Is someone in the house? What’s that noise?” And your mind is searching and searching for data, for in-puts, for the content that it needs to assemble a conclusion. “It’s okay, it was just the water heater gurgling.” That’s how everything exists. Your mind puts data together into your perception and reality. Though sometimes you can’t put the inputs together in a “normal” way.

Someone was telling me that they were in retreat and they kept hearing noises on the other side of the door and it was dark and there was no one around. They turn on the lights and the noises didn’t go away and they said, “Hello, hello, who’s there?” The noises continued and, you know, they never could figure out what it was. Sometimes the information doesn’t make sense and you can’t assemble it into some kind of conclusion.

The same is true of emotions. The way emotions work is that you feel some kind of intensity. You have a feeling of intensity, something happens, and you have an experience of some kind: someone says something, you see something your attracted to, whatever it might be. All of a sudden you feel some kind of intensity. If you pay attention and watch, you can see that your mind scrolls through the list of options looking for something to identify it as. It starts as just a jolt and then your mind, very quickly, goes, “What was that? Was that anger? Was that

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

love? Was that excitement? Was that sorrow?” And if you pay attention, you can actually watch your mind scrolling through its list of options.

And then your mind goes, “That was anger, he yelled at me.” And you respond. It doesn’t have an objective absolute identity. Your mind is scrolling through its options, looking. And then it locks onto one, and that becomes your fixed reality. Everything, every value and every identity comes from us making it via our mind and then projecting it onto the stuff. I have to prove it to you, okay? What have we got here? A spool of thread, right? I’m going to pull it out and, hold on for a sec. Can you see it?

[Student: “No.”] [laughter]

You guys didn’t fall for it. You’re supposed to say, “Yeah.” Alright, we’ll do it again. [laughter]. Can you see it?

[Students: “Yeah.”]

What’s here?

[Students: “Thread.”]

Your mind took a bunch of parts and assembled them into this idea, right? If I had successfully been able to fake you guys out, I would have gone [*pretends to pull a thread off a spool*], and you would have said, “thread was between my hands.” And I would have said, “No, you just saw my hands move and your mind assembled the conclusion that thread was between them from a few pieces of information.” [laughter] Anyway, is there a thread here? Only to the extent that you have seen a few bits and pieces – you saw my hand move, you saw a black thing here, you heard a little sound and you put it all together to say, “That’s thread that you pulled off the spool.” Your mind just assembled all that. It’s not that it exists from its own side. It exists in dependence upon you taking in these few pieces of information and assembling them into what you just called it.

I like the example of a spider web. It’s much easier because you can never see a spider web in its entirety, can you? I walk outside and I see this brown thing suspended in mid-air and I go, “Wait a minute, what is that? Brown things can’t be suspended in mid-air.” The mind is trying to come up with some way to conceive it, to handle it, to pigeon-hole it. And I look at it and go, “Oh, look, there’s a little bit of shininess here, there’s a little shininess there but then there’s a gap... and then there’s some more shininess over here, and I don’t see where it goes... well that’s a spider web”. You can’t see the whole thing. You can never see the entirety of a gossamer thread of a spider web. I mean even if you look at the web, the woven web itself, all you can see are a few reflective bits. And what happens? Your mind assembles that into an identity. You take a few pieces of information -- you can’t completely perceive the thing -- and your mind puts an absolute identity onto it.

I had a perplexing thing happen the other day with a spider web. I was sitting in the living room, and there are windows all the way around on three sides. And I see a spider web – there’s this gossamer thread, and it’s moving, it’s hanging vertically like this. It starts moving, this way, past the windows. I’m looking at it, and it just kind of keeps on going, you know, like twenty feet. And I’m going, “That’s weird. Spider webs don’t usually do that.” And it keeps on going and here’s the mind at work trying to assemble identity, meaning, concept, and I go, “Okay, it’s hanging from a branch up above and the breeze is moving it so it’s moving according to the breeze.” I said, “All right, that works, now I understand.” But then it turned the corner,

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

and it started going this way, *[laughter]*, and I'm going, "Wait a minute, I don't understand." So that's how everything in the world is, right? This is how our entire reality is. Sometimes you can put it together, sometimes you can't. What is this thing right here? *[Points to a box covered with a sheet.]*

[Students: unclear]

We don't know? A stereo system, a box? Something black. All right. What's the meaning of it being there?

[Students: unclear]

Alright, what if I tell you ultimate reality is under the sheet. Is ultimate reality under the sheet? Pull the sheet up. *[laughs]*

[Students: unclear]

There is no ultimate reality? Uh Oh. *[laughter]* There is no emptiness? I didn't say that. *[laughs]* Okay. He said, "Not from it's own side." I said, "Who said anything about from it's own side?" *[laughs]* So ultimate reality is under the sheet, right?

I'm gonna show you the totality of existence, compliments of National Geographic. What did we say? We said ultimate reality is synonymous with emptiness, which I like to call the totality of existence, the pure totality of existence.

So compliments of National Geographic, the totality of existence is on this piece of paper. What do we have? National Geographic has endeavored to take everything that there is and document it. *[laughter]* It's a noble undertaking, right? What they've done is said "The size of the universe... so vast is space that just to find our solar system we have to make five leaps of scale." bla bla bla... "some hundred and fifty million light years across our super-cluster is a great aggregation of clusters and galaxies," bla bla bla. What they've done is say "Here's everything." Now we're going to start to dissect that, we're going to start to put that together. We're going to get a handle on everything there is.

First we've got our "super-cluster". They're talking about it being seventy-five million light years across. First we go from looking at the big picture of our super-cluster down to looking at a very small part of it called the "local group", which is one little speck in our super-cluster. (Each step down that we take involves a leap of great magnitude in distance and scale.) And the "local group" of galaxies is two million light years across. And then if you find just this little dot out of that whole "local group", then you get our "galactic realm", of which the Milky Way is one galaxy. And there are many, many other galaxies in our "galactic realm". And if you take the Milky Way, it's that little, little dot in our "galactic realm". And if you find this little spot in the Milky Way, you come up with our "stellar neighborhood". And then if you find this little, little dot in our "stellar neighborhood", you come up with our "solar system." And when you look at our solar system, then you've got Earth and Pluto and all those planets. (I may not have read the star charts completely correctly, but you get the idea.) And when we look at Earth, you've got the land and the water. And when you look at beings, you've got humans, animals, insects, fish, and so on. And then you look at humans and you've got men and women. And then you look at women and you've got old women and young women and it goes on and on... and you've got cars and then roads and the whole shebang, right. This is everything there is.

So what did we just do?

[student: not a clue. Laughter]

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Well, I'm not meant to be an astronomer, it's obvious.

What we did is make categories to define and separate things from the whole. This is how we exist, this is how we perceive. We take the whole and we fragment it, we break it up and identify different bits, categories, parts, concepts. We fragment the whole, the totality of existence, for the sake of being able to get a handle on it, to be able to think about it, to be able to relate to it. I mean, if we didn't do this how are we going to relate to our world and our place in the world? It's useful but, unfortunately, we fragment totality into endless countless bits, ideas, definitions, names and divisions. And if we didn't have the projection of the whole, divided up, then we wouldn't have this reality, would we? If we weren't taking the whole and going, "That's a planet, that's water, that's Earth, you're human, you're an animal, you're male and you're female," ad nauseum, we wouldn't have this reality, would we? No. This reality is dependent upon our conceiving of it and labeling it and naming it like this. That's what makes this reality this reality. That's how it works. What your mind projects is what you are, and what your realm is, and what your environment is. Guess what determines the projections: our past karma. Our past karma determines how we divide the totality of existence into these categories, the things, the experiences, the concepts, and how we relate to it all. So this is the study of *chi jedrak* in Buddhism: logic.

[student: unclear]

What he's saying is, "Okay, we took everything, we categorized it. Obviously, anything we didn't categorize doesn't exist for us. It's just not part of our picture.

What is *chi*? *Chi* means "quality," *jedrak* is "characteristic of." What is this idea of quality? It's stuff, categories, ideas. We sit there and go, "Let's think of some groups, let's think of some ideas, let's think of some categories." We don't think that consciously but that is, de facto, what our subtle mind does. This is, de facto, how we perceive and how we operate. We go, "mountains, ground, earth, water, planets, stars." These are the *chis*. Cheese is another category. [laughter] We make all these categories: galaxies, solar systems, light years, stars, planets. These are all mental constructs, concepts, ideas. And then guess what we do? *jedrak*. We say, "ah, what fits in what?" "What's characteristic of 'star'? What makes something a star? Well, let's see, we've got a brown one, a brown dwarf, a red dwarf." Then our mind says, "Here's the general category, star, and here's all the stuff that goes with it, and that makes it up, and fits with that idea/category/concept." So this is the study of *chi jedrak*. And this is extremely important to see emptiness and to understand emptiness. There are two important types of *chi*'s.

The *chi* part, the making of the categories is clear, right? The making of ideas, categories, constructs, and concepts is the *chi* part. There are different ways you do this. There are two main ways you create these categories. One we just went over – breaking the whole down -- and this is, in fact, the harder one and that's why I did it first. We take the totality of existence and we break it down. And we relate to it all according to how we've broken down the totality of existence, and that's our world. That's called *rik chi*. And this is the one people have a hard time understanding, and thus we're very grateful to *National Geographic*. [laughs] This is the most important one for seeing emptiness, for having a direct perception of ultimate reality. If you can understand that there is a totality of existence which we have fragmented into the

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

concepts we call our conventional reality, and we live and relate to these constructs as our reality/world, then you basically understand it.

This is how we mentally image things – this is the study of mental imaging in logic. We sit there and we go... not logically, not consciously, not with primary awareness, but on a subtle mental level... we say “this divides into this, this doesn’t go with this, this does go with this, this is part of that, that’s not part of that, this is separate from this, I’m a human, I’m separate from the water.” This is *rik chi*. Your mind is constantly saying “That’s separate from that, that’s separate from that, that’s part of that, that’s not part of that.”

This kind of ties in with Master Shantideva a little, doesn’t it, when he states that the notion of you as an independent separate human being who doesn’t have anything to do with anyone else is wrong. Why do you think that you are not part of the person behind you? Why do you think they’re separate from you? Because you categorized it that way. Because you made that mental distinction. Because that’s how you set up your world according to this process. Your mind conceptually and sensorally separates things, and you validly experience your reality as such. If you understand that and meditate on this very profound and powerful concept, it can lead to a direct perception of emptiness.

Now the other way we do mental imaging is called *tsokchi*. What did we do last night? *Tsok*. What’s *tsok*? Collection of parts, right? And *chi* are the qualities and like-minded stuff that we lump together, you could say. This is an easy way to understand how we image things. You add up the parts. This is a bench because it has legs and a top and it’s made out of wood. This is an easel because it has pages of paper and legs to hold it up and a clip at the top and you write on it. Your mind looks for clues.

It’s what I was describing before when I was sitting there listening to the fly. I hear sounds. My mind says, “Furious wing buzzing – that happens when there’s a fly in the spider web.” I take all of the individual clues and parts and pieces and I assemble them into a conclusion: “There’s a fly trapped in the spider web.” That’s a valid perception for me. It didn’t match reality, did it? Guess what? Our conventional valid perception of all this doesn’t match ultimate reality.

We’re taking all these parts and assembling them in our mind into ideas and concepts and constructs, and we’re living our life based on that. What we do is take in the information and decide “That’s an easel.” And it is, and it functions as such for us. It’s a valid perception. It’s our reality. It’s our world, it works. But guess what? It’s only the surface, it’s only the veneer that we’re seeing. We’re not seeing the ultimate reality, we’re not seeing what’s really there. We’re only seeing the conceptual images that we’ve assembled via our senses and our mind.

And we live our entire life based upon that. We live our entire life based upon the fact that we assemble information into our world. We take the data in through our senses and our mind assembles the information into our reality. We go, “That’s a fly trapped in a web.” And it functions and it’s our world and it’s our reality.

And who cares, right? I was in the mood for props this time. So who cares. Who cares? Well...do you want to see this? [*puts on an alien faced mask*]. Or do you want to see this? [*puts on an ugly hag mask*]. Or this? [*puts on an angel mask*]. The question is, what’s really there? There is stuff there, a blank screen, for all intents and purposes, which you project meaning and concept and identity onto. And you can project it as the alien, or the ugly hag, or a beautiful

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Angel. It's not coming from the stuff. The subtle energy that's there, the stuff that's there is not anything from its own side. It's not anything until you make it into that, for you. Either through *rikchi* or *tsokchi*, through mentally imagining it one way or the other.

They are two totally different ways of doing mental imaging, and you use both, and both work. If you do *tsokchi* you're saying, "It's got two legs, it's got long hair, it's got two eyes, a mouth and ears, so it's a human." As opposed to, "It's got four legs, it's got fur all over it's body, it's making this mooing sound, so it's a cow." That's *tsokchi*: you look at all the different parts and you add them up into a conclusion: that's a cow, that's a human.

Rikchi is where you take the totality of existence and fragment it into all the conceptual parts that you call your world. It's much more profound and much deeper, and is what you have to meditate upon and investigate for your direct perception of emptiness. If you can delve into this and really understand this, it will significantly further your direct perception of emptiness.

[student: unclear]

That's taking the totality of existence, and investigating how we break it up into categories and concepts, and subdivide everything. Then we walk around saying "What is this thing; what category is that part of?" Mask. This is one mask, this is a mask, this is this mask. It goes into the *chi* of mask. Where did "mask" come from? Where did that concept of "mask" come from?

[student: unclear]

You could say that. It's a mental construct, right? It is your mind saying, "There is this category called 'mask'." If you really wanted to get down to it you could take the example of a candle wick. You could say, "What makes a candle wick a wick?" We've got this idea that there's "wick". Not a wick. "Wick", the idea "wick". How do we take any given candle wick and say, "That's a wick"? How does our mind know to do that? You've never seen that particular object before and yet you take it and put it in that category. You say, "This piece of string..." See, we've got this idea of string, which is another category, right? What's the difference between string and wick? How it's used, right. Is it in wax? What if it's big? Is it still a wick, or then is it a string? No, if it's big, we call it a rope. So this is what our mind does endlessly, you see? It separates and categorizes everything. And this is how we function in the world. We make the categories "Wick, string, rope" and we walk around putting things into those categories. We make our world that way.

So I'm looking at all the parts of this mask, adding them up into a mask. This mask, one mask. But you additionally have the idea of the category: mask. And how is it that you came up with that category and decided what goes in it? That study and meditation is extremely important for a direct perception of ultimate reality.

[student: unclear question]

That's *jedrak*. It's not characteristic, it's characteristic *of*. The *of* is very important. Why is this object characteristic of the mask category? Because you put it there. You found some way to put it in that category, however you defined it. You can define it as something that goes over your face, etc., etc., but the point is that you made the category and you decided that this object was characteristic of that category. And it goes into that category for you. So that's the general idea. Mind you, I have to give you my disclaimer: I'm not a logician, but that's the general idea as I understand it, and I probably got some things wrong, but hopefully it helps.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

[student: unclear question]

Are you doing both at the same time? You have both going on but your mind can only do one thing at any given moment. In one case your mind has taken the totality of existence and massively fragmented it into all these categories: mask, people, cow, it's endless. And then you go around saying, "That's got four legs. That's a cow." So you have both at work. They work together. But in terms of seeing emptiness, the study of *rikchi*: fragmenting the whole, subdividing the whole, categorizing the whole into all of its component bits, is the important one.

[student: unclear question]

So the question is: why isn't it the case that there is one right answer and everybody else is wrong? Well, I ask you, if I'm color-blind and I perceive this as blue, is that correct for me?

[student: unclear]

The issue is who has the absolute baseline standard. Because if you say there are six billion people on the planet, each of whom has a unique perception, how do you pick the absolute baseline standard? And not only that, if you start to examine what's really there, then you run into problems trying to find the absolute baseline standard. I think this is a good time for a break.

[Silence: break]

We are running out of time and we still have things to cover so we gotta rock and roll. The question was, why isn't there one absolute right answer? And the answer to that question is if you take any object *[shows spool of thread]*... For me, this is something you sew cloth with, right? For a cat, this is a toy. Which is correct? Is every cat in the universe totally wrong? Are humans always right and animals always wrong? Or animals always right and humans always wrong?

[student: unclear]

She said just because we're not capable of knowing, how does that prove that there isn't an absolute definite answer? We accept the idea that different beings perceive things different ways, right? Okay then, even if you just take the way we perceive things, this spool of thread, for example, is based upon assembling its parts into an identity. But guess what? You can't even see this whole spool of thread. You're taking the front, the top, the back, the colors, the cylindricalness, and assembling all that in your mind, into the idea of a spool of thread. To get to the absolute final bottom line would mean that you have to find some ultimate particle, or ultimate piece.

If you take this spool which is comprised of parts, and and you break it up into further parts, that is, you take the top, the bottom, the middle, colors, each of those can be subdivided. And then you take the top of the top, the bottom of the top, the sides of the top, the inside, and you can do that, ad infinitum. You can never find the smallest particle. Every single thing, the smallest particle that's found, will always have either a left side and a right side, or an inside and an outside, or a top and a bottom. So there is no ending to how far you can go, in terms of breaking things down to look for the bottom line. And Buddhism says it's infinite, you can break it down forever. You can always go smaller. And that's proof that things don't have an ultimate nature, an ultimate way of existing, a fundamental base-line particle. Buddhism says the fact that things are like that is proof that you're just taking all these little parts and assembling them into stuff. And there is no absolute one way reality. It's totally dependent upon the perceiver.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

Totally dependent upon who's taking in the data through their senses and how they're assembling them with their mind. And that's how everything exists. It exists for each individual uniquely to them.

Science is telling us that we're a flux of energy, right? So why does the subtle energy flux in this way? Why do we form in this way? Why does the world around us form in this way? Why do things arise the way they do? How is it the case that I'm taking in all this information and interpreting it as a light in the tent and a human body and a tent full of lovely people and squeaky poles and everything else that is going on? How is it that my mind is assembling that? Why does that happen and how does that happen? Is it the same for everyone? No, you just said it's different for everyone, right? The subtle wiring of your mind is the thing that causes you to assemble your reality the way that it does. The subtle wiring of your mind is the thing that determines how you perceive stuff that comes in through your senses. You take in stuff through your senses and your mind processes it and comes up with the concept: light, floor, human, planet, stars. We can all accept that.

But why does my mind interpret it as pleasant or unpleasant, human or angelic; as being made of solid matter as opposed to the ninety eight percent empty space? Science keeps telling me I'm ninety eight percent empty space, so why don't I see a light body here? It's a function of your mind and how your mind works and the way in which your subtle mind processes the data it takes in through its senses. How did you get this mind and this wiring? That's the fundamental question. It's your karma, it's your past lives.

The way it works is that you have a perception (and you have perceptions continually and endlessly all through your existence). The residual energy at the end of that perception is a karmic seed and you carry it with you. And it causes your subtle mind to form and configure accordingly. For example, if you yell at someone, the latent energy at the end of yelling stays with you as a karmic seed in your subtle mind.

As a result, it causes your subtle mind to function in a particular way. If you happen to do a lot of yelling, those subtle latent energies will cause your mind, your subtle mind, to turn into a mind which perceives a lot of anger, and being yelled at. So how do you collect karma? How does it work? You have a perception of an event. Somebody's walking down the street and you go, "Oooh, fashion victim!" *[laughter]* "Her shoes don't match." "Wow, she really did not get it; it was a daring attempt but she blew it, you know, she's a loser." Or, you're walking down the street and you go, "Oooh, he's really fat." You know, "Wow, he's ugly, I look better than that." You know, "Bad hair day," right? We do this all day long walking around, everywhere we go. We say, "Oh, they didn't do that. How stupid, what an idiot. I can't believe they couldn't even handle that."

We have these endless mental judgments about people, and guess what? Thoughts are raw karma. With every single thought you have and every single word you speak, you're collecting karma. You have a perception and you react as a result. As a result of reacting, you collect karma. You see an ugly person, someone who appears ugly to you walking down the street and you say, "They are so ugly, man, I'm so much prettier than them." You just collected a negative karma by judging a person and thinking badly of them. Because of that reaction you collected the karma. Guess what? Those karmic seeds stay with you and cause your mind to process its

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

sensory inputs as seeing yourself as ugly in the future. The karma you collected will cause a perception which you're going to react to, and then you're going to collect some more karma.

What is this going on here? This is the cycle of samsara, this is the cycle of suffering life. This is what the circle of suffering life is. We have perceptions all day long, endlessly, sixty four perceptions an instant. We react to them and collect karma. It's endless. This is the generator of your mind that I talked about earlier. As long as your mind is putting out crap, you will be storing crap in your mind and you will be storing crappy energy in your mind. It will be causing your mind to function crappily, and you will see crappy things in the future. Just to put it in technical terms. *[laughter]* This is what Buddhism is about, and you have to understand this and you have to use this to get to paradise. If you want to get to paradise, if you want to clean up your channels, this is it.

For every perception you have you're going to react in some way: positive, negative, neutral. One or the other. Your task is to train yourself to respond in some kind of virtuous way twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, for the rest of your life. If you don't train yourself to do that you will never get enlightened. That's how every Buddha that ever existed got to be a Buddha. They cleaned up their channels by stopping negative thoughts, negative speech and negative deeds. And it's great to do hatha yoga and it's great to do breathing exercises, but as long as your factory is dumping sludge into your channels it's going to have very minimal impact. The most important thing is the work you do on your channels from the inside, from your thoughts, and from your breathing and your yoga exercises.

If you want to get enlightened, you must collect virtue twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, period, or your channels will never be pure, never be cleaned and you will never achieve a body of light, you'll never get enlightened. A body of light does not include clumps of crap in your channels. You've got to clean it first. If you want a pure world and you want to have paradise, what do you need to do? If you want a pure world, you need a mind that projects your pure world. How do you get a mind that projects a pure world, and how do you get a body that's pure? The only real way to do it is to treat everyone as holy all the time.

Sutra methods which say to see skeletons and such are very weak relative to tantric methods. I will give you the essential secret of tantra, okay? The absolute most important point of tantra, all right? You must see everyone and everything as holy all the time. If you don't do that you cannot succeed in your tantric practice. You cannot succeed in what Geshe Michael is teaching. Why? Because your left and right channels are filled with the negative energy produced when you think of things as ordinary. And the only way to stop putting negative energy into your left and right channels is to stop seeing everything, yourself and everything around you as ordinary. It's empty.

You are seeing a crappy veneer that you are projecting. Stop relating to your crappy projection and the crappy veneer you're overlaying on everything. Ultimate reality, emptiness, is not about crappiness. The crappiness comes from us and our projections and we're spreading it on top of everything. If you take that away, you can have pure holy projections. You can experience emptiness, ultimate reality. The goal is to project pure, holy, blissful concepts and divisions of existence. Same process, same idea.

“Oh, Angels. Oh, bliss, perfection.”

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

We can't even conceive of a lot of the things that we aspire to achieve. They're not even within the realm of our concepts. So we have to really change it. We think that this realm and what it offers is as good as it gets and is all that is available. This is not true. Patently untrue. There are things that we haven't even conceived of. The first time I heard someone say that in paradise the ground moves under your feet and with every step you take the ground conforms to your foot so that there's a pleasurable feeling when you walk, I said, "Wow, that's a cool idea. Who'd ever thought of that." So we're not even close.

The reality is that whatever we project as our world, is our world. Whatever we project as us is what we are. You can't solve any of the real problems of the world by conventional means. Homelessness, fighting, anger, you name it. They're endless, right? As long as you have a mind that projects crap, you will see crap, in one form or another. If you address it conventionally – which you must – if you solve it in one place, it will pop up in another place, until you clean up your mind and your projections.

The only real solution is to stop projecting crap in your reality. Part of the process of stopping the crappy projections is being virtuous to everyone, and you must do it. But don't think that feeding someone is going to end hunger in the world. It's not, not conventionally. Giving is going to eliminate your crappy projections of hunger. By changing your mind, you are creating a mind that projects a pure world and a pure body. So now I propose this to you. Think about this. I'm projecting everything in this room; everything in this room is my projection. I am projecting a room full of normal human beings each with their attendant limitations and issues. This person is a little sleepy, this person is a little sick, etcetera. My ankle hurts. So these are all my projections. Everything that exists in this room comes from my projection, for me.

And the same for you. Each of our realities is unique to us. So I propose this to you. It's possible that a person in this room, from their side, is projecting complete purity. A person can be projecting one of two things, crap or purity. There's a spectrum, but let's take the two ends. It's possible that a person can be projecting paradise, enlightenment, perfect purity. Or they can project themselves as something less than that, some limited being of some kind. Those are really the two options. It's fifty/fifty odds that one or the other is true, isn't it? The thing that we forget is that every single person you're projecting as suffering and human is coming from you, it's your projection, it's not coming from them. From their side, there's a fifty/fifty chance that they're perceiving themselves as a holy Angel.

So I say this to you. Given fifty/fifty odds that everyone around you is seeing themselves as a holy Angel, I'll take the belief in the projection that they're an Angel. It's even odds, right? If it's fifty/fifty odds, why pick the view that everyone's a holy Angel, an enlightened being as opposed to a limited suffering being? You're gonna either really believe in your heart that everyone is a limited suffering human being, to one degree or another, or you're gonna really believe in your heart that everyone is a holy enlightened Angel. Why pick the holy Angel? It's fifty/fifty odds that choice is correct. You get a bunch of cool friends that way.
[laughs]

That's right, that's exactly right. Because, by really believing that everyone around you is a holy Angel -- based on logic, based on understanding, based upon reasoning -- by really believing that and treating them like that, you are collecting the most powerful karma possible to

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

get enlightened yourself. And it's just as likely true as the view that everyone is ordinary. The only way to get enlightened yourself is to see everyone around you as a completely pure holy being. Because if you don't, you will never collect the good karma and you will never stop collecting negative karma.

If an Angel appeared before you, it's a very slim chance that you would do some shitty thing to them, right? *[laughter]* If we really believe that we are surrounded by holy beings, we're not going to do all the shit you normally do, are we? You're not going to render all the judgments you normally do. You're not going to mistreat people and collect all the negativity you normally collect, right? That is why this is the essence of tantra, this is the secret of tantra. If you don't have this, nothing else will work because it's all about how you think; it's about the kind of energy you generate with your mind to put in your channels. And if your channels are blocked and constricted and full of crud, you will have a suffering limited human body. So this is the bottom line.

[student: unclear]

She was saying that, at this point, it's all very pretend. And it's true. This is how everything starts. Everything starts as an intellectual inkling. Somebody talks to you about it, you hear it, and you go, "Let me check that out, let me think about it, let me evaluate it." Then you believe it or you don't; you buy it or you don't. And then you start to make efforts and at first your efforts are quite artificial, it's quite difficult. You forget most of the time. Maybe once a day you remember. That's what spiritual practice is. That's what a spiritual path is. A spiritual path is remembering these things, studying these things, remembering these things and applying these things, repeatedly, so that they start to feel natural and they start to feel normal and they start to feel right. And then you start to really believe it. And meditation is an essential element of this. Because if you're just walking around going, "Yeah, that's a nice idea, la da-da, yeah, that's a good idea," it's never going to be deep enough or powerful enough. Which brings us to our last verse. There's always a holy being in the room that brings up the next point to move the discussion on.

Verse II.9:

“Grasping is a thought
That comes on, all of its own,
Even for those who understand,
And then grows even stronger.”

This relates to your question. Even if you understand this stuff, when somebody gets in your face and pushes your buttons, what happens? You say, "Get out of the way, shithead." I'm sorry for cursing so much. You cut people off on the road, or you take the parking space because it's closer. Whatever it is you're doing, you do. And then later you go, "Oops"... maybe... Right? *[laughs]* This is what the sutra is addressing. The sutra is saying, "Look, it's great to understand this but even for those who understand, grasping is a thought that comes on all of its own and grows ever stronger." If you have an intellectual understanding of this, it's not enough. It's a great beginning, and be happy that you have that as a beginning. But it is

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

definitely not enough. You have to replace your existing reflexes and habits with new reflexes and habits. Your new reflexes and habits must be such that your impulsive reaction is, “Oh, thanks. Can I help you in some way?” No matter what happens. That’s your job.

Your job as a spiritual practitioner is to get to the point where your natural way of being and your impulsive character is such that, no matter what happens, you reply by helping them. Lama Zopa Rinpoche is a great example. Somebody could be cursing him out and he’d be going, “Oh thank you, thank you, thank you dear, thank you very much.” It’s exactly this. He has perfected clearly, in himself, the training so that his every impulse is to be kind and loving and virtuous towards everyone around him, and this is our task and this is our goal.

A couple of last things I want to say. You have to realize this as a first hand, direct experience. If this stays as an intellectual understanding it’ll never be strong enough to overpower your habitual negative way of being. The only way to overpower your negative habitual way of being is through meditation by gaining deep realizations of ultimate reality, how things really exist. That gives you the power to change your habituation so that you can reflexively become a being who does virtue all the time, endlessly. If you don’t have a direct perception of ultimate reality, emptiness, you’ll almost certainly never be able to change your habituation.

I want to end on the note of saying that whatever goodness you see, obviously, you created. The fact that we’re here and we see this is amazing and we created it. We collected the causes and the karma. Any goodness you have in your life, be very happy about it. It’s extremely important, as you caused it. If you see Geshe Michael as holy, it’s coming from you. Be very happy that you created it and that you have it in your life. It’s not coming from him, it’s not coming from the robes, it’s not coming from anything other than you. Use it as a reminder that you have to treat everyone else as holy. You should not be treating Geshe Michael any different than you treat the person next to you. Period. Forever. Not to say treat him less, all right? *[laughter]*

As he said, it used to be the case in Buddhism that one in ten thousand monks, after twenty years of study would be allowed into the tantric college. And after some more extensive years of study at the tantric college, a few of the one in ten thousand would be brought aside and told about these things. And you’ve heard them, clearly and directly. So be very happy, it’s very powerful good karma to be very happy. It’s in the bodhisattva vows, and it’s the essence of tantra that the holiest thing you can do is treat everyone around you as a perfect pure being, right now. So I’d like to do a little meditation on that to end. So beginning with an exhalation, watch your breath.

[silence]

Clear your mind of the normal way of seeing things. Just wipe clean your normal concepts and projections of ordinary people in an ordinary world. And now think of a person next to you, don’t think of them as an ordinary human, don’t see their outer form. Think of what lies under that, behind that, that you can’t see. Their ultimate reality and your pure projections. Generate a feeling in yourself that the person is actually an enlightened being, a tantric Angel, and you can’t see it with your eyes. Pick a specific person sitting next to you. Let go of the veneer, don’t look at the veneer. Feel strongly you can picture what’s behind this veneer, and it’s actually, truly a pure holy Buddha.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Three – John Stilwell

[silence]

Now expand that awareness to everyone in the room and generate a very strong feeling that everyone in this room is the same. Buddhas with ordinary veneers.

[silence]

Bring your awareness to yourself. Forget about how you normally think of yourself. See yourself as a being completely pure. The inside of your body made of light. No inner organs, no blood. Feel strongly that your mind is pure, your body is pure.

[silence]

As you go throughout the rest of the day and the rest of your life, retain this awareness that everyone around you is completely pure, a perfectly enlightened being. Treat them that way.

Just two last thoughts. Keep in mind that holy beings are happy beings, you know. This idea doesn't mean walk around somber and afraid to talk to people. Holy beings are blissful, joyous, happy beings. Try to be like that yourself, and try to relate to others in the same way.

Afternoon: Day Three ❁ November 30, 2002
Geshe Michael Roach

One of the retreatants will lead us in a meditation now.

Elizabeth Heimborg: First of all, I just want to say on behalf of all of the retreatants that we love all of you very, very much. And that we're looking forward to being able to see you. When our lama asked me to be one of the people to lead a Thanksgiving meditation I thought, "Great! They're going to give me a microphone ... I can thank the Careladies. And then I started writing what I was going to say to thank the Careladies and it turned out to be some six pages. I'm still going but then I realized that um, it's just ... you know, I have ten minutes. So we thank you... perhaps after retreat you'll have to listen for a few hours, or a few days or a few weeks or years maybe.

And then I thought that if we're all going to do a Thanksgiving meditation together then what do we all have in common that we all have to give thanks for. One of the first things that came to mind was the holy, holy beings that guide us, and if you're here you're definitely being guided personally, intimately, closely by a holy being. And I think just take a moment to sit and feel them... all around you, loving you, and watching out for you, and calling to you in their silent way. So just take a moment to reach out with your mind and try to make contact with them.

[silence]

Elizabeth: And then, I think all of us know what it feels like to hear a voice inside that's calling us towards something holy. Maybe you heard it when you were very, very young. Maybe you didn't know what it was. Maybe you thought it was God. Maybe you thought it was your Guardian Angel. Nowadays I like to call it the *Dakini* Guide. But everybody has that, everybody has that inner voice, the inner wisdom, maybe people hear it at different times but everybody has it and it guides you towards the pure things. And it gives you strength to do the holy things that sometimes are maybe a little bit scary. But it's always there for you and it's always guiding you in the right direction. So just a moment to be thankful for that.

[silence]

And then, something else everybody has...that I think we overlook the importance of it. Is that part of your mind which overrides your emotional reactions, your negative emotional reactions. And it checks you and it makes you act with wisdom. Maybe the whole rest of your being it wants to do something bad, you know, but you have an understanding, you have wisdom and it forces you to do, or at least try to do, the right thing, the pure thing. And I just think we should be grateful for that. We've all felt it if we're here, if we're trying to practice — that moment, that pause in which you get a choice and you choose to do the thing that you know is going to bring you a pure result.

[silence]

There's about a thousand other things to be thankful for, but we just have a little time today so let's stop here and someone will lead us in a holy chant. Thank you.

Ruth Lauer *[chanted]*:

Om... Om...Om... Om...

Asato ma sat gamaya.

Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya.

Mrityor-mam amritham gamaya.

Lead me from the unreal to the real.

Lead me from darknes to light.

Lead me from death to immortality.

Lead me from death to sweetness.

Make me move like a saint.

Make me move like my teacher.

Make me move like an angel.

Make me move with innocence.



Some of us had the privilege to studying at Sera Monastery, at the Mey College, Sera Mey and our wonderful teacher there, holy Lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen, encouraged us and specifically one of the people here to not to be lazy and sing the chants in Tibetan tunes but to translate them and try to put them to our own special tunes. He was quite insistent about it and I think he'd be very happy to hear all the beautiful chants that you have all made. And I hope you will continue — even the same prayer can be put to many different chants.

There are two great tantric colleges in Tibet, Gyume and Gyuto, and they chant the same prayers but with very different melodies. And if you're from Gyume, you say Gyuto doesn't sound so good. And if you're from Gyuto, you say Gyume doesn't sound so good. But there's sort of a fun rivalry to see who can make the most beautiful tunes to the standard prayers. And I hope that all of our friends in different parts of the world will continue to try to make these beautiful tunes. Then every once in awhile Gyume will steal from Gyuto if it sounds really good. *[laughs]*

Also we have received many beautiful gifts from people attending the teaching, all of us, and we wanted to thank you. We try to use them, like incense sticks or a drawing that someone has done or if we're having a bad day we pull out a poem that someone wrote. We never know exactly who it's from, but it means a lot to us.

We miss you a lot and we feel you praying for us. I think it's made a big difference in how we've been able to go on. And the best gift that we ever get, all of us I think, is rumors that we hear sent in from teachers that come to teach, or maybe we see an announcement by accident, but we are aware that many of you are doing retreats and we have heard that many of you are teaching courses throughout the world. And I don't think anything makes all of us happier than to hear that you are trying so hard to help other people and we pray that you continue and work hard.

The tradition of this lineage is to offer the teachings freely without payment, even the courses, the ACI courses and the tapes, which through the efforts of people here have been sent

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

to many tens of thousands people. There's a big notice on the front that says these things cost money to make, but if you don't have any money then you're welcome to have it for free. And it should always be like that. And I wanted to say that everyone here is very welcome to take anything they find of benefit in the readings or the teachings or the tapes that are made from the courses in the past and use it in any way you like to help other people freely. You don't need to ask anyone or there's no copyright. You should pass it to others. You can always make copies of anything, the tapes or written things, and use them to help other people.

And the reason we can do that is that almost everyone here at Diamond Mountain, or the staff, all of them are teaching, almost all of them, all of them are translating ancient books that are important, all of them are writing or helping to write explanations of those books. People in ACI New York and at Godstow and many other places in this country and other countries, they're all working for free, they're all working for people in their spare time. They often end up paying for the materials themselves. And we hear about what you're doing and this is truly a great gift to give to us.

It's said in the scriptures that the greatest offering you can make to any teacher is to try to practice the things you have learned. And truly for us, when we hear how hard you're meditating or doing retreat or helping teach others, this is the kind of offering that makes us all very happy, and it sends a thrill up our spines every time we hear that one of you is helping other people.



I thought I'd talk briefly, if such a thing is possible for me, about how this particular translation of the Yoga Sutra was done from Sanskrit. There are many translations into English of the Yoga Sutras. And we took the time, those of us who worked on this translation, to read many of the fine translations that have been done. Each one has a different feel to it, each one is different. I think this is typical. Each great yoga teacher has a special interest or emphasis which they would like to impart to their students.

For example, we read the commentary or the translation by Master B.K.S. Iyengar. And his background from his guru Sri Krishnamacharya was very strong on the physical *asana* exercises, and that comes through whenever you read anything about the Yoga Sutra from his beautiful books. We relied heavily on the fine Sanskrit manuscript presented in the book by Sri Brahmananda Sarasvati, Doctor Mishra, and it's a very clean text. He was a medical doctor and also very strong in psychology, and so his translation is very useful because of his training. He's able to impart many useful things from those fields and also he had studied *Samkya* philosophy deeply and his translation reflects that.

We had a chance to read Swami Satchidananda's beautiful translation. He is a leader of many American disciples and I think from his translation comes through a very beautiful concern and wise advice for his disciples. He is presenting the Sutra in a way which will make his disciples lead holy lives. We also depended a lot on a fine translation by Master Georg Feuerstein, who is a Western scholar. And for example the roots of Sanskrit are presented very nicely in his translation. He draws from other Western scholars and ancient Vedic sources, and he's very knowledgeable and it was very helpful to read.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

There are other fine translations; we haven't gotten hold of them all. You should know that there's especially one person here who has taken immense trouble and expense of her own to make sure that we had all the materials we needed. She has worked selflessly, tirelessly, to make sure that we had everything we needed for this work. You can probably guess who she is. It couldn't have been done without her. And there are now I think a group of people helping her too, in the work that's needed to present these things accurately.

She also dug up some of the early Sanskrit commentaries: there are two early classical commentaries on the Yoga Sutra. They are specific to certain ancient traditions — they were written, I think most scholars say, about five centuries after the Yoga Sutra or even later. And they reflect the ideas and concerns of two of the great schools of India, *Samkhya* and *Vedanta*; also one of its great proponents, Shankara Acharya.

This Acharya was even known in Tibet very well. Je Tsongkapa often refers to him and Je Tsongkapa also has a beautiful section in his greatest book on Emptiness, *Uma Gompa Rabtsel* — “The Clarification of the True Idea of the Middle Way” — which we studied for eight years with Geshe Thupten Rinchen, in Sera and which I hope will be one of the courses that will be taught at Diamond Mountain. And we also had a beautiful explanation of the *Samkhya* system from Je Tsongkapa's work by holy Lama Khen Rinpoche. It was one of the few teachings he gave to a fortunate group of us, I think about twenty years ago and it was at holy lama Art Engle's house. It was extraordinary teaching about the *Samkhya* system; it's a very beautiful system and we can learn more about it.

Then through the efforts of the people I mentioned, also one holy being in Boston who's running a Tibetan Buddhist research center, who's continually sending us ancient texts, very rare texts, including some from Sikkim, for example, about the *asanas*, the *asana* practices. These have all been arranged by the Diamond Mountain staff, just working hard and finding ways to help us. We have also used a compilation of eighteen different Tibetan dictionaries, from Sanskrit to Tibetan. These are ancient books about how to understand the Sanskrit manuscripts that were passed down through the centuries and now have been compiled into a huge dictionary recently in Tibet. And we were able to use that. The Tibetans use the *Armalakosha*, the *Mahavyupatti*, and other great ancient Sanskrit dictionaries, and if you had to characterize our translation or an explanation, I would say it has been done as if a Tibetan translator, *lotsawa*, a thousand years ago, had been working on the Yoga Sutra.

So first we translated it using the ancient Tibetan manuals into Tibetan, because then it is placed within the four and a half thousand texts which came from ancient India into Tibet. If you translate a text into Tibetan, you can then understand it more clearly in the context of four and a half thousand other texts which we have available to us. And then we translated it into English from there.

Also we used about twenty ancient commentaries to the subjects covered in the Yoga Sutra. These were all written in Sanskrit — they were brought to Tibet a thousand years ago. And then because of the invasions of India by the Moguls and then later the British, these books were largely lost in Sanskrit, and certainly their study almost stopped completely in India. Because Tibet could not be invaded until the airplane was invented, because of the mountains, the Himalayas, these books have survived and they form the core of the monastery study. All of the books we study in the monastery — Sera and other great monasteries of Tibet — all came from

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

India and they were all from Sanskrit. It's all lost now in India and there are no longer any great institutions that I'm aware of which are still passing on those lineages in India.

Then I had the idea to go through the Yoga Sutra line by line and explain which commentary it comes from. Yoga Sutra, like all great Indian works, is really a summary of the knowledge which came before. In India, and Tibet, Mongolia, China, it was not considered necessary to be original or novel somehow. It was considered wise to take the knowledge of the generations before and present it in a way in which your own generation could appreciate, but not to change that knowledge. So really all the great books of India are compilations of the earlier wisdom. So I thought to go through the Yoga Sutra line by line and point out where each idea can be studied further if you want to go deeper, if you want to show up at a store to buy a ten dollar thing with a thousand dollars instead of a hundred. You could go deeper into the other great *shastras*, the great commentaries of ancient India.

Then I realized it would take a few days. I actually wrote it out and prepared it, but I was trying to think of a way to stop on time today, so I thought maybe better to go the other way around. Many of the great commentaries I mentioned are in the ACI courses themselves. All of the great books that we study in the monastery are contained in the courses, which you have in English, and you have tapes for. So I thought maybe I'll just point out some of the major ideas that you can find more information about.

So you can say our translation is — I think you could call it a classical translation in the way that it might have been done a thousand years ago, based on the ancient texts from five hundred B.C. up to eight hundred A.D. And each translation has its benefit — I'm sure you sensed that as I spoke about each translation — and it's much like the jewelry stores of Marvin Zales. Each store has its own customers who are ready and they are happy and they are benefited by the product in that store.

So I'd like to go through the ACI courses briefly and tell you which parts to study in more depth, especially those of you who are already finished with the eighteen courses and who may be speaking to small groups as we travel. I think that speaking will help each person here gain experience. There's nothing like speaking to a few people that you don't know in different locations to prepare you to speak to larger groups later. It's sort of a gentle way to get into teaching. And you will learn to face very difficult questions, sometimes tense situations. As you travel, someone you don't know throws a hard question at you, sometimes with a little bit of heat. And I think it's good practice for all of us to travel and meet many people who want to know more about these things.

Secondly, I think in the coming years there will be more groups growing in different places, and during this tour I think you may find a core group of people, maybe people who have already taken many ACI courses, who you suddenly click with. Like we may be in Atlanta and you may meet some of the people there who are already studying the courses. And you might take a liking to them, a special karmic connection, and they might really take a liking to you and then maybe you could help teach at that center in that city in the future. So it's good to be deeper, to know more.

So here we go through the eighteen courses. I'll probably leave some things out; it's okay. In the first course ACI we study Je Tsongkapa's summary of all the ancient Indian texts and it's called *Lam Rim*. In this teaching of Je Tsongkapa, you'll find the foundation is how to

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

find a teacher — how to study properly with that teacher, how to serve that teacher properly — which is all based on understanding the qualifications of a teacher. What to look for and how to check out a teacher. In Tibet it was a process that sometimes took up to nine or ten years to examine a teacher before you commit yourself. You ask other people, you try to find out if there are any problems in the closet with this teacher. You find out if they are knowledgeable; you find out if they have compassion; you find out if they understand emptiness; you find out if they have a wide range of knowledge, up to the secret teachings. And all of these are contained in every great Indian book that was ever written — how to find a lama or a guru, how to relate to that teacher properly, how not to have mistakes happen.

In Master Patanjali's work this subject is covered in the first chapter, starting with "*Ishvara pranidhad va.*" *Ishvara* in this line can mean either a deity and it can also mean your own personal secret Angel and it can also mean your own root lama, your guru. Probably they're all the same anyway. And it continues through a description of a lama, a teacher and for about five or six lines actually. So you can find out more from the first ACI course about those qualifications of a good teacher, an authentic teacher. Also you can find there more about the four immeasurable, the four infinite thoughts. We spoke about two of them yesterday, *karuna* and *upeksha*, equanimity and compassion. And they are covered more in the Lam Rim teachings.

ACI course number two — sometimes I forget what they are about — is about refuge. It comes from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras and the teachings of Master Asanga and Lord Maitreya. Master Asanga's works play a heavy role in the Yoga Sutra. The fourth chapter specifically has a very lengthy explanation of the idea of *rang rik*, which is the ability of the mind to know itself. You can find in the second ACI course more information about the idea of nirvana, which is the cessation of certain mental patterns — which is Master Patanjali's definition of yoga itself. And you can find out more about that in the second course.

In the third course, which was devoted to meditation, how to meditate, we discussed from the *Bhavanakrama* of Kamalashila in the eighth century, different instructions on how to meditate. These are covered by Master Patanjali in the first chapter — he discusses the obstacles to meditation. Then in the opening lines of the third chapter he describes the different states of meditation, which you will find summarized in the third ACI course. And in the closing lines of the second chapter Master Patanjali talks about controlling our sense powers as part of meditation. So really the last four of the eight limbs of yoga, *ashtanga*, relate to meditation, and they can be found in the third ACI course in detail.

I think the fourth course was "The Proof of Future Lives." And this comes from Master Dharmakirti's text, called *Pramanavarttika*. This is an explanation of how we perceive things — the different means by which we perceive things in the world. And Master Patanjali has a major section on this subject in the first chapter, right off the bat. After about the first six, seven lines he begins a description of *pramana*, valid cognition, valid perception, and he discusses it at length through the different *virttis* or the different mental functions.

Which brings us to the fifth course, which was "How Karma Works." Master Patanjali has a beautiful presentation about karma in the second chapter. We'll talk more about that today, I think. And his presentation is very, very similar to Master Vasubandhu's presentation from about 350 AD. Master Vasubandhu and Master Asanga were half brothers, so we know that they lived at the same time. And you can see the threads of their thinking throughout Master

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

Patanjali's Sutra. That's what leads me, personally, to think that he may have lived in the same period. So if you wished to know more about that presentation you should study specifically the sections from Master Vasubandhu in the fifth ACI course about white karma, black karma, how karmic seeds are planted, and their relationship to doing good or bad to other people. In the fourth chapter, the final chapter of the Yoga Sutra, these subjects are also discussed by Master Patanjali, especially with regard to karmic seeds.

The sixth ACI course on the Diamond Cutter Sutra is a presentation of emptiness. Master Patanjali covers emptiness in great detail. There's a beautiful section in the first chapter, towards the end, describing the path of seeing. In one of the first three lines of the whole Sutra he makes reference to the path of seeing. He uses many synonyms for emptiness. He uses the word *shunyata* directly on several occasions and then *svabhava*, meaning *rang shin* or "own nature" on other occasions to refer to emptiness, which are common words in all of the ancient scriptures.

Then again there's a very difficult section in the third chapter about the emptiness of — how to say — rather than the emptiness of static objects, like the chair in front of you or this tent, there's a difficult discussion of the emptiness of changing things, of change itself. What causes the sun to rise in the morning? And this section comes from Master Nagarjuna's *Mula Prajna*, which is "The Root of Wisdom," a Middle Way scripture from around 200 AD.

This is another reason why I think Master Patanjali may have lived in that time or shortly afterwards. It's a beautiful section, quite difficult; we won't talk a lot about it because it would take a few days. But some of us are writing a more thorough commentary. There's been a short commentary already finished in English. There'll be a longer commentary coming and we'll cover those sections more thoroughly in that commentary. They are very beautiful and very necessary for us.

The next ACI course was the Bodhisattva Vows, also from Master Asanga. Master Patanjali discusses, at length, the six perfections, in different places. "Giving" is traditionally, as for example in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, included among the *niyama*, which is the second limb of the eight limbs of yoga. "Patience" he covers in the first chapter along with four other virtues, which are part of the path of preparation before you see emptiness directly.

"Morality" — ethical way of life — Master Patanjali covers in the second chapter, in the middle. And it's a very beautiful presentation of the five basic components of an ethical way of life, which form the basis for our Lifetime Layman's Vows. They come from the ancient teachings of basic kindness towards others that are found in our most basic vows that we take. They are called *yama* in Sanskrit, and form the first of the eight limbs of yoga.

Then "joyful effort" is again covered in the first chapter. "Not getting angry" — patience, the perfection of patience — he covers in a beautiful section in the second chapter, right after finishing his description of the *niyamas*. Then again "wisdom" and "meditation," the last two bodhisattva perfections, are covered in the opening lines of the third chapter. So that's how Master Patanjali covers the perfections of the bodhisattva, the lifestyle of a bodhisattva, which are the basis of all the bodhisattva vows presented in Course Seven. So if you wanted to go deeper, you should study the vows in Course Seven for those.

Course number eight, I believe, was about death and about the *bardo* and about the different places in the world where you might take a rebirth. Master Patanjali treats the idea of

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

future lives as a component of his presentation on karma, because he mentions how karma can ripen either in this life or later on. And if you wish to know more about that then you should study the eighth course.

The ninth course of ACI concerns *vinaya*, or ethical way of life. And again this is covered in the first two limbs of yoga in the second chapter. I don't expect you to absorb all of this right now, I just want you to have it to look — you can check on the transcript and if you want to learn more about any section you can go to the ACI course about it, which is to go back to the ancient Indian masters.

Courses ten, eleven, and twelve are Master Shantideva's presentation of how to live like a bodhisattva. And again that's simply based on the Six Perfections, which we talked about already.

Course thirteen was about logic, the ancient schools of *nyaya*, logic, and these again are covered in the discussion of perceptual theory in the first chapter. It's about the second page of Master Patanjali's work, specifically about the use of deduction to perceive higher spiritual things. He covers that in a single line.

Class fourteen was about Tibetan methods of gaining bodhichitta or ultimate love for others. This is covered in Master Patanjali's first chapter with the four immeasurables, and right after that there are about five lines which describe the benefits of love for others very much as they are taught by His Holiness the Dalai Lama nowadays throughout the world. So if you wanted to see the ancient sources for that, you could go to the fourteenth course.

The fifteenth course was about interpreting scripture. How do you know when a holy lama or guru is speaking literally? How do you know when they're not speaking literally? It's a very important distinction to be able to make.

It comes up in the course of Lord Buddha's teaching. He was like Marvin Zales. He ran four different schools, stores [*laughter*], in ancient India. These four ancient schools of Buddhism used to compete with each other and contradict each other and argue with each other. And they were all taught by Lord Buddha himself. So the last course of ACI's fifteen courses is a presentation by Je Tsongkapa on how do you deal with it when your teacher makes conflicting statements. How do you thresh out what your teacher really wants you to do, or really wants you to believe? Because this is something that happens to anyone who becomes close to a guru.

We must have guidelines and we must have logical methods of working out what the guru really wants us to do and what's correct to do, because a guru has to speak to many people. When you hear His Holiness the Dalai Lama speak in New York City he will say ten thousand different things are fine. When he gets to Sera he will criticize the monks severely for doing any of them. And you need to know if you're travelling between the two what are you supposed to do. And His Holiness, like all great holy teachers, is trying to bring each member of the selected audience up a little higher on the spiritual path.

And so how do we know how to interpret these things? It comes up in a huge question about *virttis*. *Virttis*, you know if you have studied any of the Yoga Sutra before, are the mental functions which yoga causes to end.

Master Patanjali defines yoga as, "*Yogash chita virtti nirodhah*," which means, "The meaning of yoga is to stop certain functions of the mind itself." This goes back to an ancient debate in India. If my mind is making some terrible mistake all the time and if this is the source

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

of all suffering, then how can I ever catch my mind doing it if my mind is defective? If the mind is broken and you want me to catch the mistake in my mind with a broken mind — how can anyone do that? How can we ever catch ourselves making a great error in our thinking with a mind which is at that very moment making the same error? And this is an extremely important question and the whole fourth chapter of Master Patanjali's Sutra is devoted to this very question. It was a hot question in the time of Masters Asanga and Vasubandhu. So it's another reason why I think we may be able to say that there was some connection between them, historically.

On another level, you can talk all day about historical connections. We will never know. India didn't care about history — they cared about ideas. They didn't keep birthdays or dates of anyone. We don't know the real dates of the Yoga Sutra. Also, on even a deeper level, all the holy beings throughout history and on different planets, they all go through the same spiritual levels in the course of their spiritual development, independent of each other. And of course it wouldn't be therefore unexpected that Master Patanjali would be describing the very same issues and levels that every other enlightened being has had to deal with. And so there may be no historical connection at all.

So those, the last three ACI courses summarize the others. There are some extra small courses. One is about the Wheel of Life — how we get into this life, how we get out, and this is covered. Master Patanjali uses much of the information in the Wheel of Life in the first chapter and in the second chapter of his work. We'll discuss part of that today. He mentions the three poisons in the second chapter of his work, which are at the center of the wheel of life. And he uses them to discuss the idea of purifying karma, how we get rid of our old karmic seeds.

If you really believe this idea about pumpkin pie, if you believe that pumpkin pie is really a picture that comes from an old seed in your mind, well then how could we work with our old seeds in our mind? How could we change them? How could we modify them? How could we get rid of the bad ones? Which would take us to heaven really, if we could eliminate the bad seeds that are already in our own mind. And Master Patanjali discusses this at length, right after he discusses the second of the eight limbs. He discusses purification of old karma. Then again in the fourth chapter.

This is all found in the ACI course on the Four Powers, which is how to purify your old karma, from an old Sutra by Lord Buddha. One of the retreatants actually developed a beautiful chart, which we call the correlations. It outlines what things you must have done in the past to get all the details of your current life. It comes from several sources: Master Vasubandhu and also the Wheel of Knives, an early text by Tibetans. And Master Patanjali covers these very subjects at length in the second chapter of his work. There's a beautiful discussion of how each of the details in your life go back to a certain way of behavior towards other people. So I think that's a very important subject you could study deeper by checking that chart and studying it.

We studied the Heart Sutra in a separate course. It has a description of the five levels that all of us go through in our spiritual life. And these are traced throughout the Yoga Sutra with specific references to the standard stages.

I think I'll stop there. There are many more subjects to talk about, but if you want to go deeper, check the transcript of this talk and you can find those in the appropriate courses.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

So we'll start with the Yoga Sutra. I have one correction from yesterday. When we spoke about the meaning of the word *Samkhya*, I wasn't sure about the ancient root and it's *sekw*, of course. "S-e-k-w," and from that came the word to "say," or "saga" and also the word to "see" and "sight" with its "g." And all of these are related to the ancient Sanskrit root *khya*.

I'd like to ask that today's first line be read.



[Salim Lee: *Prayatna shaithilya-anata samapattibhyam*. They do so through a balance of effort and relaxation; and through endless forms of balanced meditation. (II:47)]

This is the line that comes right after the line about the asanas, how to do the yoga exercises. And it's sort of a surprise. I mean he jumps right from exercises into how meditation is working with the exercises. And again Master Patanjali is trying to emphasize that we can work from the outside with physical exercises that have a very slow but steady and very exciting effect on the channels, and then we can also supplement that from the inside through our meditations on kindness and serving others and emptiness. The key words here: one is *samapatti*, and since it's a sister word of *samadhi*, I thought we might talk about both of them.

Samapatti comes from the same word as "Patanjali." So we've covered that already. It means "to fall," "to fall down" or "to fall together." In Tibetan it's called *nyomjuk* or *nyamshak*, and I think here the Tibetan translation helps you understand the meaning of the word *samapatti*.

Nyam means "balanced" or "equal." Equal between what and what? There are two great obstacles to meditation, and if you begin to try to do the *tong-len* breathing practice, holy practice, which you have all sort of promised to, I think, or mostly. And even if you try to do the asanas, the yoga exercises, then you will find that these two, this kind of balance is important in all of them. It's a middle way between two extremes. One is called *chingwa*, one is called *gupa*. We'll talk about *gupa* first.

Gupa is related to a word for crazy. *Mirgu* means "a monkey that's jumping around." Monkeys, orangutans, are called *mirgu*, which means "a human with *gupa*." And "*gu*" means you can't keep your mind on your meditation — you're sitting in your yurt, you're wondering when the careladies will come, you've got your ear out. We can hear the first ignition [*laughter*] half a mile away now, which is how deep our meditation is, of the delivery vehicle — I don't know what it is. But we know when they put the box in the back or the front — we hear that. Then we hear the car start, and then we hear the cart, and your stomach is growling, and your mouth is watering, and this is *gupa*.

Gupa means "your mind is elsewhere." It could be on the plans you have for your talk at the Yoga Sutra; it could be for the plans you have for after retreat. It's similar to the plans you had for retreat when you were supposed to be concentrating before retreat. And we do that. We just constantly shift to other locations than what we are doing or where we are, and the easy part is to get rid of that, to bring your mind back to the present even as you do your asanas and as you do your breathing practices and as you do your meditation.

The other extreme is called *chingwa*. *Chingwa* means "dull mind." If you want to do a scientific experiment to see what this state of mind is like, then eat a lot of food — eat like six

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

slices of pizza — and then try to meditate. Or don't get enough sleep and then try to wake up early and meditate, and you will see *chingwa*. *Chingwa* is just a sort of dullness, and it's the other extreme from *gupa*, which is sort of a wandering.

And of course, the most dangerous obstacle of all to meditation is called *chingwa tramo*, which would be *shukshma*, which we had yesterday. It's a subtle form of dullness. This is extremely dangerous and I think all of us in three year retreat have had long stretches of *chingwa tramo*. It's where you're spacing out, basically, during meditation. Your body is very quiet, your breathing is very smooth and you're not thinking about lunch and you're not falling asleep really. You're sitting up okay but really your mind is just sort of in a daze or in some sort of a dull, very subtle dull state.

This is supposed to be one of the most dangerous obstacles to meditation. Master Patanjali actually speaks about it in the first chapter of his work, when he speaks about the four *dhyana* levels: “*vitarka vicara ananda asmitarupa*.” And we have to watch out for that one. If we can run a middle course then that's *samapatti*. *Samapatti* means “it all comes together.”

Samadhi, which is *ting nge dzin* in Tibetan, comes from a root *dha*. Sometimes “d-h-a” changes to “d-h-i.” There's another root, *dih*, which is not the root here and has sometimes been mistaken for the root here. It's a long “i,” and I'll speak a bit about the root *dha*, which is the d-h-i in *samadhi*. The ancient Indo-European root is *dhe*, and it means *to put something down*, meaning “to set something down.” The word “do” comes from this, which means “to set something down.” The word “deed” means “an agreement set down in writing.” The word “doom” comes from this root, which means “a fate” which is set down in writing in a way. When the root comes to Latin it changes to *f*, and becomes the word “fact” and all the other words that have “fact” in it: “factory,” words like that. The word “face” comes from *dhe*.

How does *samadhi* different from *samapatti*? In the later development of the yoga schools, *samadhi* takes on probably six or seven different meanings. They're quite difficult to trace. You can get confused sometimes. Even the name of the first chapter the Yoga Sutra is *Samadhi padah*, “the chapter on *samadhi*.”

The word *samadhi* emphasizes *ekagraha*, which means “single-pointedness,” “the ability to keep your mind on one object.” Good baseball players have it. Rinpoche used to punch me on the shoulder and say, “Look, *ting nge dzin*,” when they did a close-up of the batter's face as the hard ball was approaching his elbow. And you see the whites on the eyes glowing and there's this total concentration on the baseball. I remember one night the guy was getting a good line of home runs, and they asked him, “How do you do that?” And he said, “I don't know, I'm just focusing on the ball as it comes in and just before it reaches me it's about the size of a watermelon. Ah, so I just swing and it hits.”

Good businessmen have *ting nge dzin*, *samadhi*, the ability to concentrate single pointedly. My boss, as I've said before, holy *Chakrasamvara* and his wife Aya, who I constantly think about and thank. They had *ting nge dzin* about their business. They would go for ten or twelve hours without eating or drinking anything, focused on running this business. And that's a kind of *samadhi* or single pointedness. It's the ability to concentrate on one thing. We'll talk about it more later on.

Next line please.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

[Ramon Alonzo: *Prachardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya*. It gives the same effect as releasing, then storing, the wind of the breath. (I.34)]

What is the “it” in this verse? Master Patanjali is talking about, this line occurs right after his description of *karuna*, “compassion,” and the other three of the Four Immeasurable Thoughts. I put it here because obviously he’s talking about how you can either work from the outside or the inside. First he tells you about having ultimate compassion for others, which is focused on every living creature and wants to bring them happiness, save them from the pain of death itself. And right after that, in the very next line, he says you can get the same effect as you get from storing and releasing the breath, which means you can also work from the outside with your breath.

The breath is intimately connected to the inner winds in our channels, our thoughts ride on the inner winds. You can complete the transformation into an Angel’s body by working from the inside with compassion for others and by working from the outside with the physical exercises and the breathing exercises. The breathing exercises emphasize the exhale of the breath and they also talk about storing the breath, which means the ability to stop the vital energy and store it and bring it to places in your body where you want it to be more. This is also where the physical exercises cross the practice of breathing and especially *tong-len*. Some of the retreatants and care staff and other people, director and other people, are working on a tiny, small book about special *asanas* from Tibet in conjunction with the traditional *asanas* from India which you are familiar with, and then how that connects to breathing practices and I think perhaps that you could get that book also later.

The key word here, this is I believe the only line in the whole Yoga Sutra where Master Patanjali mentions *prana*. I’d like to speak a moment about *prana* and then we’ll take a break. First, the source of the word “pra” means “to go forward.” It is the root which came into English as *pro*, and as the *for* in “forward,” so actually the word “forward” and “pra” are connected. It’s also found in the word “proud,” which means “to step out in front.”

And the second part of this word is *an*. The ancient root in Sanskrit is *an*. And in Indo-European, I believe it’s also *anh*, I believe it’s a-n-h. I’ll check for you, *anh*. It shows up in the Latin root *a*, word “animus,” and it comes into English in the word “animal” and “animated.” The ancient Sanskrit root means “to breathe.” The Latin “animus” means “soul,” “spirit” or “breath.” And an animated cartoon is one which is alive and breathing, and so an animal is a breathing creature. So you can see how this word has come into our language.

Prana is the word for inner winds, what we call in Tibetan *lung*. There are in the great yoga scriptures many, many synonyms for *prana*, and each of them has a slightly different flavor. The idea of breath or spirit or inner energy. I’ll speak about a few of them and maybe you can get a sense for the different kinds of inner winds.

One is *vata*, which would be the inner winds as part of our bodily makeup, the elements that make up our body. In this sense if you get a *vata* overload you might get, for example, a cold or pneumonia, which is an excess of the wind constituent in your body. And this idea of humors or what the ancient texts call physical problems is important for Ayurvedic medicine and Tibetan medicine.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

Another unusual word might be *anila*, which sounds like the Tibetan *ani-la*, and this is a word that you use in a Sanskrit text when you need a three syllable word for *prana*, to make your meter. *Pavana* is another word, and it's often used in descriptions of tie-up of the inner winds, when the inner winds get tied up or there's a problem with the inner winds.

I'd like to also throw in some of the Tibetan words for wind. As you know, in Tibetan it's *lung*. *Lung* can mean the external wind. For example, the wind which moves a flag is called *lung* in Tibetan. *Lung* has a second meaning. It can mean one of the five energies which underly all physical matter. The ancient Indians didn't speak about gravity or forces like velocity. They described all of these energies in terms of the four elements. So it's not like they were naive and they thought that there was earth element in you or water element or wind element that somehow was blowing inside of you. When they spoke about the wind element, it was the basic energy of the whole universe which causes things to move. So the movement of any object — you could call it velocity, really — the changing from inertia to motion was called *lung* or the element, the energy of wind within an object.

Sometimes "*lung*" can refer to what the Sanskritists called *vayu*, which is yet another word for wind. This refers to five basic energies within the body. There are five winds moving through the body and they are responsible, for example, the downward moving wind is one example, which is responsible for the elimination of material from the body, whether it's feces or urine or even semen or menstrual discharge, and also the exhale of breath are all governed by this *lung*, one of the five *vayus*, or one of the five inner winds. So that's a whole different meaning of inner wind.

Unfortunately in both Sanskrit and Tibetan the word for the wind which moves in the inner channels is also the same word for one of the five winds which move through our body, and there is much confusion in the ancient texts. We'll talk more about it tomorrow, but the Sanskrit texts which have survived, which have been carried up through the centuries with such devotion by the great yoga masters, even of the current century, masters like Master Iyengar and Sri Patabhi Jois, they have struggled to keep these ancient traditions alive. They can be extremely helpful in detecting places in the Tibetan texts where the same word is unfortunately used for three or four different kinds of wind. So it's very important to have available both the Sanskrit and the Tibetan. Sometimes the Tibetan is more clear; sometimes the Sanskrit is more clear.

Unfortunately *lung* has yet another meaning. *Lung* is described, is a word used to describe an ailment of the *soklung* of the *vayu* of *prana*, meaning of the wind of the five which controls your upper body — it controls inhale of breath for example. When there is a problem with this wind, then you get a condition which in Tibetan is called *lung* or *soklung*. All of the retreatants are experts on *soklung*. I've asked many of our holy yoga teachers who have come to help us with different ideas on treating *soklung*.

Soklung means you meditate too long, you try too hard; you're aware that the caretakers and the staff and hundreds of other people are supporting you, hundreds of people are contributing for you to have this hour or two in meditation right now, and you feel the severe weight of all that hope and all that help that they are giving you, and you want to try very hard, and then you try too hard. And this leads to what we call *soklung*. *Soklung* is characterized by shaking in the hands, emotional swings up and down, especially depression or irritation with

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

other people for small things. Sometimes you feel tightness in your chest, it's hard to breathe and other typical signs.

I think one of the most valuable things to come out of this very long retreat is that the fatigue of keeping up thirty nine months of constant practice has forced us to learn a lot about *soklung* and how to stop it, how to treat it. And Tibetan medicine, *Ayurveda* also describes many creative methods of dealing with disease like *soklung*. It could be going out and looking at the sky for a half-hour — some of us actually lay down on the top of our yurts at night and watch the stars and do our prayers. And it could be eating popcorn with lots of butter on it. And things like that. Some of the retreatants have been working on retreat manuals to help people in the future who will be doing long retreats, I think Diamond Mountain and Godstow and other places, to help to deal with the problem of *prana* overload, which we call *soklung*.

Those are the basic meanings of *lung*, of *prana*, in the scriptures. It's a subject which would itself take maybe six months to teach, and I think Diamond Mountain will be a good place in the future to have courses on the structure of the inner body. It's very important for final transformation of the body.

We'll talk more tomorrow about how we get those teachings to people who can't come to the Arizona desert and hang out. And we have lots of ideas for that, which I think we'll speak about in detail tomorrow. So I'd like everyone to please have some of the refreshments and we'll start again after that.



I wanted to say one more word about *prana* before we go on. And as we mentioned the word *prana* can be confusing. It can refer, in a text if you are studying about the breathing practices, it can refer to the breath itself, to the air that's coming in and out of your nostrils. It can refer to the, one of the five general winds in your body which is controlling certain physical parts of your body like inhalation. And for us the most important meaning is the wind which travels in the inner channels. And fortunately the words are distinguished in many of the Tibetan texts. On the other hand, sometimes in the Tibetan texts a single word is used, like *lung*, for an idea that might, there might be three different types of *lung* described in a Sanskrit text with different words, so it's very useful to have both.

I'd like to talk a moment about the relation between your physical breath and your inner winds. Because sometimes when the word *prana* is used nowadays people get confused between the two. Also when we speak of *pranayama*, which means control of the *prana*, it can be confusing whether we are talking about controlling the breath or controlling the inner winds.

I was fortunate during my stays in India to study sitar in the early years, about thirty years ago. And sitar is interesting: it's made of a gourd and a hollow neck, which gives it a unique feeling of being natural, and then there are iron frets that curve like bridges on the neck and they have about, I don't remember now, but eight or ten strings. And then underneath there's a whole layer of secondary strings that you never actually touch. In fact you only use two of the ten upper strings when you play, normally. And the bottom strings that you never touch are called sympathetic strings. It takes about half an hour or an hour to tune them. Once you get them tuned, you don't touch them for a month or so. And they have to be tuned just right because

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

when you hit one of the upper notes then the corresponding two strings below will go off automatically. You don't need to touch them. And that's what gives a sitar its unique sound. When you hit one of the upper strings, two other or three other strings are going off at the same time.

When I used to sing in a chorus in church or high school, our directors would tell us if you can't reach a high note during a performance, like we were doing Handel's "Messiah," open your mouth, stretch your vocal chords into that note and just hold the position without letting out any air. And then the power of the other people hitting the note will make the note vibrate in your own throat automatically. This is like, called sympathetic vibrations.

And the same thing happens with the outer *prana* and the inner *prana*. Your breath has a sympathetic connection to your inner winds. They are not at all the same thing, but if your breathing is calm then the inner winds flow more smoothly. Conversely, if the inner winds are jammed up or moving in an erratic way that also affects your breathing. That's why if you're angry and you take ten breaths or if you try to slow your breathing down, you get calmer, because your very thoughts ride on the inner winds. The *prana* within your inner channels is intimately connected with your thoughts; this is the beautiful place where your body and your mind merge. This is an amazing place where the physical body and the mind are linked together, inside the channels. So for example if you are very afraid then those thoughts start to jam the inner channels, moving erratically. Then the inner *prana* or the inner wind begins to move erratically. It's almost like playing one of the bottom strings on a sitar and then the upper string will go off and your breathing will begin to move erratically.

When we do breathing exercises like *tong-len*, we're taking advantage of this connection. It's a very clever ancient method of actually changing our mind through the physical body. So we do special breathing exercises, which set off sympathetic vibrations in the inner winds, which force certain changes in our very thoughts. And the idea of all of the yogic practices in our tradition is to create an effect in the thoughts themselves. Also, by thinking kind thoughts, beautiful thoughts, during the breathing exercises and even during the asanas, then we can make the inner winds flow more smoothly, which actually triggers the Angel's body.

So all of these elements — inner wind, breathing, compassionate thoughts and physical exercises have a very profound connection. And you can imagine that it might be extremely powerful to do your physical exercises while breathing in specific special ways to cause a change in the inner winds. And at the same time go at it from underneath, and as you do your physical exercises or breathing exercises you actually try to help others with your breathing and your breath — you try to send kindness, help to other creatures even as you do your physical yoga exercises. And this is the key of all the practice of our lineage of the Dalai Lamas and Je Tsongkapa, the teacher of the first Dalai Lama. We seek to create profound changes in the very nature of our being through a combination of compassionate thoughts, special breathing and doing the physical exercises which are so popular today.

And so you can see why it might be very powerful for the millions of people who have already begun to do the exercises. And I repeat that twenty million American people wouldn't be suddenly doing yoga if they hadn't had some powerful seeds in their mind for it before. So on this planet or other planets these people have studied under great masters in their past. They have powerful words in their minds for the exercises and those are projected out into yoga

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

schools all over the country, and if you have a special vision, if you have a blessing of your teachers, you could see this as an extraordinary event in the history of a country and it could have great meaning for the future of many people.

Next verse.

[Fran Dayan: *Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha duhkha punya-apunya vishayanam bhavanatash chitta prasadanam.* Use kindness. It makes the mind bright and clear as pure water. (I.33A)]

The key word here is *maitri*. You know it from the word *Maitreya*. It's a touch difficult to trace the root, but it's probably *mih* or *minh*. And that came into English as the word to "mix" or to "mingle." You also see this word in modern Hindi. People say, "Oh, *mitra*, he's my *mitra*." Meaning "He's my friend." And even the word *geshe* — *gewa shenyen* — means *kalyana mitra*; it's an ancient word for spiritual friend.

How does the word *maitri* differ from *karuna*? How does kindness differ from compassion? If you look at the stars tonight — it's a very lucky time of the month. We are entering the last few days of the lunar month. There will be no moon in the sky for a long period of the night, and the stars will be out... bright. By the way, that's also a very negative time of the month [*laughs*]. Having gone over the two holidays, we'll be going into two rough days, in a lunar way, which strongly effects your thoughts, especially in a deep retreat or in a place where there's no city. So if you get cranky with a friend today or tomorrow don't think about it too much. It's just the moon.

Us retreatants have discovered the meaning of the word "lunatic." [*laughter*]. The moon strongly effects our emotions now, and we're actually afraid of the last few days of the month. But you'll be able to see, so if you get grumpy in the next two days or depressed don't think about it too much.

If you look up at the stars, you can believe that there are countless stars and on many of the stars we can see or imagine countless creatures like us. It's naïve to think we are unique; it's naïve to think there aren't billions upon billions of planets like our own, even just as you look at the sky. And all of the creatures on those planets are going through the same suffering that we are.

We live here by mistake. This world and our bodies are created by our former mistakes we have made. We take it as the way things are. It's not like that. Every person here has the capacity within this lifetime, within a few years, with the proper training, to stop completely the evils of death and of losing the ones you love and of relationships breaking down and other evils like this. They don't need to happen. You can stop them. We are living in a world which was created by a mistake. It's a very sad, ironic thing that it's not extremely difficult to move out of this kind of world. There are people who have done it, many people. They come to our world — they try, they try every way they can imagine to get us to follow these ways, to escape suffering and death itself.

When holy Lama did the chant today and said the word immortality I think some of us have a vision of getting older and older, more and more wrinkled forever. That's not what immortality is like. It's an extraordinary body, the most beautiful human you can imagine. You

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

will look just like that. Whatever your deepest attractions are physically to another being that you've seen, in your whole life, that's an indication of the karmic seeds in your own mind. You will look like that person, but thousands of times more beautiful and made of a clear crystal light, living crystal light. I look forward to that. I deeply enjoy all of our practices because there can be an understanding of what will be — but again I repeat, it's not the most exciting part. The exciting thing is that we will actually be able to simultaneously appear before billions upon billions of other people and help them.

There's no greater joy than making someone else happy. And imagine that each person here, each of us, will become able to stand physically in any form we wish before every single living being and help them and make them happy. You will gain this ability. This is the only reason to study Yoga Sutra and this is the meaning of *maitri* here. We have this seed in us. You are on the edge of becoming like that or you wouldn't be here. We just need a little bit of work and then, I look forward to the body that will be but I look ever so much more forward to being able to stand before countless beings and make them happy. *[pause]* It's why we work with the channels and the breath and our other practices.

Next line, please.

[John McCluskey: *Anitya-ashuchi duhkha-anatmasu nitya shuchi sukha-atma khyatir avidya*. We misunderstand our world; things that are not themselves seem to us as if they were. (II.5)]

We have to work hard on this verse. I know you're a little tired. My butt hurts too. *[laughter]* And I wonder how His Holiness does it. *[laughs]* This is a very important verse. Try to hang in there. We'll take another break shortly, I think.

Here begins the description by Master Patanjali in the second chapter where all suffering comes from and how we can stop it. He opens the description with — actually the first thing that Lord Buddha ever said on this planet, after he became enlightened is this line. These are the four aspects of the first of the four noble truths. These are called *chin chi lok shi*, the four, excuse me, ass backwards thoughts — and then the four antidotes for them are the four parts of the first noble truth taught by the Lord Buddha.

There's a very interesting way to correlate the four aspects of the first noble truth to the four backwards thoughts. Holy Lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen went into it in detail — it's at the end of holy Lama Winston McCullough's transcript of the first year's teachings, so if you have any questions you can ask him about it. You better check. But there are four thoughts that we have that are wrong. And this is the most important one here. The Master is describing *avidya*.

Avidya in Tibetan is *marikpa*. It's the first link of the wheel of suffering. It means misunderstanding our world. “A” means “not,” as we saw with *anitya* at the beginning of the whole teaching. *Vidya* means “to know.” *Vid*, the Sanskrit root is “v-i-d.” And the Indo-European is something like *weis*. We have many words that come from this. “Wisdom” comes from this. “Listen” comes from this and then the word “wise” comes from this. The word “video,” which means “to see,” “to see something,” comes from this. “Vision” comes from this. The one I like the best is “druid,” from Celtic. The ancient Celtic is “druvid.” “Dru” comes from

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

dir, that we had before, meaning “strong like a tree.” Or like the “dharma.” And then “vid” means “to know.” And a strong seer or ancient Celtic wise man was called a “druvid,” which became “druid.”

So *avidya* means “misunderstanding.” Misunderstanding what? We think things which are *anatman* are *atman*. I’d like to talk about *atman*. People translate it as “self.” You have to now listen very carefully for about three more minutes. It has been a cause of limitless misunderstanding of the ancient Indian religions, the meaning of the word “atman” in Buddhism. You know that “atman” can refer to a being, a divine being, one who is described as having created the world. In Tibetan it’s called *dak*. That’s not at all what this line is talking about, obviously. We discussed the idea of *atman* as a creator being in the teachings on the *Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* by Master Shantideva, and many of you, heard those teachings. It’s not the *atman* which is referred to in this line at all. This *atman* means “a self.”

Let’s talk about the roots, and then we’ll talk about what self we’re talking about. There are many traditional ways of explaining the word *atman*. Some texts say it comes from “un.” Which means “to breathe,” which we had just before today. Some people say the *atman* comes from the word “va” which means “to breathe” also. I like the etymology that stems from the *Rigveda*, where you find a word for self which is *tman*. Just *tman*.

Long “a” is a frequent prefix. I think this word is *Atman*. *Tman* comes from a root in Sanskrit, *tam*, which means “to gasp” or “to cut breath” with your throat. And Indo-European word is *tem*, which means “to cut” or “to cut off.” This word occurs in several English words. One is “atom.” The “t-o-m” comes from the “t-e-m” and it means “a discrete, tiny, cut off entity.” Like almost a self, you see?

The word “temple” comes from this same root, “t-e-m,” because originally a temple was a place which was fenced off, marked off, cut off from the rest of the town or village. The old Christian monks’ “tonsure,” also comes from this root meaning “to cut the hair in a special design.” I have an automatic tonsure [laughter]. And you can see then that the root *tman* which in the *Rigveda* means “a self” or “life” — “life” or “breath” — has come to mean “an individual unit.” “A self-contained, cut off unit.”

Now here’s what *atman* really means in a Buddhist scripture. It means “self-nature.” It doesn’t mean “self.” Do Buddhists deny the self? It’s a silly question. Buddhists and all great Indian pundits, even Master Patanjali, describes existence as “that which you can perceive with unmistakable perceptions.” I’m sitting up here, I am myself. It would be foolish to deny that I don’t exist or that I’m not myself. It’s obviously not what these words mean. So what is the self which Buddhists are denying?

Let’s go back to that picture of Je Tsongkapa as he approaches the house of his master and the master comes to the door and says, “My gosh, Manjushri’s coming up to the door.” And Je Tsongkapa looks at his master and says, “Oh, my gosh, Vajradhara or Vajrapani is standing in the door.” That’s the only meaning of “no self.” Try to remember it’s the same as the meaning of emptiness. There is no Je Tsongkapa walking down the road. There is no Manjushri walking down the road. There’s only a blank figure, four sticks and a body, coming down the road. What you see when you stand in the doorway is totally up to the seeds in your own mind.

I’m not talking about psychological mood. That’s not the point. When you’re in a good mood the people around you look pretty good. When you’re in a bad mood everyone seems to

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

be bad. That's not the point of this. This is actually when you open your door you see a full perfect tantric deity walking down the road. It's not a result of having had a good breakfast. [laughter] It's a result of extremely powerful karmic seeds in your mind and it's reality.

The only meaning of "no self" is that there's no Je Tsongkapa out there walking down the road. And there's no tantric Angel, Manjushri, walking down the road. In and of itself, from its own side. There is no such thing.

"Oh, Je Tsongkapa looks like a tantric angel to me."

You can't say it that way. It's not Je Tsongkapa. It is a tantric angel.

"Oh, it's a tantric angel that I saw as Je Tsongkapa before."

You can't say that. It's a figure. That's its emptiness. That's what "no self" means. There is no self. There is no person walking down the road who is Je Tsongkapa or who is a tantric angel from their own side.

You want to go to heaven. You want to go to paradise. You want to travel to countless stars and appear before countless beings to make them happy. There's only one way, you must do the karma to put the seeds in your mind to see yourself doing these things. Because we are empty, because we don't have a self or a self-nature that comes from its own side, we can become all of these things. We can practice yoga breathing exercises, meditations, and the six perfections. Those will put seeds in our hearts and we will gradually see our bodies turn into those of a tantric Angel. That's the only meaning of emptiness.

You can see how vital it is to becoming an angel. If things existed from their own side the way they look to us now then nothing can ever happen, we're stuck like this until we die. Because we are empty, because we don't exist from our own side, because we are *anatman*, because we don't have *atman*, in this meaning of *atman*, we can become anything.

We are a blank blackboards. We can write anything on that. Not by choice. You can't pretend to be a tantric angel and then see yourself turn into one. You must do the karma to create it. You must be kind and you must have the intention so stand before countless beings on countless planets, around countless stars and hand them happiness. Give them this knowledge which is being given today.

So *anatman*, the fact that we are not ourselves by ourselves, we are not ourselves from our own side, is crucial. So always remember that's what a Buddhist means when they say no self, *anatman*. It has nothing to do with denying that I'm a person, or I exist, or the world exists. Of course it exists.

Now something exciting ... at this juncture in the Yoga Sutra Master Patanjali takes off into the Six Steps of Lord *Maitreya*. You've had these before. I couldn't remember when I had taught them. We are trained in this in the monastery in the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra course, which takes twelve years. And holy Lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen taught it to us. It's my dear hope that we could perhaps have him finish the teaching that he began over two years' period in this country. It's my hope that the directors — Winston and John and I think Salim-bai is important there — and also the other staff here could contemplate him coming perhaps to New York to finish the last part and then perhaps to visit Diamond Mountain and teach the Perfection of Wisdom.

This all comes from that source. It's from a text called the *Uttara Tantra* spoken by Maitreya to Arya Asanga. It's another reason why I think this text is deeply related to Master

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

Asanga’s teachings. This line indicates what we call ignorance as it comes from our past lives. This is the first of the six steps in which we get in trouble. This *avidya* being spoken about here, this misunderstanding, is a reference to the very seeds in our own mind which make us misunderstand things. We look at one of the people around us, especially if they irritate us, and they seem to exist from their own side. They seem to have *atman*. But the truth is that your mind is projecting this person in the same way that Je Tsongkapa’s teacher’s mind was projecting Manjushri walking up to his house. You are solely responsible for every irritating person in this room. And by being irritated you create new seeds in your mind to help them come back in the spring. This is the truth.

“Well, where did that seed first come from? I mean, there were irritating people here before I ever got irritated.”

You met your first irritating person because of a seed for irritation that you had from your past life. And that’s what this verse is talking about. Ignorance comes to us because of seeds for thinking this way all along. It’s very hard to catch yourself having ignorance. “How am I seeing things wrong right now? What am I doing wrong?”

It’s the whole question of, “What is yoga?” *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. The whole meaning of yoga for Master Patanjali is how do we stop our tendency to see everything wrong all the time? You have to fight against it with the knowledge that what you see is being projected from the seeds in your own mind. And even to catch yourself is difficult because of seeds to be ignorant while you’re looking for your ignorance. Even as we try to find misunderstanding in our own mind we are misunderstanding it. This comes from our past lives — countless lives of misunderstanding — and it makes seeing the true nature of things around us so difficult. That is the first link in our trouble, in our problem. This verse is talking about the seeds, which come from our past lives.

We’ll do one more line then we’ll take a tea break.

[Gail Deutsch: *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. Yoga is learning to stop how the mind turns things around. (I.2)]

Thank you. The first line of the Yoga Sutra is *Atha yoga anushasanam*. “Now I will review for you the meaning of yoga.” Meaning, “What do I know? This is just what my teacher told me.” It’s a traditional way to start a scripture with humility. But the next line says *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. The whole point of yoga or the yoga exercises, the breathing practices which you are going to learn, and the meditations, and the retreats and all the study — the whole point is to stop our tendency to see things wrong.

I wanted to say before I forgot that there are many kinds of breathing exercises. I’ve asked — I humbly request — that each of you again study the breathing exercise called *tong-len*. It is the first and greatest of all the *pranayamas* of our lineage. But the other types of breathing exercises, *pranayama*, require close supervision of a teacher, of a person who can help you, because they are very difficult. If you do them slightly wrong you can actually make yourself sick. The *tong-len* breathing exercise you can do happily without getting sick or any worries about any problems with it, because of the element of kindness involved prevents anything

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

happening in the inner channels which would not be good for us. So you can jump into that one happily and you should and it's a powerful way to start these breathing practices.

I'll go over the Sanskrit words. I believe *chitta* is the first. You know this word from "bodhichitta" meaning "the mind which wishes to become that Angel." *Chit*, the root in Sanskrit means "to think" or "to consider" or "to count." Its Indo-European root is unclear. I believe it's *kweit*. And it's also related to the word "vid" that we already had, which is "to know." All "cha" sounds come from ancient "kla."

I like *kweit* because as it came into our language, the "k" drops off and it becomes the word "white," the color white, which is why white is spelled with a w-h. And it comes into the word "wheat," the grain wheat, because when you grind it it becomes a white color. All ancient texts describe perception in terms of a bright, a brightness, a projecting of light from the mind out. You see, in the Western world we think of perception as information coming in. The ancient Sanskrit words for understanding or knowledge or perception all involve light going out of the mind and illuminating the objects around us. And so *chitta* comes from roots which mean "white brightness light flowing out of our mind and illuminating the objects around us." It's not much of a step then to say that actually the karmic seeds in our mind are projecting the objects around us.

I like the word *virtti*. It's mispronounced "vritti" because of a mistake that a German scholar made long ago. When they got to the Sanskrit vowel "r" they transcribed it as "r-i" with a dot under the "r," meaning "ri," and then all the dots get lost as time goes on and even the word Sanskrit is a corruption of *samskirta*. *Virtti* means "any turning around of anything." The Sanskrit root can be spelled "v-i- r-t." And the ancient Indo-European is *vert*.

I like this one because it's the root of "weird." [laughs] "Weird" means "twisted," you see. "Vert" means "turned around," "twisted around." The word "wreath," like Christmas wreath, comes from the same root because you twist around the pine needles. The word "wrath" is spelled with a "w-r-a-t" because it means "a twisted emotion." An emotion which is twisted and turned around. And most importantly I think the word, the word "wrong" comes from this root. The w-r in wrong comes from *virtti*.

The whole point of the word *virtti* is that we are seeing things the wrong way. We twist things around the wrong way. It looks like the irritating people in this room came from Tucson airport. Your mind is producing them at this moment; your mind is creating them at this moment. The incredible tragedy of our lives is that the new irritation you feel for them plants new seeds to see them or someone else be irritating in the future. That's why we're still here, that's why we have to die if we don't practice well.

Nirodhah: "ni" means sometimes "to stop," sometimes "inner." *Rodhah* comes from a root *rudh*. The ancient Indo-European root is *wrad*. And it comes into English in the word "root," the word "radical," there's one more...what's that...mmm... "radish"! [laughs] All meaning "a root." *Nirodhah* means, or so "root" means "to grow" or "to have a root or a branch." *Nirodhah* means "to stop something from growing."

So I threw in the first descriptive line of the whole Yoga Sutra in which Master Patanjali tells you what yoga is for him. It is stopping our tendency to see our world the wrong way. Later in the text he uses *virtti* in three or four different ways, which is something he does with different words, like *asmita*, throughout the whole text. On that basis some people have thought

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

that yoga can be defined as stopping all mental processes. This is just simply not possible. The mind is independent from the body in that sense. The inner winds are where the mind meets the body. But when the inner winds die off, when the body dies, the mind is not affected at all. The mind continues. Like a rider getting off a horse and walking to another horse, which he has created with his own mind.

It's flatly impossible to stop all your mental functions. And I don't think, it's not a serious goal. I mean every major tradition holds that our goal is to become a holy being, a divine being who can help countless other beings. And for that we need to have compassion and love for them and for that we need to have a mind. We need to have the ability to think about them, to focus on them, to go to them. This is clearly not a goal simply to blink out, simply to stop existing or stop thinking entirely. It's not thinking itself which is our problem. It's not thinking itself which we need to stop. It's the kinds of wrong thinking, it's the kinds of thinking which cause pain and suffering.

We'll do one more line and then we'll take a break.

[Alistair Holmes: *Dirg darshana shaktyor eka-atmateva-asmita*. Selfness is where the strong impression of someone seeing something and the something someone sees makes it seem as if each one were itself. (II.6)]

This is another of those kind of Buddhist, Heart Sutra or Dalai Lama, His Holiness, statements which can be very confusing, especially I think to a new person. And there have been a lot of misconceptions grow up around statements like this.

Master Patanjali is moving on to the second step of our suffering. It's where we misunderstand subjects and objects. It begins in the womb itself. He's now describing ignorance as it begins in the first moments of our life and continues through our whole lifetime.

Does this monk sitting up here talking exist as an object for you? Of course, if you haven't fallen asleep yet in which case you can't hear me anyway. *[laughter]* Do you have a mind? Are you the subject which is perceiving this monk talking? Of course you do. There is of course a subject and there is of course an object. Are they separate? Of course they're separate. I can stick a pin in you and eat some pumpkin pie and I'll be happy and you'll be sad. *[laughter]* The subject is separate from the object. Are they separate in the way they seem? Is the monk up there talking separate from the subject down there listening in the way that it appears to be? Do I exist out here on the other side of this tent and you exist over there on your side of the tent in the way that it seems? And the answer then is no, not at all.

Again the seeds in your own mind are creating every detail of this talk for you. Every single word, every single syllable, every single detail of the sound is rushing by your mind through karmic seeds ripening sixty-five per second. It requires sixty-five separate extraordinary deeds of kindness to experience one second of a teaching on the Yoga Sutra. If you ever have doubts about how special you are or how amazing our lives are you have to remember that. You have done sixty-five extraordinary, difficult kindnesses to other people in the past to hear these words for one second.

In that way I'm not a separate object from you. You are creating me as I speak. In that sense I am not myself, meaning I am not separate from you in the way you thought. You are

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

producing this holy teaching through your own goodness. But we forget. We don't know, we don't understand where the teachings coming from. And that's what these lines mean when they say the, the impression that the subject and object are separate is wrong.

I have seen many people squander this expensive karma. I beg you not to squander it. You will walk out of here, all things equal, having lost thousands and thousands of karmic seeds to hear these things again. It's one of the reasons why you must maintain high, beautiful, pure thoughts during this teaching. "I am only here because I will take this knowledge and share it with other suffering people."

Asmita, key word. Comes from the root *as*, meaning "to be," which we already had with *asana* and *abhyasa*. Which came into English as "is" and "was" and "essence." And *asmi* is the first person singular, present tense, "I am." "Ta" is an ending like with *shunyata*, which came into English as *tion*, like "motivation." And it just means "the being of that thing." So *asmita*'s literal meaning is "I am-ness."

It's a standard word in Tibetan *nga'o dzinpa*. *Nga* means "I," *nga'o* means "me," and it's a wrong way of thinking about selves. It's thinking about me the wrong way. *Asmita* means that. I think it's very important to say that in the Yoga Sutra Master Patnanjali uses this word in three or four very different ways. So you have to be careful when you read the other parts of the Sutra.

Next line.

[Jenny Thomas & Laura Thornton: *Svarasa vahi vidushopi tatha rudhobhiniveshah*. (Irish: *Smaoineamh a tháirt a thagann leis féin chomh maith leo súid a bhfuil tuiscint acu a fhásann níos láirdre*.) Grasping is a thought that comes on all of its own, even for those who understand, and then it grows ever stronger. (II.9)]

The key word here is *abhinivesha*, then I'll go to *vidvans*.

It's difficult to trace. *Vish* is a word that means "to be active." It comes into Indo-European in roots like, I believe it's "vice." *Abhinivesha* in Tibetan can be *ngunpar shepa* or *sepa*. *Sepa* is one of the links of the wheel of life, number eight. It comes in three different forms. One, it means "craving." One of the forms is "craving for yourself as you die." It's called *jigse*. It's a special fear of death. And many of the ancient commentators interpreted this word with that kind of craving, which is only one of the three different kinds. And that interpretation has been followed by many commentators in the centuries since. There's another kind of *sepa*, *abhinivesha*, which simply means "to grasp onto yourself in the wrong way," as we have spoken about already.

So now here's the point ... every person in this room has already heard me say that the irritating person in front of you is being produced by your own thoughts and that those thoughts you don't have current control over. You don't have a choice ... right now. You planted karmic seeds long ago or yesterday — they are ripening now; they're forcing you to see a irritating person in front of you. It doesn't matter how much you wish they weren't irritating, your karmic seeds are forcing you to see them as irritating. You can't affect those seeds in the present instant.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

“*Heyam dukkham anagatam*” in the Yoga Sutra, “We can only avoid pain in the future.” It’s too late to change the karmic seeds which you planted in the past.

“Well, how long will it take me to turn this thing around?” [*laughter*] You have to start planting new seeds now, which are good and pure, by not being irritated at this irritating person. And that’s the whole trick of all practice. You don’t want to repeat past mistakes. You are seeking to replace the old seeds with new seeds. It’s a lot like gardening. Master Patanjali calls it *tatah kshetrikavat* in the fourth chapter. We have to be like gardeners. We have to rip out the old karmic seeds. We have to start planting good ones.

“Well, okay, I can handle that; I’ll try not to be irritated at this irritating person.” But we slip you see... even those who know. *Vidvans* means “knowing ones.” And it’s the root for *vidushopi* in this verse. It comes from *vid* that we had before. And the *van* came into English as “i-n-g.” “Knowing,” we know better. People who’ve been in the ACI classes and the teacher who taught them in New York in the past, we all know we’re not supposed to get irritated. But even for those who know, which Master Patanjali says in this verse, we slip again, we take the person. A few minutes after this class is over, I will walk in one direction, you will walk in another, and we’ll get irritated at someone. We know, we understand — our *avidya* has been addressed, but it just takes constant awareness and practice.

So this line is all about the third step in the six steps through which we get in trouble. We were born with a misunderstanding of the irritating person in front of us. In the womb our mind already began to separate: subject and an object which I did not create. And then even after we’ve had a nice teaching on it, you and me will leave this tent and get irritated at someone and plant new bad seeds. And our life’s practice, our *sadhana*, is just trying to get our wisdom to overcome our ignorance. It’s being mindful that every time we are irritated at this person for another second we are creating sixty-five new seeds for sixty-five new irritating people to come into our lives. It’s not an exaggeration. It’s frightening. And it’s depressing because we are *vidvans*, we know better.

So our whole life’s practice is simply to struggle to use our wisdom, our understanding of where things are really coming from, to stop getting ourselves in trouble. If we could remove all the negative seeds through some powerful practices, if we could create new positive seeds, then we would be forced to see every person around us as an Angel, tantric Angel, real tantric Angel. And then we would be able to go to all worlds and make all people happy. There’s no more fun thing, there’s no more exciting thing to look forward to. All of us are going to do that. All of us — all of us evolve into that. It’s unstoppable.



So please don’t forget you have to review tonight again. And I repeat, you know there’s still one or two people in this room that you kind of like the way they look but you were kind of shy. Go over and, “How about a date over Yoga Sutra?” [*laughs*] And no you don’t have to be so obvious. There could be friends, people who kinda attract you. This is past karma. I’m not saying only romantically, but you have a karmic connection to other people here. Let it come. You know, get together somewhere this evening and sit around dinner, four, five six people whatever, and pull out your papers, and start looking them over again. And talk — talk about

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Three – Geshe Michael Roach

the ideas with each other. Then tomorrow before the class, one more time. That's the tradition of our lineage of the Dalai Lamas. Then we'll meet here tomorrow.

And thank you for all the hard work you're doing here. I know it's often difficult to come to a new place. There's always some, some difficulties and problems and uncomfortable things and it's a very noble thing that you came to do here.

Morning: Day Four ❀ December 1, 2002
Salim Lee

Good morning. So nice to see all the smiling faces. Incredible as it may feel, today is Sunday, which is the last day that Geshe Michael is going to teach us this time... in person.

Generally every custom has a story behind it. Some of the really good customs have a purpose. Now maybe most of us are familiar with the prayers that we do in the morning, which generally consist of two parts. The first is what we call the mandala offering. The second part is the refuge and bodhichitta prayers. Now refuge and bodhicitta prayers are not really prayers. It is a reaffirmation of what we want to do today or how we want to go through this life, or the rest of our lives actually, for those who have already taken their vow to do that.

The first part is actually the fun part – the mandala offering. Now I guess this is for our brothers and sisters that maybe are not so familiar with it – because I could still see people struggling with doing that. But you all very good at that now, right? And yet, this finger thing [*Salim demonstrates the mudra*], and to certain extent, even the words are not the most important thing. The story behind the mandala offering is really, really fantastic.

There are a few ways of doing this mandala offering. But first, there are many reasons, of course, why we do it. There are many reasons. It's not just one of the things that we do here. It's that we believe that this is something that we do to repay things that we receive, so that mandala offering is a means of showing our gratitude. That's why Lama Tsongkapa did hundreds of thousands of them in so many days, until they say that his hands and elbows had blisters.

So it's not a magical thing. It's not an empty gesture – it's loaded with meaning. So why I keep talking about this, is that we should do this really understanding the meaning, and let's make it meaningful, even though if maybe we don't know the words or we can't do the fingers correctly. But let's just do it. So in this way, then we really get the benefit of what we do.

We'll talk about refuge and bodhichitta, meaning reaffirmation of how we're going to go through today and the rest of our lives. That is, we are counting on taking refuge in those Three Jewels – three things that are unsurpassable; three things that are really going to guide us; the ones that we going to count on – the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. And then also, we keep reminding ourselves again that *dro la penchir sanggye drupar shok*, meaning we do that for all beings. So the second part is just as powerful as the first part – every word means something.

Then the mandala offering is like this – if you believe that what we receive, just like Lama Tsongkapa believed that what he received in that particular life was so precious that he was willing to give anything and everything. But that is anything and everything for Lama Tsongkapa then – what did he have? He only had that body and that mind. No? So then this mandala offering is an effort to say, “If I could have all this...,” you know.

So the most basic thing is to say, “If I could have all the universe... if I could have all this universe covered in gold, in beautiful gems...,” with anything that we could think of as being beautiful. Just offer whatever you think – the flowers, the music, the smell, the incense, anything that is really just perfect for your senses. “Oh, if I could have all that, I would be gladly willingly really want to give it to to all these enlightened beings who have been guiding me and making my life worthwhile.”

So that's why the wording is like this – the whole universe covered with all these

gemstones, and I give it to you. Not as if those enlightened beings need it. Obviously they don't. This would nonetheless show that if we could appreciate that what they've been giving to us, in this way at least, they know that somehow or other we get the message. So another way of doing this mandala offering: first is that all this visualization, right, everything? And that's why Winston-la will have information on this: how to serve and doing mandala properly. There's a certain course in that. And you do all the physical things and then things that you own, things that you don't own, things that can not even be owned by anybody. But it doesn't matter, you offer it like that.

But then that is only one way. There is another way of doing that, and that is we use all those beautiful things out there, all this perfect universe, and with this all of the senses, the sensual objects that we could offer. Now we use those objects just as the symbols for something that is more precious that we could offer, which is really what you have inside you. That's why this way, sometimes it's called inner mandala offering. Which is really a simple way of saying you really want to offer whatever is inside of you, but you use the external means as a symbol.

So you're still doing the same thing – you say the same thing, but this time it's even more loaded. Not only those things, but what does “inner” mean? Well, inner means anything that you think is good about you. You know. Like getting up at 5:30 this morning *[laughs]* even though you feel, “Aw, not again.” Or the moment you stop from getting angry at somebody. Offer all this practice. Whatever you think is good about you, that too, you want to offer. So that's the so-called inner mandala offering. And of course, there are many more.

The next one is also quite interesting. If we come to think about it, there's the universe covered with gold and precious jewels; they're just visualizations, right? So is our inner offering, it's also visualizations really. Because you cannot offer it like that. Except to say that, “Yes, we can, I do it all for you.”

It's almost like these little kids that came back on the last day of school: “Mommy, I have the report card.” And why did the children do that? Not that they want a pat. They want to please mom and dad, right? This is the same – like us with our report card. “I'm offering mommy.” *[laughter]*

So that is it, the mandala offering should be like that. “Maybe I didn't get all ‘A's’ but I did try, I did try. You know, I did try.”

And that's why mandala offering is such a wonderful, wonderful exercise everyday. Or any time, if you have time. That's why Lama Tsongkapa did it so many hundreds of thousands of times. But when somebody tells us, 'You have to do a hundred thousand mandala offerings',” we said, “Aw.” We felt it's punishment. You see, if we don't get it, nice things become a burden.

So this is really a good way of doing that. But then if all of these ways of offering mandalas are visualizations, are they real? They are real because it is you who visualizes it, and because you make it real. Because of you, they are real. Then if that's the case, if that's the deal, you might as well go all the way. Then you just say, as John-la was saying: “Well, everything really has no nature of its own. Then whatever I've created is purely a projection of my karma.”

Now for a time you might say, “Wouldn't it be fantastic if what I have right now are just perfect karmas, in my own mind, the karma that is no longer burdened with anything else, but just pure things that really are the essence of all goodness. Then I can visualize whole place, and me, and everybody in it, as just being perfect. Wouldn't it be just nice?”

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

So this third type of offering mandala, as Winston-la first said, is the result part, meaning you get used to it everyday or whenever you have time: this perfect mandala, with perfect beings in it, and and a perfect me in it. Whereas you usually say, “poor me,” this time, you say, “No, actually I have that potential and I can be that, and I'm offering all the essence of perfections in doing that.”

So now you see, doing little things like mandala is in itself a practice. The same way as when you drink a nice cup of coffee and when you offer things. You can visualize this not as coffee: “Oh, it's so nice.” But at that moment when you say, “It's so nice,” you stop. You think, “Wouldn't it be fantastic if this were the nectar of immortality, *amrita*?” Then I could not take it only for me – if I had it, I would give it to, first, my cat... or my boyfriend, or my kids, or my friend. Start doing that. But then you say, “Why? Why only this little bit? Why don't I give it to everybody?” Then all of sudden this cup of coffee became many, many, many, many cups of coffee – It may make Starbucks go bankrupt. *[laughter]*. But the whole thing is then it becomes a really fantastic, fantastic exercise.

So with that little pep talk, let's do this real mandala offering. It's up to your heart which one you're gonna do, but if I were you, I'd go for broke. *[laughter]* It doesn't make you any poorer, does it, giving away everything? Well, I have a confession to make. When it was finally confirmed that the three of us would have to give a talk, I kind of prepared something, because this time I thought it was good that at least we know what we should be talking about. And then after three days of Geshe-la's teaching, what I prepared is really, really – what can I say? *[laughter]* I mean, what I thought was really quite reasonable, but now I think, “Why bother to talk to the hump if we can listen straight from the camel,” that's what they say. *[laughs]* No, I mean, Geshe-la, I didn't call you “camel.” *[laughter]*.

So today, I'm gonna do an even sillier thing. It occurs to me, the first time I heard something from Yoga Sutra was when Geshe Michael mentioned it at the first teaching, during the Quiet Retreat Teaching from “The Inner Kingdom.” That time, Geshe-la used the verse *sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara asevito dirdha bhumih*, if you can remember – that kind of stuck in my mind. I have to use whatever I know to impress you all you see, so, *[laughter]* I have to say that first. *[laughter]*. But then, quickly, quickly I have to confess, I only know three verses of all hundred ninety six of them. But then, whatever I know today, I would like to share it with you. So please don't take it this as a teaching, but as a sharing. It's just to give me a degree of comfort. If you share, it doesn't matter whether it's perfect or not. *[laughs]*. But at least this is what I know, and I would like to just share it with you. The content definitely, definitely is deficient of any wisdom, but at least the motivation is good. The motivation is that I just want to share with you how I went through this Yoga Sutra and tried to get the benefit of it.

So when I say that I'm going to try something really silly, I mean that when I learned this Yoga Sutra, after reading it bit by bit, I realized that there is a pattern. There is a framework. The entire thing, it has a logical sequence. And the whole hundred ninety six verses it has, make sense the way Master Patanjali presented them. So today, in one and a half hours, or two hours or whatever, I'm going to attempt what no other fool's tried to do before – that is to present you with the whole framework of Yoga Sutra. *[laughs]*.

Geshe Michael generally always gives a title of his talk, and Ora-la is very expert in picking up one sentence or the theme of his topic. And I was thinking if I were to give a title of

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

what I'm gonna share with you – in the last few years there have been some serious books like “Windows Excel for Dummies.” You know them. *[laughter]* Yeah, there are many difficult subjects, but they are written about in a simple way and they are called, “for Dummies,” right? This talk is worse than that. Because this is... if there was a title like that, this would be, “Yoga Sutra by a Dummy.” *[laughter]* *[students: No, no.]* Oh, no really, really, really. *[laughs]*

[student: “Salim.”]

Yes?

[student: “It can't be ‘really?’”]

Huh?

[student: “You're empty?”]

Oh, that's right. I'm empty, so I can not be “really, really, really.” Okay, so there it is, “Yoga Sutra by a Dummy.” *[laughter]* I'm gonna use just three verses that I know, and I keep repeating that because that's what I could memorize, and I know I can say it in Sanskrit. I know the pronunciation must be still wrong. Is that right, Brian? *[laughs]* Also the rules are the same as with John and Winston – butt in anytime, put your hands up. I better put... *[looks at watch]* Could you make a sign so I don't talk like last time? *[looks toward Winston and Gail].* *[laughs]*.

The first verse of the Yoga Sutra that Geshe Michael mentioned yesterday said: “Well, this is the instruction on Yoga.” Master Patanjali said this with very, very great humility. What is very, very interesting to me is the second sutra. Because this is where they define what Yoga Sutra is all about: *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. I don't know, is that all right, Brian?

[Brian: “That was perfect.”]

Okay! *[laughs]*

It's so comforting to have so many experts on Yoga Sutras among us. *[laughter]* It's really humbling, so please correct me as I go wrong. What is the translation for that verse? Well, actually Geshe Michael already went through that yesterday, right? If you check on yesterday's reading, it's in there. *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. *Nirodhah* is, Geshe Michael would say cessation, controlling, or to put a stop to it: something of that nature.

Now Geshe Michael pointed out one very, very important, very, very interesting thing about this word *virtti*. It's not *vritti*, but *virtti* which Geshe Michael said if you write it wrongly, it could be mistranslated. Now what does that mean, “*virtti*?” Sometimes it's translated as... what did Geshe-la translate it as? Turning around things, right? Or sometimes it's translated as modification, is that right? Modification, turning things around, or fluctuation, that's another word they often use to translate this, and *chitta* is mind, or consciousness, or so.

It was really quite a relief, when I read this, that yoga really is about controlling or turning around, or correcting the fluctuation, or the modification, or the agitation of the mind. Why was that a great relief? Because when Geshe Michael said before, “Well, you have to learn by yoga.” I thought yoga was just a headstand. *[laughter]* And my children would attest to the fact that I'm utterly useless with that. *[laughs]* But one day, one day, one day.

So *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. The whole essence of the entire teaching, I believe, is in this thing, in this particular sutra. So what Master Patanjali says is that, “Yoga is just trying to correct your mind.” Your mind is agitated, has agitation. Your mind has this fluctuation, your mind has these things. Whatever state of mind you have now, in whatever shape you are in, and whenever you do use your mind, that mind is always in the state which is incorrect, and always

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

agitated. So naturally, you can say that the actual nature of the mind is without agitation. Right? So the actual nature of the mind is without this mistaken idea about things, without the agitation.

Now, we will go back to the Yoga Sutra to look at the next verse, which is actually the grand finale of the entire sutra. Verse number three should be the grand finale of this Yoga Sutra. It says, *tada drashtuh svarupevasthanam*, meaning “If the mind is no longer agitated, if the mind is no longer mistaken, then the real nature of the mind, *drashtuh*, or the real seer, will abide in its true nature.”

So there you are, that's the whole deal – the mind is in an agitated form. With yoga, when you can get rid of this agitation, when you can get rid of this mistaken way of looking at things, then the real nature of the mind, *drashtuh*, or the seer – the real seer, perceiver, whatever the term that we may use then – can abide in its true nature. Okay.

Well, that's it, that's what I have to say. [*laughter*]. But then, Master Patanjali went on and on. He went around the circle to finally come back to that third verse. When they say mind, this we will control, it's very similar to when you say, “I control my children.” Not that I can, but [*laughter*] what does it mean? It doesn't mean you eliminate your children, does it? And it doesn't mean controlling completely. You control maybe their behavior, or things like that. This is the connotation of controlling the mind. It's not really that. That's why Geshe Michael made it very clear yesterday, it's not trying to get rid of the mind. No, it's “controlling,” meaning controlling the agitation, controlling the fluctuation, controlling the mistaken way of looking at things.

Now if the mind is always in agitated form, and if the true nature is without agitation, then where does this agitation come from, and how do we stop it? Now we are talking about the whole Yoga Sutra. In the next section of the Yoga Sutra, Master Patanjali says, “Okay, let me just make it clear what I mean by mind.” Mind is anything that you use – your thought, the whole thing, whether it is correct or not correct; your imagination, that's also mind; even your dreams. They are all really functions of the mind. So correct ways of thinking, wrong ways of thinking, your presumption, or your imagination, or your thoughts, and as I said, your dreams and sleep, they are also part of your mind. Now I think Geshe Michael mentioned this during his previous teaching, when he mentioned, “First, we are in *viparyaya*,” [ignorance], remember that? And then we begin to doubt, you know, and then you get *pramana*. *Pramana* means correct and valid perception.

And then Master Patanjali says, “Well, valid perception can be divided into this and that.” And that's actually covered in an ACI course. That was very well elaborated yesterday, and I don't need to repeat it here. Geshe-la explained about how the mind works – the nature of the activity of the mind, or the mental functions. Then, he said – right? – “Why is it in the state of agitation and how do we get rid of that?” Or why do we want to get rid of the agitation, anyway? Maybe that's the first question. Master Patanjali said something like this: “Now because it's agitated, that's why you can't see its true nature. Really what agitation here means is that you are not in synch with reality, with the real thing you don't see – you're not in harmony with reality. You do not see things correctly – in this sense, that is what agitation means.

Then Master Patanjali also said further along in the sutra that for those who can see clearly, for those who can see clearly – with a clear mind – they can see that all of this is *duhkha*.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

Now we found a reason why we want to get rid of the agitation, because if you could see clearly, if you are not deceived, you could see that all of our existence here is *duhkha*.

Now *duhkha* means what? [*pauses to listen*] Oh, yes. Until yesterday, I really thought it meant suffering. Really it means – what is it? – unsatisfactory, you know, not perfect. Geshe Michael explained it perfectly. The word *sukha* is, remember the wagon wheel with the hole doing that? [*motions smoothly*] Now, *duhkha* is when the hole is somehow skewed. When it's out of kilter, you may say. So *duhkha* has got nothing to do with being happy or unhappy, not necessarily. Everything we do, because we cannot see reality clearly, because we cannot grasp it correctly, then everything we do is askew, out of kilter. Therefore whatever we try to do, always, always because it's out of kilter, it always ends up being something that is unsatisfactory. That's what *duhkha* really means.

So the purpose is really to get out of this *duhkha*; to put our life – can you say, “in kilter?” We say “out of kilter.” So that we could really put our axle right in the hole, and the wagon wheel now at least doesn't go, “Clank, clank, clank!” Instead it is just smooth – because that's the nature of the mind. Then, okay, so we now embark on a mission to try to get rid of this *duhkha*.

And then Master Patanjali says that if we ask, “How do we get rid of this?” Then he says, “Well the foundation of it – there are two things.” First – Geshe-la already mentioned this – is *abhyasah*. Remember *asa*: “seat,” *abhi*: “to the other end.” So what it means is constant, persistent practice, all the time. Sometimes there in a few commentaries, it includes your constant, persistent practice of meditation. Now in this sense, meditation is not only when we're sitting on our cushion. What it means here is constant application of controlling our mind all the time; always thinking about what we are doing, about what should we do for this life. So first is *abhyasah*.

The other one is *vairagya*. It sounds like that particular pill that does totally the opposite [*laughter*]. This *vairagya* is often translated as detachment, non-attachment, but I'll tell you what it actually means, I think, very much in the tradition of ACI. What it means is that you feel that you are no longer dependent on sensual pleasures. You can still have your ice cream, Geshe Michael always says that. It's good to have a good pizza, your happiness, your well being, is no longer dependent on that. If you have it, fine; if you don't, fine. But whether you choose to eat pizza, or to eat stewed straw, you know which one you would like to choose. Whatever you think, that's okay, as long as you like it properly.

Now, these two, *abhyasah* and *vairagya* are the foundation of getting rid of this agitation. This is what is in the Yoga Sutra. Now there are few elements of this too. So we are going in sequence right? First, we all agree now that this existence is *duhkha*, out of kilter. I said this to David last night: basically in colloquial terms, “Life sucks,” right? It doesn't mean that everything is not enjoyable, or everything is suffering. No, it doesn't mean that, but it's because whatever we do, at the end it's always not satisfactory. We talked about it last night, you know? If you had the buffet dinner, those ribs, maybe they look nice, and if you take five or six ribs, it's still very nice, right? But then at the end of the night, after taking five or six ribs, [*laughs*], the next thing is you're thinking, “Pepto Bismol!” [*laughter*] See, anything that we think is nice, anything that we think is desirable. anything that we think, “I must have it”, and all that, when you do have it, not only when you're denied having it, even when you do have it, you are always

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

ending up with something that is unsatisfactory.

So first is the realization that this life, this condition, is unsatisfactory. We've had many years to prove it, right? We tried all the time, everyday. We keep doing this, feeding all our desires. And at the end, it's always very, very unsatisfactory. So we know this is what is implied here. Also in these two things, this *abhyasah* and *vairagya*, there is another factor. Yes, there is an alternative: because there is a cause, we can get out of this. So first we must know the condition, that life sucks: that this one is unsatisfactory. Yes, there is a better way. Yes, we can get out of this. There is a better way of doing this. Then we constantly, repeatedly, remind ourselves of this and incorporate it into our practice. This is coupled with the fact that we know that we're no longer dependent on all of the sensual objects outside to make us happy because they are not what they seem to be anyway.

What do you think this is? This is the first principal path in Buddhism. This is renunciation. Renunciation is not a vow, like having a vow never again to eat pizza. Renunciation is saying no, never again, whether I'm buying a shirt that I like or not. Nothing like that. It's got nothing to do with it. It almost has nothing to do with it.

So this is the basis. Master Patanjali said, "This is how you do it. This is your base." [sighs] Oh, okay, you know. If this is the case, you have to be nonattached, you have to have mastery of the senses, but that's not possible. And we can ask him, "But really, you know, okay we can do that, but really what are we watching for out here?"

And then Master Patanjali says, "Look, I'll tell you what: there is this, really. If you try to do these things, try this *abhyasah* and *vairagya*, or try to get rid of this agitation in your mind, basically there are five major hurdles, major obstacles." There are many more, but Master Patanjali listed them as five. Actually you could even say one, really.

Those are the obstacles. The first one is *avidya*. Actually, we can stop with just this. Because Geshe Michael just told us, *avidya* means what? It means looking at things the wrong way. You do not see. Whatever you do see is not really what you think it is. You know, this in itself, you can talk on and on about this, but basically it just so, so vital, so fundamental, that we see things wrongly.

From this, everything else just goes wrong. When you see wrongly here, it is not because you didn't go to the correct high school, or it's not because your parents didn't teach you well, or it's not just because when you grew up Martha Stewart wasn't that popular; it's not about that. This one here is actually in you. You've been carrying it all along, so you really have almost no chance of even knowing that this actually has something wrong with it because you might think in our society we would have given up on that already. You must have heard it everyday, the expression: "Ah, well that's human nature."

Is there any such thing like human nature? No. What there is, is human habit. They say violence is human nature. No, it's human habit. As His Holiness would say, "Show me one sign to say it's a human nature to be violent. Do we have fangs, or...?" There is no such thing. And then also my colleagues always say, "Well in business, you know, it's human nature that we have to cheat because otherwise you will not succeed." No, it's human habit. So from now on let's not use the word "human nature." It's only human habit, and as Master Shantideva said, any habit or any form of mind you have, you can always change it. So it's changeable.

So now, first is *avidya*, or... I can go on and on but you, you all know *avidya* how how

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

bad it is, right? Geshe Michael already went through that. Now Master Patanjali then enumerates the derivatives of *avidya*. The next one is what is called: what is the next? *Asmita*. *Asmita* is used with different meanings throughout this thing: *asmita*. Geshe Michael went through *asmita* already. It is “I am-ness.” “Asmi.” For instance, Brahman is *asmi*, you know. I am also the Brahman, meaning, it's a reality. So one meaning of *asmi* is first person, singular “me.” You know, “I” or if it's referring to a thing it's *asti*. *Asti* is this. *Asmi* is me, mine. Now, “I am-ness,” see, being “I am,” is maybe okay, because that's what you'll always be. Being “I am” is okay. In fact, some say that being “I am” is a divine prerogative or our prerogative, being “I am.”

What was the story when God asked Moses to go to the Pharaoh and to do all those fantastic things? And then Moses wasn't so sure, his self confidence was a bit shaken at that time because he was asked to do all these great things and he asked, “But whom should I said has sent me? You know, under whose authority?” And then God said, “Well tell your people that 'I am' has sent me to you. The Word, 'I am', has sent me to you.”

Judging from the way I talk, English is my second language – so I learned English. When I read that one, I thought “I am' has sent you” that's kind of funny. “I have sent you” is what the grammar book said, but “I am' has sent you?” That's not correct. But this “I am” is referring to “me.” Well, 'I am' is okay, but as an extension of *avidya*; to say, *asmita*, meaning “I am this” or “I am that” is not okay. Because of this, *asmita* is sometimes translated as egoity or egoism. But this is not in the sense of egoism, like “I want the bigger slice of the pumpkin pie.” It's not in that sense, right, but it's *asmita* meaning “I am this.” The moment you say, “I am this” or “I am that,” your pride, your anger, your jealousy, your bloated sense of I – all of a sudden, all that is manifested. Wrongly. It never is *asmita* like that. *Asmita* – all of the signs say, Salim only exists to the extent of my skin.

Asmita force us to think now that we are separated from our world. *Asmita* thinks that now we are independent: it's me against the world. *Asmita* is that kind of sense: “Poor me, against the world.” And if you are going to go battle, you against the world, who do you think, who's going to win? It's almost like that statue. Is that on 5th Avenue? – Atlas with the world on his shoulders? That poor guy, he didn't look happy, did he? [laughter] I like Lord Buddha just sitting there and totally on top of everything; not “*Asmita*, I am against the world.” You see, when when you do this, if you read this book, it's amazing. All of a sudden it becomes clear.

Now this is all because of *avidya* the way you see things. There's no “I” that exists from its own side. Lama Tsongkapa – there is no Lama Tsongkapa. There is no Manjushri, Vajradhara or the the holiest lama, in and of themselves. There is never, ever a real “I” like that. But because of this *Avidya*, first thing we do is “*Asmita*. I am this.”

Winston-la will talk about Geshe Thubten Rinchen: he talked about the emptiness of self and objects, as did the others. Now because of the extension of this *asmita* also you also see other things out there. They also exist independently, also exist the way they are, right? No.

Now, you may ask, “Hang on a minute, you can talk metaphysically here, to say that Salim extends beyond his skin.” But let me just ask you a few little things and then I'll just move on: that, to say that we are separated always from the rest, the rest of whatever there is, is almost saying that I could picture myself as “me,” alone, without my environment, without the beings in it, without anything, right?

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

This is actually what we always think. We are always alone because we ignore the others. But are we ever, ever, in all our lives – in any single moment – when we open our eyes, are we separated from our world? Are we ever, ever separated from other people, in our life? The answer is never. Every time we open our eyes, we always are somewhere. We always are in our bedroom, or in our car, or every... or we are always somewhere and within that somewhere there will always be other people; always, always be some other beings.

By the way, that is the definition of your body, the so-called *rupa*. That is all of the definition. That constitutes “I,” but no, we don't think that way do we? We think, “I am only this. Out there that's not even 'I'.” This is what I mean by “me against the world.” This is how stupid we are. That's why *avidya* is sometimes called stupidity, ignorance, right? So you see, [laughs] the odds are stacked against us, because even with those two fundamental ways of thinking, you can see that it's very hard to do. Because if I am like this, then you can generally say, “Only I have to be happy. I don't care about others.” Little do you know that if they are not happy, do you think you can be happy? No chance.

Okay. We can start by, really, if we define it, even shorter, just a very simple thing, for those who have children. If your children are ill or sick, if it was you actually thinking, if your consciousness said, “It's only *asmita*. It's only me,” then whether my children are sick or not, I still should be happy. But no, you feel unhappy because you see the children are ill. The same way way with your spouse, or your husband or your wife, or your girlfriend, or your boyfriend – you know that, if they're not happy, we're not happy.

But okay. We have made a little concession: now in this *asmita* I include my wife, my children – a little concession, but it won't do. Because *asmita*, whether you like it or not, includes every being, all beings. So this is the basis of bodhicitta. When you talk about all beings, and all that, it's not because Geshe Michael thinks it's some nice thing to do: it's not because you know all the wise beings have been saying, “Look, it's only the proper thing to do, that you care for others.” No, it's more fundamental than this. It's to remind ourselves, *asmita* : You are not alone: your world is part of you: it will always be.

Professor Thurman would always use this kind of example: just imagine one day you are stuck in the subway in New York. All of sudden all the exits are closed. There was an announcement made, “Outside there has been a nuclear holocaust. You are all stuck here in this station. We don't know when we're going to open the door, if ever we're going to open the door for you to escape, because above ground all has been decimated. We don't know what's happening there.”

What are you going to do? Are you going to still worry that that man is still not using the right aftershave lotion? [laughter]. And what John said, “That particular lady is a fashion victim?” [laughter] No, you try to live together as harmoniously as possible. You try to work out how do we exist together. How to do it, at least that, don't you think? Maybe you still don't like the guy, but you have to put up with him, because you are in it together.

And guess what? That's what our life is. You have a choice. You have a choice. You can kick them. You can curse them. You can judge them, do what you like. It'll just come back and hit you because you have to live with them. That is you by the way. That is the real you. It's part of the whole thing. So this is *asmita*, now, you know, egoism or egoity, like this. When you say that, then of course you mean, “Me, I want to feel good. I don't want to feel bad.” The

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

whole package comes with saying, “I am this.” Right, the whole package come with that: *asmita*. Then with the notion of something that is nice, something that I like, something that makes me feel good, you started to look at things a certain way. You started to look at things to see which one of those things make me feel good: “I need it. I want it,” because those things are outside you, right? With this notion of saying, “I get hurt this way.” comes “I don't want this.” This you know, “I don't like that.”

This reminds me of a story. Venerable Robina Courtin, you know, is a member of my favorite sangha. *[laughs]* All my sangha, all sanghas are my favorite. *[laughter]* But Venerable Robina always says, “You know, my life is full of hating people.” *[laughs]* She says it like that. When she was young, she started by hating those male chauvinists, and then when she joined the hippie movement, she hated all those people who belonged to the establishment. And then she belonged to this movement that has a great sympathy for our brothers and sisters of the African American culture: she hated all the white people. And then when she was little, she hates her sisters, couldn't stand her grandmother. She said, “And then as I grew up I realized I had run out of people to hate.” *[laughter]* She hated everybody. It's true. And then she realized it's not the objects that are wrong, it's the instrument, that looks out here, sees “hateful.” No wonder you hate everything. But because to hate everybody becomes really a very onerous task, *[laughter]* she *[laughter]* identified bit by bit, “Okay, I hate this male chauvinist pig, I hate this authority, I hate parking inspectors, I, I hate....” *[laughter]* So you can't hate everybody – We are very good at that, aren't we?

Now this wanting something because we know it made us happy before, wanting something like this, this in Sanskrit is called *ragah*. Now, hating something or trying to avoid something is what we call, *dveshah*. These happen to be number three and number four of those five things. So we've got number one, number two, number three, number four, number five.

[confusion from students]

Sorry?

[Students: what were they?]

Oh. First one is *avidya*; number two, *asmita*; number three, *ragah*; number four, *dvesha*, meaning your aversion to things, your dislike of things, because you know those things are going to make you unhappy; avoiding things. This is what sometimes you call attachment and hatred. This is the two of the three poisons in Buddhism. I like Geshe Michael's definition of this, “Liking things ignorantly, and disliking thing ignorantly.” That's all it is actually. You just like things because you think it's gonna make you happy. *[pause]* And you dislike things, you want to avoid things, because you think that it's going to make you unhappy.

Now, then the last one that Master Patanjali listed is, *abhinivesha*. What actually does the word mean? What is it, Brian?

[Brian answers: unclear, something about will to live]

Right, the will to live, attachment to life, but actually there is one word that actually almost has that flavor, Brian, which is craving. Craving. Grasping, to hold on to something. Is it wrong to have the will to live? No, no no, I don't think it's wrong. But what *abhinivesha* is, is you want to grasp, you want to hold on to the way to live, as it is. It's your tendency to hold on, to grasp, onto something as it is. As bad as my life is, there is nobody that is going to die voluntarily – or almost nobody, because they are afraid. “No, it's my life. Me, my life. You

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

gonna take my life away?”

Now, you remember those five things, right? Now I will tell you a story of how these five things relate. Actually it's not original story at all, Geshe Michael started it yesterday. I'm going to take this story from *Uttaratantra Sastra*, which is actually a book written by Master Asanga, under direct instruction from Lord Maitreya. In there, there is a section saying that if you want to know the story about why your life is so miserable now, Lord Maitreya explained that there are six steps that to it. Geshe Michael started that story yesterday so I thought I'm going to link all this one with this talk.

First is that a long long time ago, in the far away galaxies, [laughter] meaning many many lives ago, we have been carrying this in our minds, in the form of... Actually, actually, before we get into that, Master Patanjali also says, we've been carrying what we call the *samskara* or the seed, you know: *vasana*, or this bakchak, karmic imprint – sometimes it's called, “subliminal motivator,” or something like that. It's amazing that some of the translators can come up with such fantastic words.

What it means is a simple thing: your predisposition that you carry is really a result of what you've been doing in the past. Every time you do something you leave an imprint, leave a mark, leave a groove that will propel you to do things based on what you've done before. We do that all the time. There is no logical reason nor any other valid reason that two plus two equals four, any more than just my first grade teacher told me, “Two plus two equals four.” And we been doing that, right? We never ask, and the two times tables, you know, three times four equals twelve; we don't ask: we just memorize. And that's an imprint, right? That's a *samskara*. But then it's more than that. Everything we do – what we like, what we don't like, why do we do this, or all of these things. How we experience things are *samskara* – that imprint or the seed, *vasana*, bakchak.

So we've been carrying this tendency, this predisposition to look at things in the way of *avidya*. The seeds are that. You look at things wrongly. You want to grasp at things self-existently, whether you, yourself, *asmita* or those things outside you, your world. So first you carry all these seeds already, which in this life materialize as you looking at yourself, self-existently, and things outside you, they're also self-existent. It's easy to say that, if we are talking about tables, they do not have self nature, because you know they have parts and causes and conditions. This in itself is not a table, the leg is not a table, that is easy. It's harder when people are really screaming at you, getting angry at you. You think, “Well. that's got nothing to do with being non self existent,” anger, you know, but you believe when you are confronted with something like that it is self existent. The anger is so real. The hatred is so real. When I feel jealous it's so real – that guy, he doesn't deserve that! You know that's real. You've got that. These things are no different than this table; no different then this watch. They are all just as real as you make them out to be – wrongly.

So then you grasp on other things as being solid, and because of that you develop *raga*. Because of the feeling of feeling good, you started to like things. And guess what happens if you like things? Attachment. Now attachment here means this: in Buddhism it's explained more. Because now we've switched to *Uttaratantra Sastra*, we're talking about Buddhism. As you can see, it's exactly the same as what Master Patanjali says. When you like things, the first thing that happens to you, is that you exaggerate the things. You really painted the picture because you

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

already started it by saying, “I like it.” So you already painted the picture that is not what it is. That's why the pizza in your mind is always nicer than the real pizza you eat. *[laughter]* Because you painted that, you already formed the word in the form of pictures in your mind, and wow! And that goes, by the way, not just for pizza, it goes for your girlfriend, or boyfriend, things like that. It goes for all that. Right? So you painted that.

And then the second one is that because it's so nice, I must have it. And then, the sealer of the lot, is to say, “Because my happiness is dependent on me getting it.” Three things. This is explained in Buddhism. First, you exaggerate things, then you want it, “I must have it,” and then, the third one is to say, “My happiness is dependent on that.”

What happens when you see things based on things you don't like? Same procedure. Same way. You exaggerate the bad quality. Only when you meet the person, you say, “Ohhh, that person. Aw gee, you know, I can't stand her. She's not only stingy, she's this... You know, she's very... she must have been weaned on pickles, *[laughter]* because whatever she says it's always very, very sarcastic, and you know, she's got, to top it off, she's got body odor. And I don't like her shoes, in fact.”

You exaggerate things. If you don't like somebody, or if you don't like anything, you exaggerate. “That's why I don't want to have anything to do with her.” You know. “Let's not even talk to her. I don't want her to ever come into my existence.”

Guess what happens? The moment you say that, *[laughs]* that's almost making sure that she will accompany you wherever you are. You're exactly opposite of where you want to be. There is another subtle technique to try to catch ourselves when we do this kind of thing. I was using the example of buying a new car. I don't know, what's the hot car these days?

[student: Avalanche].

Avalanche, right, who makes it? Cadillac. Okay, you want to buy this Cadillac or Avalanche, whatever, it doesn't matter. Then you really picture this car, right? And then your happiness is dependent on getting the car, at least that is what you think, so then you say, “I must have it.” Right? That is what we said, the three things.

What is wrong with that? Because it's based on *avidya*, there's a difference here. Which one really happens? You really want that new car? Or do you really just want the desire to have the new car fulfilled?

It's no more than just fulfillment of yet another desire. You don't really want that car. But you want the fulfillment of the desire to have a new car. This is deadly. So because of this, please, please, every time you want something, now or every time you hate something, stop and ask yourself: Are we really wanting that thing, or are we just practicing *raga* or *dvesha* here? Because desire has many characteristics, but there's one salient point about this desire, very very strong: with desire there can only be only two possibilities, right? Fulfilled or unfulfilled. So that's one characteristic of desire. It can be fulfilled or unfulfilled. But whatever it is, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled, the way we live now, the way we exist now, with *avidya* and *asmita*, it will be replaced with another desire.

So no wonder our life is miserable, because it's a series of fulfilled desires to be replaced by another desire, or a series of unfulfilled desire to be replaced by another desire. Nonetheless, you always have a desire to fulfill. And whether it is fulfilled or not, you think it's going to give you happiness, like when we talk about this *raga* and *dvesha*, right? And when you want

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

something, or when you don't want something, then Lord Maitreya said, the next thing is what? You do something. You do something to get it – you do anything to get that, or you do anything to avoid that. Regardless of whether it hurts you or whether it hurt others. Regardless of the consequences.

Now this doing something, it has a really fancy Sanskrit word, which is karma, action. So this is how karma is made. You do that all the time. *[laughs]* No big deal is it, really? You do that all the time. So when things are karma, you do it.

Now as we say, every time you do karma, it leaves impression. *Samskara. Bakchak.* The seed, *vasana*. And that will propel you round round in this thing; in Tibetan, it's called *korwa*, or in Sanskrit, *samsara*. This story of Lord Maitreya is called: “Welcome to *samsara*.” And this is the story, the six steps going round there.

So Master Patanjali listed it in the obstacles to get *chitta virtti nirodhah*, saying exactly what Lord Maitreya, or Master Asanga wrote in this six steps: how we got stuck here in the first place. Or will be stuck here in the first place, right?

So now we know about why our mind is always agitated, always seeing things wrongly, all those things. Now you even know the Sanskrit words, which is fantastic, so at least we started to leave the imprint of this very holy language in our mind. Then we can ask Master Patanjali. Actually we should just go back a bit before I go on this *abhinivesha*, the last one, craving or grasping, or wanting life as it is. It's more or less a continuation of *raga* and *dvesha*, right? Because you just want to grab things. It's almost really – you could look around you – sometimes we are so good at this, that... how many of us in here, if we are honest, still remember the many things that hurt us? We are so good at that. *[laughter]* You know, you remember, “In nineteen seventy-eight *[laughter]* so and so at three o'clock told me off like this. How dare...!”

Life like this is caused by this *abhinivesha*, based on *avidya*. That's why now clinical psychologists always find it very, very hard, because people grasp, crave, hold onto things that they are hurt by as much as the things that make them happy. Both of them have a disastrous affect on your life. Because, you know, if you grasp something that makes you happy based on something that happened in the past, then you tend to see everything as it is now as unhappy.

I'm not saying Geshe Michael's still suffering like that, but Geshe Michael still thinks that “Heart of Gold,” Neil Young, is still the best song, right? *[laughter]*. But this is more or less a similar idea to say that, “Well if only we could go back to the Beatles' era. All these hip-hop things, and the R&B, I can't stand!” *[laughter]* You know? In other words, our mind unconsciously, we always want. Or – this is quite common as you grow older – you still think, “In my younger days, things were better.” All this is *abhinivesha*.

It's nonsense, it's past, it's from something about you. Check it out. Leave that baggage. Do you know what we do? We carry this garbage with us every day, every single moment of the day, things that make us unhappy. “That's why I come to Diamond Mountain now. I hope I can get this spiritual inspiration or something like that because this won't happen like that.” Forget that! It happened in the past. Take the essence, take that as a lesson, move on. Based on *maitri, karuna, mutita, upeksha*, the four immeasurables. Always have that. You always can refuse to carry that burden. Let go. Let go.

You know, when I meet some of you, generally the story is about your past, and coupled with that is the fact that you do not have enough *maitri*, or care or love or fairness towards

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

yourself. It's diabolical! Makes your life miserable because you say, "Poor me, I'm not good enough, I wish I could do this or that." Forget that! First, have love – if you want to train love, train it first to know how you can be fair to yourself. For goodness sake, you've done your best. You tried. Stop calling that a failure. In Buddhism, there is no failure. The result has always been, and will always be exactly in proportion, in exact proportion, with the effort you made. You call that failure because it doesn't match your expectations. The one that is wrong is your expectation. Not the result. Just take it on the chin. Take the essence of it. Move on. Enlightenment is there: you are so close. What is this garbage about holding on about these little silly things that happened in previous lives and all that? Ditch it.

You know, there is this story in India about how they train monkeys. This monkey has to climb in Goa; the monkey gets trained to get coconuts. And to catch this young monkey, the way they do it is they get a coconut, put a little hole in top of it, and then they put a lump of rice and honey and some nice smelling things inside. All the big monkeys, the wise ones, wouldn't have a part in it. But this one monkey, very inexperienced, sees that, "Oh, something nice," and it came in, grabbed this thing, tried to get out, could not get out. The hole is just enough to get the hand like that [demonstrates with open hand]. And then people go chasing all these young monkeys. But this young monkey, instead of letting go, kept holding on, and tried to run with the coconut on the hand [*laughter*]. That is the way they catch young monkeys.

Don't be like the young monkeys. Let go. Take the hand out. Run. *Rahula* is the name, fetters. Refuse to be fettered like that. Life is about liberating yourself from this kind of habit. In other words, question everything. Whenever you want to do something, whenever feeling comes up, question it. Check it out. What is it really? Like what Geshe Michael always says. Because things are always not what they seem: "Is it just my desire again? Is it just my *dvesha* in operation or, what? Or things like that?" Now you know it. When you check, you can do it either in English or in Sanskrit. [*laughs*] but anyway, you must do this.

So in this way, this grasping, craving are beneficial. By the way, it appears in, this and others, that is link number eight and then grasping becomes link number nine in the Wheel of Life.

I'm going to do a little commercial here. Besides all these fantastic websites that Winston-la mentioned, there is another fantastic website that you should visit www.digitaldharma.org. It really is the effort of, I think, some really virtuous people wanting to enlighten us there. I really hope that this this kind of thing just keep mushrooming, and this is because of our karma, our collective karma, that makes this kind of thing happen. This site has all the videos of Geshe Michael which are not the official eighteen courses, what Kevin calls, "the cookie classes," the Friday night classes.

It's all videos, which is really fantastic, and one of the things in there is the "Wheel of Life". And really, please set aside those two, three, four hours. Just download it or whatever, and learn about this wheel of life. It shows you how you keep going round and round, round and round in this existence. Right at twelve o'clock the blind person, not only blind but also blind-folded as well, so he's doubly blind, *avidya*, the start, the mother of all this things. And then, number two, three, four, five, six, seven; it's just trying to explain how we actually form, based on the *avidya*. Number two is the karmic formation, how karma is created. Three, four, five, six, seven; and number seven, then, once it's formed, your senses are formed, your consciousness is

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

formed, and then you start to having feeling. In here, what this means – number seven, feeling, means just what we talking about, “I'm happy, that makes me happy, I want it. I want it. I dislike this.”

This kind of feeling is coming, which causes number eight, craving. Now, Geshe Michael mentioned about this craving, and he said that... he mentioned only one, right? And then he said that there are three. There are three types of craving here. Now, this craving is number eight when it's carried out towards your death, towards your death in the more forceful way, the stronger way, then it becomes grasping.

So if you remember, for feeling the picture is somebody with arrows in their eyes. There is nothing subtle about this wheel of life. *[laughs]* And then, I think number eight is a person that is drinking, right? It's called craving. It is like a person is partying or drinking or alcohol, and then grasping, number nine, is the monkey picking up fruits. And then, from there it becomes old age and death. So this *abhinivesha* really fits on eight and nine. On this one.

Now there's three things, just to complete what Geshe-la said yesterday. First one, is to say, d-u-s-e. It means a fear of losing things that you like. It's a very very nice explanation, right? I think that's something, we live like that. The next one is *jise*, meaning fear of things, or the wish to avoid things you don't like. So first is the craving of desire, and this one is craving caused by fear. In other words, you're afraid; you just don't want to lose things that you don't want to lose. And then you want to avoid things that make you unhappy. And the third one is *sise* – it's the fear of losing life itself. So *abhinivesha* in Buddhism is these three things. So the fear of losing life is only one portion of these three, and you can learn more by visiting www.digitaldharma.org. *[laughs]* Okay. Kevin, I've done my bit here. *[laughs]*

So now, Master Patanjali explains, those are the things you have to work with. And then you may ask, “Oh yes okay, so really in practice, how do we do that? How do we do it?” Based on the fact that already our foundation is *abhiyasa* and *viyaragya*. Then Master Patanjali enumerated eight things that you could do to avoid things. Eight sections or limbs, and these in Sanskrit are *Astanga*.

The first one is *yama* and the second one is *niyama*. We will go one by one. Very quickly, because most of you already know this anyway. Truly I just learned this since, “The Inner Kingdom.” So it's really not that long ago, and just out of curiosity, I didn't realize until yesterday and the day before, how important this was. It really floored me. I really didn't realize. I thought, it's just the yoga sutra. And I don't know why, but I feel more comfortable with the Sanskrit words, because all the words are very much the same as what we use in Indonesia.

Like in Indonesia for instance, *asmi*, it's “name,” you know, the word, “name.” That's what it means in Javanese actually, particularly in Javanese. So when people ask, “Who are you?” actually what they are asking is, “What is your name?” Do we have a thing called that? When we say, “What's your name?” are you referring to the person or just the name itself? That's interesting isn't it? You are actually just asking for a label. In other word, you can also put it, “What are you labeled as?” *[laughter]*.

“Tashi,” isn't it? When you ask your name, “What's your name?,” in other words, it's not enough to be you. You must have a label otherwise I can't identify with you. But then I think that's quite profound. Because in Buddhism, that's all you exist as. Nothing but that label.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

[audience: unclear]

“What's your good name?” Yeah, and that's really quite interesting – different cultures doing different things. So you know, *[Salim says, “What is your name?” in his language]* in Javanese, means “What is your name?” This is why I feel a little bit more comfortable with the Sanskrit. And because of laziness in learning Tibetan. *[laughs]*.

So Master Pantajali says, “Okay, the question having been asked, there are eight different things that one can do.” First is yama. Yama you could almost call it the “don'ts.” “Don't. Don't do this. Do not do this.” It's not in a patronizing way at all. It's just saying, “Look, if you can avoid this, do, because if you do this, this will insure...” It's this one thing that's great about all these sutras. With all these things, there is never a fear. All these sutras never say, “You have to do this,” or “Don't do that.” It's more saying things that you need to avoid.

The first one is yama. They give maybe five examples. It's all written there. I'll just review them quickly. The first one is *ahimsa* – all of you know that one. Which is what? Absence of violence, non-violence. Absence of harming others. You can put it in a positive way then, “Respect life.” You try to do that. When you have ahimsa, meaning non-violence, this is what John was saying, these are the ten non-virtues actually. But Master Pantajali listed only five, right? This is actually, the virtue of killing, or rather non-killing, non-violence or non-harming others.

Next one is *satya*, no untruths. Absence from deceiving people. Try not to convey things different than what you know. It's a hard task here. And in other words, you have to do this, later on we will discuss why all this, because these are all the things you should really avoid. No untruths, meaning always present everything as they are in the way that you understand it, without any intention to cheat or to deceive others.

Asteya is not taking what's not yours, what is not given. This also has a very, very big ramification. It's not only just, not just that we don't go out and bump the old lady in the dark lane way and run away with her handbag. It's not about that. It's a lot more subtle than that. Those private conversations on the phone while you're at work, for instance. You should ask yourself, “Am I authorized to do this?” It's not being pedantic. It has something to do with really purifying your mind. You don't want to be polluted by all these little things. It's so little. It's only a quarter or something, but then if you used to say, “Right now nobody is watching, I'm gonna ring Sally.” So you talked half an hour, or five minutes, whatever – is it your time really? Aren't you paid to be there to do something else? Things like that. Or the famous one I always get asked questions about, is like some of our friends, students in Indonesia, work in a computer firm, and they like to download Geshe Michael notes at work. *[laughter]* “Is that okay because we're going to give it away and everything?”

I said, “The rules in fact, particularly because you are downloading John Stilwell's notes that you are going to use to teach dharma to others, and you are taking the paper from the office, and the downloading time, I think that's incongruous. Not right. And if you get it slowly, your mind starts thinking like that all the time, and whether you want it or not, your life become easier. It's a lot less burdensome, because you no longer think, “I want to do this.” No. All the themes are the same, and you started to get the feeling of this. It's what Master Pantajali is saying here, the same thing Lord Buddha was trying to do, to get rid of all these things. Identify, pin point all these little things, that if you rid of all that, how wonderful it would be.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

Next one, the *bramacharaya*. How would you define that?

[Student: unclear]

“Not indulging in the lower, grosser way of being.” *Brahmacharya, charya*, is the way of the Brahmin. Really what it means is a code word for saying, “Don't succumb purely to your raw passion.” [laughs] You know, all of your impulses, particularly with regard to your desire, whether sexual or anything – overeating, or doing anything overly. So I like what you say that this is what *Brahmacharya* means. Of course there is also a school of thought to say that it should not be diluted – it means you should not have sexual relationships and all that. It depends on how you want to understand it, but you know the gist of the way it fits in the whole thing.

And the next one?

[Student unclear]

Not to take one more grain of rice than you need.

[Student: unclear]

That's right. Non-grasping, non-possessiveness, non-possessiveness. It's the opposite of wanting things. Even one grain of rice, you don't want it. *Aparigraha*, is that the right way to write it? So good to have all the experts here. So this one here, is actually things that you avoid. And the fact that it's mentioned first, the first *anga*, I know that this *astanga* is actually almost a circular motion, and then every time it turns, it creates its own momentum. It makes it bigger. It makes it more powerful. The whole thing that has to be done, all of them form one package. But the way it is done, each one become the basis of the others, strengthens the next.

The next one is *niyama*. *Niyama* is more like, what is it?

[Student: unclear]

That's right. *Yama* is you related to others. How you relate to others. And *niyama* is really more things that you yourself have to do. Now when you say ten non-virtuous actions: killing, sexual misconduct, stealing, all these ones here, there is one thing that we deleted, there are words that we deleted at the end of all that. What is it? [listens]

Others. You kill somebody else, you kill others, right? Stealing, from others. Telling lies, to others. You know? All of these things is always us. Does it then make you wonder why *bodhicitta* is the reverse of this? You see? All the negative things that we do, we always do to others. So a lot of people say, “Why do we have to do it for others?,” when you do things. This is the answer, because usually we do these things to others. Now this is the antidote, totally the opposite way of seeing it, that you are now consciously doing good towards others. So this is what His Holiness says; that's why compassion, love, is so powerful as an image – because it has a valid basis.

Niyama are things that you want to do it yourself. *Satya*, meaning, purity. Purity means what?

[students: unclear]

Well okay. It is coming from inside you. But purity with your mind, your word, and your deed. Really, technically, what purity means here is to make pure, meaning trying to create a state of mind at the base where you have gotten rid of the obstacles, the one that make it pollution. That's why a word like purification, what does purification mean? Purification means you try to get rid of all the obstacles within that state of mind so you can do what you want to

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

do with that state. So if you want to say something in this sense, you try to avoid anything impure. So say for instance, to keep purity of the body, you make sure you don't indulge in eating the wrong things, or in overeating. That's why in *Aryurveda*, you eat the right thing.

[Ruth: *But in the yoga sutras, if you don't have that satya you can't understand the yoga sutra.*]

Of course, if you don't have that actually, you won't be able to understand the yoga sutra well. So *satya*, I'm just going to show how really it's parallel to even the Buddhist point of view. *Satya*, purity, meaning your purity of mind, purity of word, and whatever you're doing, and whatever you say and whatever you do. You know what I'm saying, what I'm getting at, right?

The next one is *santoshā*. What is it, Dr. Ho? *Santoshā*. Is it an island off Singapore with the cable car? [laughs]. Well, it's named after that, I guess. What is it, Ruth-la, how would you translate?

[Ruth: “Contentment.”]

Contentment. Contentment. Totally the opposite of greediness. Now contentment doesn't mean from now on you don't want anything. I'm contented. No, contentment meaning a state of mind of great abundance. Put it positively. When you get up, please appreciate and feel you have more than what you need. “I have everything I need.” A state of mind of great abundance. This is what the Jesuits would say, when I was educated in a Jesuit school, meaning that wherever you go, you always feel you have enough. Indeed, you do. Indeed you do.

[Student: unclear]

Yes, it's the same root as *shanti*. So what this also means, is that this is what, when Lord Jetsun Milarepa says, “No hope, no fear, no expectation,” it means just this.

So *santoshā* means no hope, no fear, no expectations. That's not a bad motto to have. Jetsun Milarepa says that what it means is that, “Whatever you do, don't ever tie it in with necessarily always messing with the result. It's more important that you look at the effort.” Because by the way, that is all you can control. When you hope for something, it's as if what you have here is not sufficient.

This is part of what Joan was saying, “Everything is holy.” You say that everything is fine. Same thing, expectation. You must believe you have what it takes to do that. The same thing like fear, what is there to fear? You fear something in the future, say for instance, you are worried about how will I be when I'm eighty five when you are still thirty. No wonder it becomes really very hard to take. But when you are eighty-five, and you are faced with the eighty-five year old problem, it's not a problem. But stupidly we are always worried about the future. Right? We, we think about the future. This is why Jetsun Milarepa says, “No hope, no fear, no expectation.” Fantastic way, very yogic way of being.

Tapas, you all know that. Which is?

[Ruth: *Making yourself strong through very very hard work, suffering*]

That's right – making yourself strong with very hard work. In other words, a lot of this activity you undertake, your great effort, enjoy it. That is the thing.

Svādhyāya is “self study.” What it means is that – *tu, sam, gom*. Three things: Always learning, always listening, then always contemplating. In other words, you try to analyze it critically; try to settle it within your mind. And then *gom*, meaning let it settle, internalize it, and let it be part of you. So whatever you learn, then it's really part of you. It came out as part of

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

you. So if you are learning about *danaparamita*, about the perfection of giving, it's one thing to do the homework, but another thing to make it part of you. Because *danaparamita* is none other than developing the heart of generosity. If you have that in you, everything you do reflects your understanding of *danaparamita*.

The next one is *ishvarapranidhana*. What it is, is this – sometimes it is translated as self-surrender or something like that. It could be interpreted many, many ways, but one way, like Geshe Michael said yesterday, really it's aligning very positively with the deepest part of you. Whatever that is, you are no longer having to prove yourself to the world. You really are convinced that whatever you do here, you know what's best, and you know yourself best. And you're no longer doing it for any of those fake reasons like pride and all that. But actually it takes a lot of interpretation on this particular one. I'm going to skip that. I'll finish the rest.

Then the next limb is *asana*, number three. Which is what? The seat, the posture. The physical exercises. Of course it's a lot deeper than that. Geshe Michael has done, and will be doing also today, I think; he will be talking a little bit more about this.

Then the next one is *pranayama*, which was more than breathing, right? *Pranayama* is really like energy. And so, what is it, Ruth-la?

[Ruth: “Controlling, restraining, moving, the breath, the energy and the breath.”]

Right, the energy and the breath. And this was almost exclusively, the theme of Geshe Michael's talk yesterday – knocking the pipe. This is what John-la was saying – try to knock the pipes, from outside and inside. But this one is from the outside.

The next one is *pratyahara*. It's literally translated as withdrawal of the senses. This one is about prioritization, withdrawal of the senses, meaning you then try not to be perturbed, not to be distracted by the myriad things in front of you. You keep doing that. The way you do it is to choose something. In Buddhism it's like that. Now if I want to find Kheng Thye, for instance. The way I do it is that by saying, “Venerable Phil is not Kheng Thye, Chukyi-la is not Kheng Thye,” and you go on like this. In other words, you are getting rid of things that are not the thing you are looking for, and then whatever is left is the one that you are after. This *pratyahara* works like that.

You then are not still in the midst of all the sensual objects, trying to find what you are after, which is really right concentration. Really you are just quickly discarding that, “No, no, no, no, no; this is not important; this is not important; this is not important,” and then you go to the important thing. This technique is really, really useful, because if you think you are still in the midst of it and try to find something, it's a lot harder than if you just get rid of things like that. Right?

So far we covered five: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayana*, and *pratyahara*. So what happens here? Master Pantajali says, “Right. You remember our mission is to get rid of this agitation of mind, right? Get rid of that.” So to do that we have to summon whatever we have within this life, whatever we have – our mind and body – and try to tune, try to prime it, so we're ready for that quest.

So in the first one, you are dealing with others. *Yama* – it means that our behavior is purified, our thoughts of others. It's almost morality. But I don't like to use the word morality. It's not the Billy Graham type of morality here. It's just things that you don't want to do. You know, you purified the way you handle others. So it's your social skills. You purify that, make

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

sure that it's as pure as it gets.

Then, *niyama*, within you – your mind, your technique, your way of thinking, your way of saying things, everything, you make sure also they're in prime condition. Right?

And then *asanas*, your body, all these things, subtle, gross, everything. You make sure that that too is in prime condition. Purify everything.

Pranayama, working with the subtle system, working with your pipes, as John said. That too, if you want it prime, you make sure you know the technique: how to knock it from outside. You want to knock it from outside.

Pratyahara, your senses, now that too you purify. You now have the technique of not being faced with being confused with all this external senses.

Now then, you are ready to do the three of the maybe more difficult methods, but they are a lot more important in trying to get rid of our agitation, *chitta virtti*. There are three methods. The first one is *dharana*, the next one *dhyana* and then *samadhi*.

Now there are many translations here. I like, very much, Geshe Michael's translation. *Dharana* is, they call it I think, focus. Sometimes it's called concentration. Focus. Then *dhyana* is fixation. This is what is sometimes translated as meditation. And then *samadhi* is sometimes translated as absorption.

Now there is a technique for doing that. Having purified everything, now your vessels, whatever you have, you're ready to tackle that. Now you work with your mind, because *yogash chitta virtti nirodhah* is a problem of the mind, and you can only fix it through your mind. So you are going to work with your mind.

Dharana, meaning, a simple thing actually, within you, you actually set up a mental area. It's a mental area, an area within that area that you want to concentrate on. So first, you set your boundaries, see? Of course, it's as small as possible. But sometimes it's not. So just setting up the mental area within the sphere you're going to work with, this is why you need something in that, and it could be, an object, or it could be a concept or something like that.

Dhyana is then, within the confines of the mental area, you keep fixing your mind on that object of concentration. Your mind wanders, you just keep correcting, and do that. So first you focus on a certain thing, say for instance, the tip of my finger, and then you really just keep concentrating on that tip of the finger in each moment, and that is what *dhyana* is.

Now to illustrate this *samadhi* option. It is more or less like this. First you draw a boundary. I'm sitting here. I'm going to meditate on emptiness of self or something profound like that. And then as you really sit like that, your mind can end up with thinking that, "I don't like broccoli." [laughter]. You know, because that's what happens when you meditate, no? Don't you think? [laughter] Because you think, "That's the emptiness of self" and then you know you start to think, "Okay, I'm meditating on the emptiness... empty... I'm meditating..." There are obstacles to meditation: one of them is to eat too much. And then these are random, associative patterns of thought that just keep popping up everywhere. We all know that. I'm the expert on that. Your mind just keeps coming up with things, popping up everywhere.

So for instance, let's just say that you are talking about this – the emptiness of the self as being red – and you want to concentrate on the color red. But what appears to you then is green, yellow, blue. All these thoughts are coming up. But slowly with a constant, constant effort, with everything having been primed, you focus first and then concentrate on fixation. And then

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

once it's fixed into that, then slowly you see “red,” and then you see, “blue, blue, red, yellow, green, orange, purple, red” , and you know, the red pops up a little bit more often than before. And then slowly, “red, red, blue, blue, blue, red, orange, yellow, red, red, red, black.” It's still coming under, but slowly, slowly if you master this, eventually it becomes “red, red, red, blue, red, red, red, red, red, yellow, red,” and then slowly it become “red, red, red, everything is red.” And once you get to this stage, not only that “red, red, red” appears, also this boundary we drew started to dissolve, right? And when it started to dissolve, there is not even you sitting there – what there is is just “red.” There is nobody there. No longer “I am looking at red.” No longer that my mind is full of red. There is no “my mind.” There is no “I.” What there is, is just “red,” emptiness of self, just the understanding alone.

Now this is dissolution of that boundary, so no longer is there a perceiver. No longer is there an act of perceiving. What there is just that thought – no longer that I'm conscious of thinking that. What there is is just the consciousness. This is sometimes what we call in Buddhism, “*korsum mi mikpa,*” the emptiness of the three spheres. It's that when you get this, particularly if you doing the day to day work, really, really there is no meditator, there is no meditation, there is no object of meditation. This is why samadhi is called absorption. Because then everything disappears. What there is, is the consciousness itself. With this kind of mind, then what is next?

Once you reach samadhi, then Master Pantajali says, “Then, there is a kind of discerning insight.” *Viveka khyate. Viveka khyate.* Now I'm using a Buddhist's parlance. The first thing we do, we call morality – how we deal with others and deal with ourself, and all that: that's the basis of our morality as it were. Only then can we achieve samadhi, which is concentration. And then, *kavya*, wisdom, *viveka khyate*. Then your ability to understand this teaching, the ability to understand this yoga sutra increases.

This is why there is no difference in Buddhism. All of them: *sautra*, or *yama*, or *niyama*, the whole thing is needed to achieve this. You have then the coming of wisdom. Just so you know, now I'm coming back to the third verse. If the second verse says *yogash chitta virtti nirodah*, then the third verse is saying that if all those things are gone, then consciousness itself would abide in its true nature. And that is enlightenment.

Anyway, that is basically the frame like that. So there's nothing magical about enlightenment. It's a process of education. Application. You need guts, need everything else, but the final thing that can really manage to get rid of all those other things is only wisdom. And to get wisdom, you must be able to achieve this. And don't even dream of achieving this if you are still jealous of your neighbors, and wanting to use the office photocopies, and all this. You see, the whole thing then dies. So it's no different.

So I hope its beneficial. I'm just sharing the way I understand about this yoga sutra. It is truly, “Yoga Sutra by a Dummy,” because it's very superficial, but please do study it. And I will do that too, and I will constantly do that and now I know why I have to do that. I will confess to you, before I came here, I had a few doubts and some of the questions that Geshe-la mentioned, is it Hindu or is it Buddhist? Now why is this yoga sutra being taught? Now all this cloud that is based on – truly one hundred percent – on my own ignorance, that cloud now has been blown away by Geshe Michael, so I understand him. And it doesn't matter. It all belongs to same supplier. *[laughter]* Just different stores. *[laughter]* Okay? Right, right, let's stop.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Morning Day Four – Salim Lee

[prayer: short mandala, dedication, long life prayer for His Holiness]

Just one more thing: I left this sentence, deliberately, for the last. After all that, Master Pantajali then says, “Actually there is another way.” And that is asking for the blessing of the Master. And I’ll let Geshe-la explain that. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Afternoon: Day Four ❀ December 1, 2002
Geshe Michael Roach

One of the retreatants will lead us in a meditation now.

Christie McNally: It is the last day of this teaching, and so I think it is appropriate to take a few minutes to rejoice in our incredible good fortune. We are all so very lucky. Let us take joy first of all in the holy being before us who brings us all here together. *Uttara*, the highest one, our precious lama. Truly you are the source of every good thing that ever comes to us. You are constantly pushing us to our highest potential. Your sole purpose in this strange realm is to share with us the key to life itself. We rejoice in you, dear lama. Please always stay with us.

[pause]

Let us take joy too in this key we've been handed again and again, the very foundation of every teaching, that which makes it possible for us to create our own perfect reality, without pain and without death. This is of course our own growing understanding of the infallible laws of cause and effect — karma — and the ultimate reality behind them. The fact that not a single thing we ever experience has a true nature, not a single thing exists from its own side.

[pause]

And let's take a minute to rejoice in this great gathering of people here who actually care about these sacred things. People in this tent today, sitting right next to us, these are *sangha*. The very presence of these pure-minded people around us will encourage and support our own practice and guide us along our path. We must rejoice in them so that they stay with us, because we need them.

[pause]

And I'd like us to rejoice in all the blossoming teachers in this room who will help spread this priceless knowledge to the West, who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining this unbroken lineage, carrying out our holy lama's master plan.

[pause]

Let us be joyful too about the reuniting of two different lineages from ancient India, lineages which were born from the same precious wisdom long ago. And rejoice in our incredible good fortune to receive teachings on the holy mother tongue, that which sings within us, the language of the angels.

[pause]

Let us take joy that we have been blessed with — been blessed with ears to hear these holy words and a mind that understands them, that we have this precious human body and mind. For this is the one and only kind of vehicle that allows us to travel this highest path. And feel joy that we are using this vehicle to its fullest potential by being here today and also by putting the teachings we've received into practice: in our meditations, our study, and the constant monitoring of our behavior towards others throughout the day.

[pause]

Now picture all this joy as a beautiful glowing white light inside your heart, and it gets bigger and bigger until it fills your entire body. Then light rays of this pure joy shoot out from your heart to all the people in this tent, and then further, out to the Circle K, and Tombstone,

and the people on the highway, and then as far as you can imagine, and every person it touches gets filled with the pure joy of these holy teachings we've just received.

[pause]

Now bring all the light rays back into your heart and dedicate this meditation to becoming a being who can actually do that, who can truly fill people with wisdom and love, like our dear holy lama. Thank you.



Ruth Lauer *[chanted]*:

Om.

Asato ma sat gamaya

tamaso ma jyotir gamaya

mrityor ma amritam gamaya.

This chant from the Upanishads is a command.
We must support all beings.
We must sustain our goodness.
We must move from insecurity to the teachings.
We must listen to our conscience.
Our gratitude must be real.
Then we'll have no inner enemies.
Then we'll be free to offer beauty.
This is imperative.

Om.

Thank you for the meditation and the beautiful chant. Before I forget I wanted to say I promise to stop speaking at 4:30 exactly *[laughs]*, because I know from experience myself that many of you have tight flights to make, especially back to the East Coast, and I know it can be very distracting if you're worried about getting out on time. So you don't have to think about that now — we'll stop at 4:30. We may lose a few lines; we'll catch them at Easter time. That's a tradition in our lineage to leave a little bit unfinished, because it forces you to come back.



I'd like to speak a little bit about lineages. We recognize two kinds of lineage in our lineage. This teaching comes from Master Vasubandhu in the 4th century — Abhidharmakosha, and at the very end of the book he says there are really two lineages: the inner lineage and the outer lineage. The outer lineage is the physical teachings, which consist of the books and the words which are spoken by our teachers to us: tapes, videos, DVDs, things like that. And then the inner lineage is the actual understanding which the outer lineage triggers inside of us. So

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

people pass on the words and the tape recordings and the pages of materials, and by so doing they attempt to transmit their knowledge and their wisdom and their love to their students, and these are the two kinds of lineage.

Lineages can get damaged, like buildings or bodies. They can sometimes be broken altogether and lost. They can get what we call *leshugpa*. *Leshugpa* means corrupted — over the centuries, ideas creep in which were not taught by the person who first taught the lineage in this planet. In ancient India the Buddhist lineages flowered for 1,300 years, thirteen centuries. The lineage which we descend from was particularly strong in the area of northeastern India, what is now Bihar state and Bengal.

Those of you who came to the teachings by His Holiness in Bodh Gaya, I believe some people had a chance to visit the ruins of some of the great monasteries of that Bihar area such as Nalendra and Vikamalashila. These great monasteries, according to Tibetan tradition, were destroyed during the coming of the Moguls from the Middle East. It's thought that the invaders, the armies, saw the great monasteries, the buildings which housed thousands of monks, and they mistook them for military installations and particularly concentrated on destroying them and slaughtering the monks. This occurred during the centuries just before and after Buddhism was brought to Tibet, so the task of bringing the lineages to Tibet was undertaken with some kind of urgency. Even the first great lamas, gurus who came to Tibet from India, such as Lord Atisha of our lineage, were endangered during the travel, and luckily for us Lord Atisha was delayed in Tibet, couldn't get home due to the fighting.

We see the same kind of destruction of the Buddhist lineages now in Tibet. It's believed that over one million monks and nuns were either killed or forced to disrobe — in some cases were forced to have sexual relations in public, some were buried up to their heads and left, some were shot by their students, who were forced to shoot their teachers. The great three monasteries founded by Je Tsongkapa and his two disciples — Sera, Ganden, and Drepung — were bombed, shelled, obliterated. The library of Sera Mey monastery was burned completely. We lost almost all of our books of our lineage. It took many years of effort to recover many of them now. And so a lineage can be broken by violence.

A lineage can be broken by economic attack. I can think of an example: when I was first in India, and studying, I learned classical music and I had two fine gurus in two different towns. One's name was Desh Bandhu Sharma; he taught me a long time. Then I remember one day we went out to the country in a bus — he said, "Pack up and just come," and I got on the bus and we went out far, far, many hours' drive into the country, and at some point he hit the bus driver on the shoulder and said, "We get out here." And there was nothing there — it was the middle of the desert, and I was afraid — it was just a dirt road.

And then we walked and walked with our sitars and tablas, and we came to this huge rock, and around it was built on the top of it this huge temple. And he said, "We're playing a concert for these people tonight in the temple."

According to tradition this huge rock — it was almost the size of a five-story house or something — had been thrown by a demon on top of a meditator's head and had stopped in mid-air over his head due to the power of his concentration. I thought it was a silly story.

Desh Bandhu Sharma took me under the rock — there was a small tunnel you could crawl through and then there was a small man there with a fire that he kept all day long and all night.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

As far as I could see there was no support for the stone underneath, and I felt very nervous to sit. Then we went up top, and that evening we and some of the other countryside musicians played music for the people who had come. One thousand Indian women in white saris, chanting these incredible chants, and I had no idea what that was. It was extraordinary experience.

We each played a raga, and afterwards we slept, all the musicians together in one big room, and I asked Desh Bandhu Sharma, "Why didn't you bring one of your other students you've been teaching for 30 years, 40 years?" (He's a great singer, classical singer mainly, and a dancer, and he also taught me sitar.)

Then he said, "My students have all left me."

And I said, "Why?"

And he said, "Money."

And he said, "You can't make a living playing music in North India. They've all gone to Bombay to play for the movies."

So this is a kind of attack on a lineage by money, by financial need, and that lineage has in many cases devolved to pop music in many ways.

My other sitar teacher was called Mubarak Massi. He is a Muslim. The great classical music of India, much of it draws on the Persian influence, also brought by the Moguls. They were very great civilization. All of our astronomy, our mathematics, much of our medicine and music comes from Persia, from Iran, Iraq, and the great culture which grew up there. So I remember meeting him and I begged him to teach me, and he said he would.

And then he said, "Where are you staying?" and I said a cheap motel, I think 50 paisa a night, 30 years ago.

And he said, "I have a place you can stay," and I said, "Well, OK."

And then he said, "It's the church, the Christian church in town."

And I said, "Do you have some relation with them?" and he said, "I'm a Christian."

And I said, "You know, I've been to your home, I've studied music with you, I don't think you're a Christian" [*laughs*].

And he said, "No, I'm not really, but for 25 years of my life I had to pretend to be a Christian."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "The British. They owned all of the theaters and all of the clubs where a sitar player could play. We had to get in; if we were Christian we got in. I was a Christian for the whole British occupation during my earlier life." And so here a lineage has been damaged, corrupted by cultural pollution.

I saw this kind of pollution in India the day that Star TV opened. This is a satellite which Americans and other Western countries send over Asia — the whole of Southern Asia — and beam down their worthless movies. And I remember everyone came to the diamond-sorting office the next day completely exhausted, and I said, "Why is everyone falling asleep at the sorting tables?"

They said, "Star TV opened last night. We were up 'til one o'clock watching the movies."

And so all the holy pujas, all the mantras that would have been chanted, all the visits to the local temple, all the honoring of father and mother were canceled, and the lineage began to corrupt.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

Sometimes a lineage can be lost simply by negligence. A student attends a teaching and doesn't try to review afterwards, doesn't struggle to learn the ideas that they have been taught, doesn't honor that knowledge, and then the lineage is damaged. From that point on the lineage is only part of a lineage.

Sometimes it's just bad luck. There's a ACI class in New York that night and your boss tells you you have to stay late. You miss class number six of course number six and then you can't pass it onto other people. The lineage is broken, the lineage is damaged.

I think many of you don't know the real lineages of Sera monastery. We — most of us here — have heard of Sera Je and Sera Mey. These are the two great colleges of Sera. They are much like Zales Diamond Park and BB&B Jewelry Stores. They have grown into almost independent monasteries within the same walls, and there's a great spirit of rivalry and competition between the two colleges.

Both Sera Mey and Sera Je together, in Tibet, had about 6000 monks. Only a hundred survived to come to Sera Mey in India. Many many precious lineages were destroyed during that time. Many many holy lineages were lost. There's a third college of Sera — you never heard of it. There was a third college named *Ngakpa Dratsang*. *Dratsang* means “college,” *ngakpa* means “the college of the tantric yogis.” Sera had three colleges in Tibet. The college of the yogis was very strong, and there were very dedicated monks. They would even debate tantric yogic knowledge, and there was a strong lineage passing it on. Not one survived. Not one came to India [*cries*]. There's no *Ngakpa Dratsang* anymore.

[*Long pause*]

What did they teach at *Ngakpa Dratsang*? There were two great lineages. One was the Vajra Yogini lineage, which many people here have been granted through the kindness of Khen Rinpoche. This is the lineage for the eleven yogas of Vajra Yogini, and this is mainly to do with what we spoke about before: learning how to see the angels, how to reach the angels, how to become them, how to go to all planets to help all beings. But mainly how to be able to find them and study with them. These all come from the teachings of an Indian yogi named Naropa who lived exactly a thousand years ago.

Naropa taught only two people this lineage. He had hundreds and hundreds of students — he only decided that two of his disciples were worthy. And those were called the Pamtingpa brothers, two brothers from Nepal. They brought the lineage into Tibet, and it grew very strong in Nepal also. Nepal is between India and Tibet.

Naropa had another great lineage which he was granted by his teacher, Vajra Yogini herself. And this was called the six practices of Naropa. This lineage concentrated on the physical exercises of yoga, which we think of as yoga in these modern times, and also on the special breathing practices, *pranayama*, and then special kinds of meditation. This lineage Naropa granted to different disciples.

And so the two great lineages of knowledge that were practiced in our tradition in Tibet descended from Lord Naropa. The lineages passed on parallel to each other. The six practices were passed down largely through the Kagyu lineage, the ancient Kagyu lineages, into which Je Tsongkapa himself was born and raised and trained. The Vajra Yogini lineage — concentrating more on angels, you can say — was passed through the Sakya lineage and from there to Je Tsongkapa through his main teacher Jetsun Rendawa, and from there they come down to us.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

The Vajra Yogini lineage we have is extremely pure. Every time we meet every two weeks we sing the names of the ancient teachers. In Tibetan it's called *lamey gyupa*, in Sanskrit it's called *parampara*, meaning every single teacher of the generations before us. We sing their names every time we do those prayers so we'll know that it's a pure lineage.

But the lineage of the six practices was damaged very badly. I have worked very hard to try to find lamas through whom this lineage has survived. I think — it's my belief and I don't know for sure (it's secret things) — but there are really only two great lineage-holders, that I know of, of the six practices, in Sera, alive today in India. And even then it was very badly damaged. We have lost in our lineage frankly, much of the knowledge of the physical practices and breathing practices of Naropa, without which, according to everyone, you can't quickly reach enlightenment. If you are granted both of these lineages and work hard, you can in this lifetime reach enlightenment.

It's very interesting — in Ancient India when the monasteries were destroyed and the monks were killed: You can stamp out institutions, you can destroy buildings and all of the monks who are living there, but the higher teachings have always been passed on secretly, quietly, in small groups, with no regard to ordained or non-ordained, monk, nun, or married person, family person. There was never any distinction. Man or woman, never any distinction in the higher lineages. So they were not stamped out when the monastic lineages were stamped out in India — they continued quietly.

Many of the great lineage-holders of the higher teachings, both lineages of Naropa, have been normal family people — so-called normal. They have been people working at regular jobs. Nowadays they would look like plain old office workers somewhere, teachers in a school, or they might look like a housewife, or they might look like someone's grandfather. These lineages couldn't be stamped out; there was no building where they were taught, there was no uniform that the people who held those lineages wore. And so you can imagine with joy that those lineages continued in India after Tibet was cut off. And there were occasional Tibetans who travelled to India and reconnected with those lineages, but it was difficult to travel.

In the area of the great monasteries where certainly the secret lineages were spreading from into the everyday people, there grew up a great lineage under two great yogis named Matsyendra and Goraksha. Matsyendra is called *Jowo Dzamling Karmo* in Tibetan, and Goraksha is called Bakyong in Tibetan.

There's an old Miller Lite "tastes great/less filling" argument about whether these two great yogis were Hindu or Buddhist. It's generally agreed that by that time the secret lineages had become both. And they passed down this extraordinary knowledge. Master Goraksha's influence spread in a wide band east and west, all the way to Pakistan, Afghanistan, all the way to Kashmir on the western side. And then on the eastern side, all the way to what we call Bangladesh now, and very very strongly in Nepal. Goraksha we know lived in Nepal for a long time and taught the lineages there. So I can imagine that even in some of the Middle Eastern countries now there are people practicing the Vajra Yogini lineages of Naropa.

In the early part of the 19th century there was a yogi, a great teacher named Krishnamacharya, who went to Nepal to learn the ancient lineages which are the two lineages of Naropa. He met a great teacher there — his name is Sri Ramamohana Brahmacharya — and he was granted these yoga lineages. He couldn't find anyone in India who was very interested about

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

them. There had been a poisoning of India by the invasions. People's minds had been turned to material things: houses, cars, railroads, money. Finally the King of Mysore, the maharaja at that time, Wodeyar, invited Krishnamacharya to begin a *yogashala*, a school, in Mysore. I'm sure it's only a coincidence that Sera is an hour from Mysore. And Krishnamacharya taught thousands of people, mainly the royal family, but other people were allowed to come to the classes if they were very devoted.

His young brother-in-law, who was I think 30 or 40 years younger, was named Iyengar, and so he transmitted these yoga lineages to Master B.K.S. Iyengar. He had another extraordinary student named Sri K. Pattabhi Jois. And thus the lineages, two of the great lineages of modern yoga in America, descend from the great Nepalese lineages of Naropa. Master Iyengar's methods and teachings have spread throughout our country and many other countries. The Ashtanga yoga tradition of Master Sri Pattabhi Jois has spread even to beautiful holy teachers who might be sitting next to you. And so we are cousins. These lineages have descended from the same holy sources.

There's another great yoga lineage, Sivananda lineage. It was spread in this country mainly through the selfless efforts of Swami Vishnu-devananda, extraordinary lama. He learned to fly an airplane that he could put together himself in a rush in a field, and when war broke out between Israel and Egypt he flew his airplane between the fighters as a protest to the violence. He was nearly killed [*cries*]. He refused to stop. He took his plane to West Berlin. He said, "I'm going to fly it over the wall as a protest." He was arrested. He got his plane snuck to a friend. He got out. He stuck it together — he flew over the wall. He landed in East Berlin. People were, if you remember, very quickly shot during those times for doing this kind of thing. He was led into a subway tunnel. He went to the toilet, he got lost — he ended up in West Berlin.

It's true. His main teaching, expressed in the *Sivananda Companion to Yoga*, descends from the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. There's a *parampara* in the opening verses. It lists Matsyendra, Goraksha, and a lama named Mina who is thought to be Luipa. Luipa and Ghantapada, two great yogis, taught the Chakrasamvara lineage. The Vajra Yogini lineage which we practice comes from the 51st chapter of their teachings. So we are also cousins with that holy lineage.

It's my dream that we could restore the practice, the serious devoted practice, of both of the lineages of Naropa. We have much to learn from the people who have carried the six practices lineage through the modern yoga traditions down to the current day. I will tell you honestly, I sat with the abbot of Gyume Tantric College — he is a close heart lama of mine for fifteen, twenty, twenty years now, twenty years this year — he told me it has been damaged, the lineage of the yoga asanas, the exercises, and the breathing techniques. He transmitted the complete teachings of the six practices to myself and other precious disciples, freely, and each word of the commentary by Je Tsongkapa.

But I think now you get some sense of the task before us. We have to work hard to restore the lineages which were damaged. Sometimes I think of Diamond Mountain as the reincarnation of *Ngapka Dratsang* of Sera, the missing college [*cries*]. If you are sitting here today and you hear an American speak about a missing college which most Tibetans don't even remember, I don't think it's impossible that you might have been one of the monks of *Ngakpa*

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

Dratsang who was killed. I don't think there are any accidents that way. I think we have a responsibility and an honor to restore these lineages. We're not fooling around with yoga exercises lightly. This is a serious attempt to restore the whole lineage of the Dalai Lamas for the practices which will make us all angels who can serve every being in the universe [*cries*].

How's it gonna work? I can tell you roughly. The details are up to the senior teachers here and the directors and all of the senior people who have worked so hard over the last fifteen years. I think first I'll embarrass Mr. John Brady. He should please stand up. Mr. Brady, holy lama, is going to find all of the ancient books — both the Tibetan lineages and the Sanskrit lineages. It's going to be a big task with the Sanskrit.

To show you how bad things were — you can't sit down yet — how bad things were in India during the rule of other countries, the root text for the practice of Ashtanga yoga, which is so popular here (20 million people have a seed for it) one of the main books, *Yoga Korunta*, was last seen in Calcutta Public Library rotting. No one has found another copy. It's gone. So one of our heavy responsibilities is to try to find these texts.

John has done an extraordinary job, Asian Classics Input Project — he took it over and has done extraordinary work to save now thousands of manuscripts. They are put into computer by Tibetan refugees who are taught free and paid to do it. It provides a living for many of the women, especially in the camps in southern India. And then the materials are given free of charge to anyone in the world who wants them.

It's no use to have physical materials if you don't have explanations of them, translations of them, and Mr. Winston McCullough, who has to stand up now, and the other fifty percent, Andrea McCullough, who must stand up, both of you. These two people together through their combined efforts have made this retreat happen, and they are helping to build and direct the starting of Diamond Mountain here. They have worked very hard to preserve lineages.

Winston and Andrea finished the entire transcripts and teachings of holy lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen that we learned in Sera, and they have ably passed them on to many other people. Their duty now will be to make Diamond Mountain happen, and we need to bring qualified lamas, teachers. We need to bring people who can help us restore those lineages, who can teach us the details of those lineages. I think, I see great teachers of Ayurvedic medicine, especially the Tibetan tradition, but also the Indian tradition. There are several great physicians of His Holiness who could come and teach the inner workings of the body, which are so important for these lineages.

I hope that holy lama Geshe Thupten Rinchen could come. You might be able to guess who is one of the two holders of Naropa's six practices in Sera, who has taken the trouble and the pain to master them. And there are other great lamas who we could bring here. So we have to prepare a place to have those teachings, and I believe here will be the deep training, the heavy-duty training for people who wish to learn those lineages. There will be a remote area which is conducive to heavy practice.

I think it would be also good to have some kind of city center in Tucson for some of the related classes and instructions. You have to stay standing, I'm sorry.

It's no good to have all this knowledge if there's no one practicing it. It's no good to have books and teachers and a retreat place and maybe a city center for these teachings if there's nobody in deep retreat, if there's no one actually sitting in a yurt trying to get their winds up

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

some channel [*laughter*]. We have had a lot of classes, deep classes here. There are more people than you might expect who have been training deeply.

I can't make the retreatants stand up, and I won't make all the others stand up, but I think just to represent everyone, those who must pass on the actual practice, the actual sitting in the yurt, are the retreatants and I think the Diamond Mountain staff who have worked so hard also in deep retreat and also they are working extremely hard to translate and carry on the ancient books of Naropa in our lineage. So I would like to ask Venerable Jigme Palmo, Venerable Elly [*cries*]. Venerable Lobsang Chukyi, Anne, Venerable Anne. And secret yogini Amber-la. There has to be a practice lineage, we call it *drubgyu*. There has to be a lineage of yogis and yoginis who transmit the actual sitting and struggling with your practice to others.

How are we going to give all this to those twenty million, etc., people who may be interested? We're not allowed to push these things on people. It's not right. It's very wrong. But in my mind it must be made available throughout the world. There should be a place nearby where I get born, where I can go and hear these teachings. I'm setting it up in advance [*audience laughs*]. It's not a joke, it's for real. You think it's some kind of, I don't know, organization thing. It's not. I want to have a place to go. If I work very hard, if we all work very hard, we don't have to worry that we won't have a place to go in the future.

I think Mr. John Stilwell should stand up. Holy lama John Stilwell, I mentioned before, is single-handedly responsible for all the ACI courses. Last I heard, 80,000 tapes or so had been provided to people. He initiated all of that effort and continues to guide ACI. I see ACI New York as like a headquarters, administrative, that will help to build — and I don't mean buildings, I mean people — groups of people in many different cities of this country and other countries. Even if it's only two or three friends in a small town out in the middle of nowhere, that's quite enough. Our lineage started with the two Pamtingpa brothers, that's fine. And I hope John will agree to oversee that.

We have to cover our brothers and sisters in the Far East, especially Singapore, Mongolia. Thousands — tens of thousands of people came to learn those things when we were teaching in Mongolia. And also in Australia, where there is an incredible seed for these teachings. Australians have invited twenty lamas from Sera — twenty highly-qualified geshe from India — and treated them with great respect and honor and learned their teachings. Americans can only claim two or three. It's extraordinary. And I think Mr. Salim Lee should stand up. I have no idea whether he wishes to undertake this job, but I pray and hope in my own heart that he will be willing to help spread these teachings in those countries, Asia and Australia, and help organize the teachings there. It's not enough to have small groups of people out in the Arizona desert holding this knowledge. It will be lost. We need to have it in many places. If I'm born in Singapore or Sydney I want to be able to go to holy lama Salim Lee's classes.

What about all the people elsewhere? Well Ted Lemon's gonna take care of that. He didn't even guess. My dream — Ted has been working with a group of people to take all of the translations, thousands of pages of English translations, and connect them to the Tibetan original texts so that anyone around the world could have immediate access to any teaching they wish. They have worked for years now. I have seen the latest copy of the printout of their work. It's extraordinary. And my dream is that the classes at Diamond Mountain, for example a translation

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

class in Tibetan or Sanskrit, could be carried throughout the Web live. Sound at least, definitely type, and maybe video.

My dream is that Ted and his other colleagues could develop a means by which if a very qualified lama taught at Diamond Mountain or in New York City that this could be transmitted on the Web live. Even, it's my dream that we have classes live in translation where a teacher could actually be translating, typing the translation live, and then people around the world could be students and could discuss issues with the teachers about the translation. I would like to see translations done of the major texts of our lineage in this way, live to the whole world. They could tune in anytime and watch. Maybe with time delay, Ted, for Australia and Singapore.

Does that mean no reason to come to Diamond Mountain? No. For one thing, you won't get in on the debating, and I dream of a great debating tradition in the ancient Tibetan and Indian systems. And of course the heavier deep teachings and training will take place in small groups which is traditionally done privately. You don't have any hope of being in one of those groups if you don't finish the eighteen courses. You can't ride a tiger without your seatbelt.

“What if I'm living in Ireland and I finish the eighteen courses and I have no intention of going to America because Ireland is so beautiful?”

I can't blame you, so I think we'll have to have courses even in the secret and higher teachings given. I would like to, perhaps, teach some of them in New York, for example, maybe summaries or shorter versions of the long courses given in Diamond Mountain. And then I believe strongly that those of senior teachers here such as Winston McCullough, John Brady-hla, Venerable Jigme Palmo, who have already been granted a great amount of these teachings — it is my dear hope that they will be willing to transmit these teachings to, for example, our friends in Ireland. I think Winston and then other teachers. My dream is to see the teaching lineage continue.

I'd like to say something very strongly now. Our lineage cannot continue in a healthy way if it centers around a single individual. It's not good and it's not healthy. Often it can deteriorate into some kind of a personality cult. It's not the way that lineages survive. You can't base a lineage on a single person. I have seen people fawning over His Holiness the Dalai Lama who ignore Khen Rinpoche. I have seen people fall at the knees of Indian yoga gurus and then speak badly about their American disciples who have spent twenty or thirty years — more effort than I am aware of any Indian spending — to learn those lineages and practice them hard. I have had people come up to me, Geshe Michael — fall at my feet. I've had one person wash my feet. I've watched them go away and break the lineage.

They didn't respect the other teachers here. They didn't respect their fellow students. They don't respect the real teachings. The teachings don't belong to a single person. A single person is not the teachings. It's not the clothing that they wear or how they look, or if they're a man or a woman, or if they're Indian or Tibetan or American or Australian or Irish. It's what they have learned. It's what they hold inside of them. I get very upset and concerned when I see people not respecting the Dharma itself, the teachings themselves, no matter whose heart they are in at the time.

We must, we must respect our teachers, no matter what country they come from. They have spent their whole lives. They have spent more effort than 99% of Tibetan monks — I tell you because I know — in gaining these lineages. If you respect someone, one person who holds

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

this Dharma, and then you disrespect all the other teachers of it, I don't trust you. I've seen where it leads to.

We have to respect the teachings. We have to honor the teachings. They exist in the hearts of many of the people here. So we must honor those people equally. And they will be coming to teach the holy secret lineages that come through the efforts of the people standing here, and you must honor them. I don't mean this silly falling at their feet and things like that, although maybe you should. But I mean person-to-person: respect them, pick them up from the airport, make sure they have a comfortable place to stay, make sure everything's prepared for their teachings. Make sure they are comfortable. Make sure that they are honored. And then as Lord Buddha said, something beyond the words will pass into your heart.

If you don't respect your teachers, whoever it is that comes to bring you these holy lineages, you will not enter the lineage. It will be closed to you. Someone sitting next to you who respects and honors this teacher will gain the lineage. But of course Christie and myself have a deep love for Ireland, and we have to come and teach once in a while [*Irish applause, laughs*].

There are several other people in this chain. I believe that Mr. Ernie Spears is still in charge of the Enlightened Business Institute. It's an idea to bring these holy teachings into American business community. I recently heard that the book about this has now reached 20,000 people, and we need people to work on this aspect of bringing secret holy teachings into the business community. It can make you a successful businessman. Our company went from \$50,000 to \$125 million per year. And slowly these same beings, holy people, will begin to understand where money really comes from. And then they will start to practice the deeper parts of the Dharma. This is the idea.

I'm not sure if Ernie's here, and I don't know who's helping him except for maybe one person that I – how shall we say? – unofficially I heard that he might be helping, and so if Ramon Alonzo is here I'd like him to stand up (he'll be embarrassed). He's representing Ernie today — he has helped Ernie, and I think the lineage will pass on that way.

I don't believe Mr. Batbold Baast from Mongolia is here. It takes about three truckloads of Mongolian currency to buy an airplane ticket here. But Batbold will pass on the teachings and this lineage through Mongolia.

We can't ignore our Mongolian brothers and sisters. It's far away. It's a hard place to stay. But it's an entire country of people who were granted the lineages of Naropa, and they are dying to get it back and we have to try to help them. We can't ignore them because it's far away and difficult to go there, and we have to find ways to help them keep these lineages strong. Some of the great books on these lineages were written in Mongolian, that holy lama Khen Rinpoche taught us. Even parts of the tantric vows, the great eight vows, are found nowhere else except in a special commentary from Mongolia. So it's appropriate that we should help bring it back.

I've asked these people to stand because the rest of us here, we should get excited about lineage restoration. It's exciting to think that after a thousand years two great lineages could be brought back together to help people. I think if you're sitting here and you heard of one of the ideas here-- oh, I forgot two people to embarrass. There's two people here who worked very hard to send out ACI courses, throughout the world, often at their own expense. Thousands and thousands of courses. And I'd like to ask them to stand, and that's Bonnie and Michael Moore.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

The people standing here and others who I've probably forgotten, they need help. These people are working without pay. These people work at their own expense. These people work late into the night. These people need help. I think it's crazy to sit in this tent and take these holy teachings and not get your finger into the karmic pie. So if you're in any of the cities where these people live (they're from Denver, for example) or Australia, wherever, you hook up during the break with one of these holy beings. You say, "I'll help you with any dirty job you have." And that's how you'll be open to get the lineage.

OK, everyone can sit down. [*Peeks at wristwatch*] Oops, we gotta get moving here. One more thing. Mr. John Brady has to stand up again, but with his box. He's got a box — this is like a TV quiz show. He doesn't know what's in the box. About twenty years ago, well let's start 600 years ago... I asked you to look at one of the paintings here, the fifteen paintings of Je Tsongkapa, which are being worked on under the directorship of Margie Weinrich, who has finished about half of it. It'll be published, the entire life story of Je Tsongkapa, and Thomas Olson is going to help her but he doesn't know it yet. But we will finish that after retreat.

But I asked you to look at one scene down in the lower right of one of the tangkas, and there's a little box much like the one John has in his hands being paraded by a holy — a long line of lamas are carrying this box of this precious thing into Je Tsongkapa's room. You can see the picture there. It happened 600 years ago.

The first great book ever written by Tibetans of our lineage was called the *Ten Rim Chenmo*, it means “The Great Book on the Steps of the Teaching.” It represents the bridge, I think appropriately, between India and Tibet, the great lineages of India and Tibet. This holy book was lost, even before the time of Je Tsongkapa. He found a copy. He read it. He was blown away. He immediately began to teach it to his students. At the first meeting where it was taught this book was brought in by a holy procession, carried in a beautiful box. And he then transmitted this lineage and restored it in Tibet.

In 1959 the last copies of this book were burned during the invasion of Tibet. People worked for thirty years to find a new copy. His Holiness — sweet, wonderful, incredible Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama — found one copy in Siberia among the Buryats, who are Tibetan Buddhists. He brought it back to India. I got a Xerox by going to Indonesia and meeting holy lama Gene Smith, who had a copy, and holy lama Art Engle devoured it and he has this copy, but it was not clear. We went to Russia hoping to find a copy in the library of Saint Petersburg, where many books were kept from the Soviet Union — Tibetan Buddhists. We found half a copy. We found half a copy, half the pages missing.

One day holy lama Khen Rinpoche and I visited the home of Trijang Rinpoche in Ganden Monastery. This is the teacher of the present Dalai Lama and the teacher of holy lama Khen Rinpoche. He's our grandfather. We asked permission to go through Trijang Rinpoche's books — he was a great book collector. We found a Ten Rim Chenmo. It took ten years of hard work to input this great book. (You can start unwrapping, John; it's very — what do you call it? — dramatic.)

Then I went into retreat; I couldn't finish it. People had donated the funds. If you remember a teaching at Vajrapani Institute, we handed out meditation posters, people donated funds for the printing. It was our hope to print the book and give hundreds of copies to Trijang Rinpoche Junior, his new incarnation, who is a fine young monk of about twenty now. Because

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

many of the older monks of the old teacher of the Dalai Lama had been getting sick and old and had nothing to eat, but Trijang Rinpoche, new, the new, the young one was taking care of them.

So due to the efforts of John and two holy-being quiet Roberts who work for him and also one of the retreatants who laid out the entire book before she began retreat, this book has been saved. Now this book can be given to people around the world. I think it's good if you just touch it. It's like finding the Dead Sea Scrolls and making them available for everyone in the world. And I would like to salute John and his staff and the other people who helped for recovering this book [*long applause*]. So please everyone, at least hold it, touch it, pass it around. We have to translate this book, and that will happen through all of the people who stood up.

This book will be spread to all of us Westerners and Easterners through the people who stood up, and it's an example of restoring a lineage. I want all of us to be lineage-restorers. We are going to bring back to life all those dead lineages and damaged lineages. We will have the new *Ngakpa Dratsang* — yogi's college — here and we will, through the efforts of all the people who stood up, we will revive these lineages in the world.

To do that you need a special lineage-restorer pill: it looks a lot like regular jelly bean. But every person here should take a lineage-restorer pill if you hope to help out. Think about it when you have your jelly bean. Think how hard, think about what you're going to do to help. How can you help one of the people who stood up? And then during the break now go to one of them and say, "I wanna help out. The part that you're doing sounds interesting to me." And hopefully the little pill will give us strength to do that.

We'll take a break now and then we'll finish two important parts of the Yoga Sutra.



We have to do what they call “horse race” in Tibetan, so let's horse race. First, first line please for today's teaching.

[John Brady: *Sukha-anushayi ragah. Duhkha-anushayi dveshah*. Assailed by what feels good, we begin to like things. Assailed by what feels bad, we begin to dislike things. (II.7, 8)]

This is the fourth step of the six steps of Maitreya. I'm very pleased, I heard a rumor that holy lama Salim Lee covered this today, which is lucky for us, so I don't need to go into too much depth. The first three steps we had in the creation of all our problems have already been taught in the lines around this one.

First *avidya*, the ignorance which we bring in the form of a seed from our past lives. And then after that *asmita*, here, our tendency even from the womb to see ourselves, subject, as *not* being the ones creating the objects around us. So in that sense subject and object are one, but from the womb we believe that the problems around us come from their own side and not from our own minds. That causes *abhinivesha*, which was the third step, where we begin to have wrong understanding of the things which are pleasant and the things which are unpleasant in a particular situation.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

We spoke about a person who might be next to you in this very tent that perhaps you find irritating. You don't realize your *abhinivesha* is mistaking that person. You believe that that person is irritating from their own side. We don't realize that we have created that person. And the very sounds and shapes and the things that the person might be saying or doing are being projected out from the karmic seeds in our own minds.

So this is ignorance active in a particular situation. This leads to feelings of hatred and dislike of a person, for example. You can't have hatred — *dvesha* — or dislike for a person if you realize you've created them. So in this way if we can break ignorance in our own minds, if we can try to understand that the things around us, the problems we've created ourselves, that the very perception of them is being projected forth from our own karmic seeds, then we wouldn't ever dislike or hate anyone.

It's not to say there aren't difficult things in the world — there are. It's also not to say that you shouldn't like anything in the world. You should like things. Birthday cake tastes good. Friends are warm. Sunsets are beautiful. To hear a child playing outside is something we miss very much. These are beautiful things.

So what's the difference between liking them in a good way and liking them in the wrong way? If you realize that your own karmic seeds are ripening to make you hear this beautiful child's voice, you would never do anything negative, say for example, to try to get something nice from another person. It's your own good deeds which are creating the child's voice outside. So to do anything harmful, even for the child's sake, for example to harm another person for your own child's sake, would simply cause you not to hear a child in the future.

So wisdom likes things but in a very wise way. If there was a person here that was bothering you or irritating you and if you felt anger for them then you would create new seeds to be irritated more in the future. No thing in this world which causes another thing is really the cause of it. We are all wrong, all the time. The goal of our practice is to stop making this mistake. *Yogash chitta virtti nirodhah*. The goal of yoga is to stop the mind from making this constant mistake. The bad things in our lives, even the aging of our own bodies, come from negative seeds we have planted ourselves in our own minds. We can't hurt other people. Next verse:

[Debbie Bye: *Parinama tapa sanskara duhkhair guna virtti virodach cha **duhkham eva sarvam** vivekinah* Truly, every part of our lives is suffering. (II.15c)

It means if we don't realize where things really come from, if we continue to have avidya, misunderstanding, we'll just get deeper and deeper and deeper into trouble. I'm gonna throw in a verse here, and you can write it down. [*Spells out and repeats:*] *Klesha mulah karma ashayo dirshtha adirshtha janma vedaniyah*. This is the next line after the line about *abhinivesha* in the Yoga Sutra. *Klesha* means “negative emotions.” The English cognates are “calumny” and the word “holly.” *Hol* comes from *kal* meaning “something which is prickly and hurts your fingers.” Something unpleasant. *Mulah* means “the whole root.”

Karma ashayo means “why we collect karma.” We want things; we don't realize that we could get them if we gave them away. We dislike irritating people, and we don't realize that by

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

being irritated at them we create more of them. We plant more seeds of the same kind. It's a self-perpetuating constant circle of pain.

Well, when does this pain come back to us? *Dirshtha adirshtha janma vedaniyah* — this is a very important principle of karma from the *Abhidharmakosha*. *Dirshtha* means, “oh, sometimes you will see it ripen in the same lifetime.” *Adirshtha* means “sometimes it will ripen in a later lifetime.” *Janma* means “lifetime.” *Vedaniyah* means “you will experience the result.” In Tibetan it's called *tongyur gyi le* and *shen la nyongyur gyi le*. This is the sixth — the last — of the six steps of Maitreya, because after you collect karma then your wheel will keep spinning. You will keep meeting bad people because you were irritated with the last one. And it spins deeper and deeper.

But these four words — *dirshtha adirshtha janma vedaniyah* — it's a very very wonderful thing, a very beautiful thing. *Dirshtha janma vedaniyah* means the whole principle of tantric practice, the whole principle of the yogic lineages is that if we try very hard in this lifetime — it's called *tse tu* — if in the early part of our lives we practice hard and sincerely to be good to others, even when they irritate us, then *tse me*, in the latter part of our lives we will be able to see them as tantric angels. So the same principle is very important for our yogic, tantric practice.

If our wisdom can overcome our natural reactions, if we try to be kind to the people who irritate us, then they will slowly go away, disappear, and become tantric angels. That makes our own body change because the thoughts have changed, the inner winds have changed, and that changes the entire body. And then we are able to serve all living beings in a single moment.

Let's see how many lines we have. Could the line that starts out *desha bandhash chittasya*, could that person please read the line?

[Doug Veenhof: *Desha bandhash chittasya dharana*. Locking the mind on an object is focus. (III.1)]

Thank you. I thought it would be important for you to hear the description by Master Patanjali of the last three of the eight limbs of yoga, *ashtanga*, because it's very important for the miraculous change of a body into that of an angel. In fact the third chapter of the whole book is called *Vibhutipada*, and means “The Chapter of Miraculous Changes.” The sixth step of yogic practice is *dharana*. *Dharana* means the ability to focus on an object. The reason you're able to focus on an object is because you are able to eliminate other objects. Focus means the ability to ignore other objects.

Most of the other objects which cause us problems are sense objects. For example if you try to meditate in a room where French fries are sitting, especially if you haven't eaten a real McDonald's French fry for three years, then you have to gain the ability to block out that object. That's called *pratyahara* and that is the fifth of the yogic branches, and it's covered in the chapter just previous. So focus means the general ability to narrow down to one object only. It's called sometimes *ekagraha*, or *tsechikpa* in Tibetan, which means one-pointedness. But it's not enough to simply narrow down on an object. You need the seventh limb, which is in the next line, so please read the next line:

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

[Kimberly Anderson: *Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam*. And staying on that object over a stretch of time is fixation. (III.2)]

Thank you. The next step is fixation, the seventh of the eight limbs of yoga. And the important word here is *tanata*. *Tan* is a root that comes into that comes into English in the word “tenuous” and “tendon” and “extenuating circumstances,” meaning “stretched out over a period of time.” Those of you who try to do yoga, the *uttanasana* in the *surya namaskara* series is an example, or *paschimottanasana*, stretching. Here it means to stretch out over a length of time. And fixation means can you stay on that object over a length of time? How long can you hold out against the French fries?

So now that you’re able to fix your mind on something, you better have something meaningful to put your mind on. We can’t just sit there and space out and think about nothing. There is no result for that. It’s not a virtue. There’s no power, there’s no goodness to it. We must have a meaningful object on which to place this powerful instrument of focus and fixation, of meditation.

I believe I have to recite this line to you also. I might need help from Christie-hla. *Tad eva-artha matra nirbhasam svarupa shunyam iva samadhih*. *Tad eva-artha* means “this very object,” which could be for example the person who irritates you. *Matra* means “that very object itself,” meaning its true nature, which in Tibetan we call *usel*, and you can translate it in Sanskrit as *nirbhasa*, the clear light.

What’s clear light mean? Is it some kind of a golden light? Is it the pink or purple spots I get behind my eyelids when I squish my eye? Is it nothing at all? Do Buddhists sit around and try to meditate on nothing at all? Is it kind of black, like the sky at night? No, it’s *svarupa shunyam*. *Svarupa* means its own nature, its own quality coming from its own side. What? That person who irritates you, up in the other row. *Svarupa* means “an irritating person who comes from their own side.”

Shunyam means “it’s empty of that; blank; there never was such a thing.” Buddhists aren’t denying the existence of things around them. They are denying the existence of something that was never there. An irritating person at work or at home or at a Buddhist teaching who comes from their side. It’s *shunya*. There’s no such thing. There never was such a thing. Your mind was making it up all these thousands of lives. Your mind was making up this irritating person who is not your own projection. Your mind was making up this irritating person who wasn’t coming from your own karmic seeds in your own mind. There’s no such thing.

We have been laboring under a huge delusion for thousands and billions of lifetimes. Every single thing in our lives which we don’t like is coming from us. If we get angry or upset at them, which I do constantly: *vidvans* — I know better — then we plant new seeds to see them again and again. And this is the problem, this is the source of all our suffering.

We can turn it around by using the same principle. We can eliminate the negative seeds in our minds. There are billions and billions — we can wipe them out. How’s it go? *Prasankhyanepyakusidasya sarvatha viveka khyater dharma megha samadhih*: “You can get out of the debt altogether.” It’s in the fourth chapter. He says, “You don’t have to pay this debt back at all.” We can cancel this debt.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

We can actually eliminate all the negative karmic seeds in our minds. The main method is simply regret and a determination not to repeat the mistake. This has an effect on the seeds in our minds, *vasanas*, *samskaras*, that they will never ripen. *Klesha karma nivritti* -- we can shut the whole show down. Then we collect new karmic seeds by doing holy practices like *tong-len*, which you all, I hope, will do, the breathing practice for compassion. What happens then? If we can prevent the negative seeds from ever growing through our true wish not to repeat the old mistakes, and if we can plant beautiful new seeds which are aimed at helping every single living creature on every single planet in the universe, then if you do the yoga exercises and the breathing exercises and the meditations, if you have a true lineage for them, you will change. Your own body and mind will change.

I think we'll read one last line. It's about the change. It's the very last line in your book. I apologize to the people who didn't get to read their line. I'm sorry.

[Winston McCullough: *Sthanyupanimantrane sanga smaya-akaranam punar anishta prasangat*. And there will come a time when they invite you to take your place with them. (III.52a)]

You can see the word *mantra* here. *Upanimantrane*. Here the *upani* with *mantra* means "to deliver a sincere invitation to someone," and *sthani* which becomes *sthanyu* here means "a place of glory, a high position of glory."

As we purify our minds the inner winds in the channels begin to also run properly in the central channel — *sushumna* — and the change in our body begins slowly. And then change in the outer world around us, which is also a creation of the exact same energies which create the winds and the thoughts themselves. Then you will begin to have this experience of Je Tsongkapa and Kenchen bumping into each other: "Oh, excuse me, tantric deity!" "Oh, excuse me, tantric angel!"

It doesn't happen overnight. It starts on a very modest level. You'll be riding in a car to the airport. Someone will make an offhand statement that suddenly strikes you that maybe they could read your own mind and they're trying to teach you something. This is your first contact with tantric angel. Very minor. It slips by. A minute later you're talking about something mundane. But that moment is the first moment that Lord Manjushri is piercing your heart with his sword.

So we have to always be on the lookout for the beginning. We have to listen carefully for the invitation that will come from the high holy beings. It will sound at the first moment like a few normal words from the person next to us. Maybe your husband or wife, maybe your children, maybe your friend. And that will be the first little crack opening into the realm of angels. So we have to listen always carefully.



We will do some special prayers begging our teachers to stay in our world. If you have a flight to catch please feel very welcome to run and we very much hope you will come at Easter time, and we'll finish the Yoga Sutra.

Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra: Part One
Afternoon Day Four – Geshe Michael Roach

[Prayers]