

KARMA & EMPTINESS IN THE YOGA SUTRA

(PART TWO)

**Quiet Retreat Teachings
by Geshe Michael Roach**



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Diamond Mountain Retreat Center
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Karma & Emptiness in the Yoga Sutra, Part Two
Morning, Day One – John Brady

Morning: Day One ❁ April 17
John Brady

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Diamond Mountain—this beginning of an amazing four days of teachings; the final remarkable teachings of the last three years. So, fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be wonderful. I think we can start with a 10-minute meditation and just quiet down for a bit.

[Silence]

[Mandala offering]

[Refuge Prayer]

So good morning again. Geshe-hla had asked me to address the teaching toward how we can continue our practice during the day, and during our work time. How do we bring this beautiful, extraordinary gift that we've had over the last seven years of ACI courses and Geshe-hla teachings. How did we pull this all together? Have a practice that can go back into the world and not be left on your cushion after your 8:15 alarm goes off. It's so difficult to do that. Usually when I walk out my door in New York and I hit the street, the mental afflictions start pouring over me. So I've figured out a few ways to do that over the years and I wanted to share with you some of my kind of practical formulas that seem to work, in the work place, and whatever else we're actually doing in our lives. We have to bring this practice to focus on the many things we do, in the multi-tasking we do all the time. Or else we're just wasting our time.

I think before I met Geshe-hla, I think the causes that I created to meet Geshe-hla were through Zen study. And I began like this Zen-head in 1984. I started reading a lot of books on Zen and one of them turned me around; Roshi Phillip Kapleau called it "The Three Pillars of Zen". I think he wrote it in 1973 and he took the veil off the mysticism of Zen Buddhism, which the Japanese had kept secret for many years in terms of the inner workings of how their systems of meditation worked. And it was really the first time in America, this invasion happened in the late 60's and then the beginning of the 70's when he was funded to start centers. And his book led me into a Zen path for a while.

to New York, I was looking in a bookstore one day and I found Suzuki Roshi's book "Zen Mind-Beginners Mind". Which again, was this beautiful masterpiece of how to maintain mindfulness in your life. The little bookmark, which came with the book in this oriental bookstore I was in on West 57th Street, had a message. It said do Zazen now! New York Zendo, East 67th New York. I read the book and tucked it away. One day I passed the place and I knocked on the door, but there was no one there. There was a schedule. "Thursday night, 7:00PM, come and learn how to meditate." And so I went, and that was the beginning of a ten-year relationship with Zen. It became almost this obsession. I had just entered a new job, and what I learned was that the balance of work was not in my thinking. I would do twelve, fourteen-hour days and then go home, collapse, and do it again.

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And so when I entered this path, the first thing that I found remarkable about it was you entered this carriage house, in this non-descript building on East 67th Street, and you entered this remarkable space. And you know, looking back now the actual esoteric nature of Zen Buddhism is this stripping away of external stuff. So you walk into their space and there's nothing but sheer, almost emptiness. It's almost... The metaphor of emptiness, an internal relationship with Zen is the space itself. It just, it exudes it. You know, present is your alter and your condiments of your alter, and then these Zen lines, the Zazen cushions that run in straight lines. In this particular sect of Zen Buddhism, Rinzai, practiced by the shogun class of Japan, who brought it into their culture full force and so it's of this military form. But these lines, again, reminded me of almost tantric lines, where everyone sat in these perfectly three foot square zabuton cushions and faced the wall for forty-five minutes to watch and count their breath.

So I jumped onto this path. The Teacher was this colorful character named Edo Shimano Roshi, who I thought was the real thing. He was the dharma heir of Yasutani Roshi and Soen Roshi, from Ryotakaji temple in Japan. The lineage really went back to Bodhidharma who brought this into China. In the fifth century, 565 – 575 AD, and then traveled over a thousand years and entered the Japanese culture around the 13th or 14th century. So I started doing these little mini four-day retreats. You know, Friday night you check your business bag and you put your dress on, your robe. Everyone had black or brown robes, so this similarity of space created fewer distractions. Distractions were always eliminated. So robes were essential when you were in this practice.

And that was the beginning. I began with this, this kind of silly thing sitting in front of a wall with your eyes open and counting your breath. And I started to realize I could definitely bring something under control in this state. The components of Zen have evolved over the last thousand or twelve hundred years, where they've stripped down so much, but the essence of the practice is still there. And the relationship to the teacher is a very formal but also immediate connection. So when you do a retreat in the Zen style you cook. You actually cook. You do these fifty-minute rounds of meditation. You will start with forty minutes, and then work up to an hour. And you start at five in the morning. You do a round of Zazen meditation. You have a breakfast, and you do a walking meditation. You do 3 more sets of meditation, and have a lunch. You do some work, and then go back to the cushion, and end at nine o'clock. So it's kind of like this pressure cooker. It's kind of incubating this energy; eliminating, stripping away the conditional patterns of our thought processes.

And the rules were that you did not go up to see the teacher until the second or third day, when he felt you were actually maybe ready to have something to say to him. And this was the whole key. You really had to cook in a way that had some meaning, and something that gave you credibility in front of this heavyweight. And so there was a whole procedure. Say at two o'clock everything was set up and the Roshi went up to the third floor of the building, and his assistant would be on the second floor—I didn't know what to do. They tell you nothing of how to construct this procedure. But the bell rings, and then everybody high tails it up these stairs, like a fire just hit the building. I mean they just whip up off the cushion and just climb up the stairs and just sit in front of this bell, and the first one who gets there just slams on the bell. And then he runs up and sees the Roshi, and everybody else lines up in a pattern waiting his or her turn.

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And then you test your skills; you test what you know in front of this being. And so, I didn't go the first time. I was just too intimidated. It was just so overwhelming. He had this presence that was so overwhelming. And I just stayed on the cushion and suffered more. You know, it's just a matter of when is the break? And how can I get this courage up to connect with this guy? And so the next day I just kind of stayed low and kind of did nothing. And then I did, finally, run up. And you had this beautiful 19th century bell from some gorgeous temple, and the block is 200 years old as well.

And you hear this bell go off and then you high tail it up there, and you do your prostrations, and you get ready to present whatever you want to present: your question or your introduction. And I knew that the Japanese were quite formal in their way, so I kind of did my prostrations and sat in front of him. And he sat there just blank faced, no emotion rippling over his face so you couldn't read him. And I introduced myself. The only thing I could do was say, "you don't know me, I'm new here, I'm willing to learn, and I'm hoping I can get some advice from you in terms of how I can do this practice". And he finally broke, and had this big gorgeous smile. And he said, "Very good, very good! Welcome. We like people who have this attitude here." And so, after that, I probably turned red. And you feel like a mouse climbing the walls in his presence. I was just so uncomfortable. But I knew I was right in this place where I could connect with this incredible teacher.

So that started it for me. I started doing these weekend sessions. Every time the Zendo gave a weekend session I would go. And then I was invited to do these ten-day sessions, which I had no idea what I was getting into. It just sounded so romantic. It's up in the Catskills. You have this beautiful backdrop of six hundred acres, and a park, and a pure water pool to go swimming. And he said, "Oh, Please come. Wonderful time, wonderful time." And so I did go. And we started with—this was a ten-day session. First one, we started at five, and you go through this routine. You do your practice in the morning. And this is the first time I had ever heard of the "Heart Sutra". Like our *Sadhanas*, they have stripped down their *Sadhanas* to: a refuge, a four immeasurable, the Heart Sutra, and bodhichitta prayers.

It's quite remarkable coming from a Tibetan side now. I see that they had it so honed and so refined, that it was all there. And the beauty of the Heart Sutra is that they use a Makugiyo drum, which is this—Japanese Kongo drum and it's very tribal and very primal. And everyone is chanting, sixty-eight people chanting in Japanese, and the Heart Sutra, which was just so powerful. So this introduction began and I was okay the first couple of days. The third and fourth day, suddenly you start getting bored about just doing your breath routine. All these thoughts are coming up and surfacing. What do you do with all these things? There's just the invasiveness of your conscious mind. You're processing of thoughts, and your processing of your stuff. You had no escape from it. It would just come up. And there had to be a way of dealing with it. And you start thinking about someone at work and you'd have this whole scenario at work, and it would hold you captive for an hour. You couldn't get rid of it.

So this would build for days. Friends of mine kept saying, just process it. Just look at it. Don't grasp to it. Just look at it. Don't touch it. Let it go through you. I said to the Roshi, I said, "This is driving me crazy. What is this? What can I do about these thoughts?" And he kind of looked at me and said, "Oh, so. You having problem with

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thought.” And I said, “Yeah, I’m thinking about people I haven’t thought about in years. And situations. An archeological dig is going on in my head. What do you do here?” So, he said, “We have this koan practice that you can do. And we concentrate on that. This is the way to shatter those thoughts. You can do this. You can use it to your benefit. So you take this koan.” And I said, “What is it?” He said, “Mu!” And I said, “Oh, Moo.” And he said, “No, not Moo. Mu!” And I said, “Moo!” And he said, “Better.” And he said, “Try it again.” And so I said, “MOOOOO!” And you know, he said, “Yeah, yeah. Okay. Now you do that. You go back on your cushion and you do that.” And then he said, “On your break between lunch and the next session, you climb the mountain as far as you can go and you Mu as loud as you can Moo!”

So this is Zen. My goodness. I didn’t buy a book on koans. I didn’t know there are twenty three hundred of them. And the cliché ones: the sound of one hand clapping, and what was my face before my parents were born. I didn’t get one of those. I got MOO! So... Okay. I’ll do this. I was so gun-ho; I’ll do this Moo! For the next six days. So we started at two o’clock sitting. You know, here it is this beautiful July weather. You’re at the highest altitude in the Catskills, twenty four hundred feet above sea level... Everything is just blooming. And this temple is a perfect replica of Ryotakji temple in Japan. I mean it’s this incredible beautiful place. And the screens open up into nature, and just flow out into each direction. It’s just extraordinary. And I’m there facing the wall, Moo’ing! Moooooo! Moooo! I started to get it. I started to realize, yeah, I could keep these thoughts a little bit further away from kicking my butt into some spiral trip into never land that you do.

You start to go out, and then realize you stopped counting your breath and you go, oh yeah, I’m on forty-eight and you come back. So, Moo is taking care of that. And then I climbed up this ridge. I said, Ok. I’ll start to Moo. And I was Mooing out into this echo chamber over the valley. And then suddenly, I heard someone go MOOOOO! And then there was someone else going MOOOOO! You had like eight people in this beautiful place doing Moo. Then I realized that Moo was this... Moo means NO in Japanese. It’s wrapped around a story from an extraordinary being Rinzai. I think it was Rinzai who actually brought Moo... The story was that a monk, a student of Rinzai, I could be right, ... Rinzai was like one of these heavyweight Zen masters like Je Tsongkapa. A student came to him, he said, “You know Roshi, I really think... Does a dog have Buddha Nature? The dog has Buddha Nature...” He said, “MOO!” No! No! And that koan is like the Bible of most Zen practitioners for years because there really isn’t an answer to these koans, the riddles that can’t be solved. And now when I think about koans, our practice is so different in the sense that our holy objects visualized in front of us have so much more meaning.

But Moo makes sense as well. You can use Moo for the sword swirling to keep your mental afflictions from kicking your butt. And that was the whole point to using Moo as this vehicle to actually obliterate these afflictions or obstacles that were coming up in your mind. And if you were good at it, you could actually create this inner space that you could gain a different level of consciousness after the eighth or ninth day. You’d get a taste of that. Suddenly you’d have this blissful wonderful experience for like a minute and half. And all of the other pain and agony of your knees, and your bitching about the food, the person next to you breathing too heavily. And all that just dissipates. And you have this taste, this exquisite taste of bliss. And then it falls back, and you’re

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back into the conventional mind and the pain.

This was my beginning. And I think the structure of it made sense to me. And I brought it into my world. And I started practicing everyday. I would get up quite early in the morning, 5:30. Do a thirty or forty minute sit, depending on the day. Do some recitation. Bring in the whole Heart Sutra memorization, and bringing that on the train to work with me. So it was this beautiful survival kit in a way. It gave me the beginning of a day that didn't implode on me at two o'clock in the afternoon. It brought me through the day and it gave me focus. And it also gave me the opportunity... that you can bring this anywhere. I can go to the men's room for fifteen minutes and do some practice. I think foundationally it created something quite remarkable, which created the causes for me to meet Geshe Michael.

I was thinking about this yesterday. How many sesshins did I do? And how many great experiences did I have? And how much I processed. How much did I deconstruct of my own stuff? And this is about deconstructing your stuff. It's about seeing it for what it is. Removing it. Using that Moo! Using that *tummo* energy. The thing about Moo, by the way, is that Roshi used to poke your belly. He would always say there's a Buddha in there. He would laugh and say, "There's a Buddha in there." And Moo was the key to open up that Buddha. You know, it's that *tummo* energy that's in your belly. And Zen really focuses in on that key. You can open up this extraordinary energy in your body and so on.

And emptiness, experiencing emptiness directly it's not exactly... They don't talk about it. It's *samadhi* or *satori*. Until this day, the court is out. I don't know really if emptiness, this experience of emptiness that Geshe Michael and many Lamas speak of, has a parallel in Zen. *Satori* and *samadhi* more remind me of the experience before emptiness—where you realize dependent origination; when Geshe-hla talks about the pot on the stove, and you realize it's really not out there. And I really believe that a lot of these stories about the monk who is ripe and ready to have the experience. Like suddenly a stone enters the sandal and pierces his foot, and then he suddenly has this remarkable experience. I don't know to this day. I'm sure those folks who are real Zen die-hards would attack me voraciously at this point... I don't know to this day if it's really an emptiness experience that these remarkable beings had. But the point is that all of us in this room, in order for us to create an evolution in our practice, we have to find a way to find single pointed concentration.

There has to be a form to bring *shine*, that single pointed concentration, into fruition. I'm doing Course 17 tag team teaching with Michael Wick in New York, and in the *Vinaya* class, Je Tsongkapa really states, "Keep your morality. Do your *vinaya*. Keep your vows. That'll bring you into *shine*." Find *shine*. Work on it. Meditate hard. Find your vehicle. Get to the point where you can bring that single pointed concentration quicker into the mind stream. And then the possibility of seeing correct view, of seeing emptiness directly is attainable. And that's it. And I think the valid *vipashyana* practices and the Zen practices have those elements and those fundamentals in common. I know people that are doing single pointed concentration in Zen centers. I know they're doing it. It's beautiful. And I know it's attainable. It's just a pattern, and a habitual way of learning how to do this. And I love the Meditation Course in our lineage because all the elements are there. The Applied Meditation Course gives every aspect of how to bring

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you into this possibility. And all the aspects of Zen are almost enfolded in this. And the preciousness of keeping a holy object in front of you is of far greater value than Moo, in my estimation. And that's why I'm here. And that's why I believe in this practice so thoroughly.

So how do you bring these practices into our life? How do we actually create this possibility where we don't leave this conscious awareness on our cushion? We go out, take the bus or train, get into the job, have your coffee, and hear the kavetching, you know? In the morning coffee clutch, what do we do? What is the bag of tricks that we need to have in our kit to actually sustain an ongoing perpetual practice? The Book is actually probably number one. The Book is valid. Stop, sit down, and close the door. Do your Book, which I need to do more often. I'm one of those Book *lelo* people. I don't do my Book very well.

I don't think Geshe Michael knew I quit my job two years ago because he said, "talk about your work career." I quit in 2001. Thank god I left that behind. I was responsible for the accumulation of money for my company. We had this very viable little business within a larger company that proportionally in percentage dollars would generate an enormous bottom line. So we had this umbrella company that generated like two hundred million dollars. But after everything is paid, you have like eleven percent left. Well, my little division generated six or eight million but we had a twenty-seven to twenty nine percent bottom line ratio, which is a remarkable little combustible moneymaker for companies. And there were only five of us. And of course every year you need another fifteen percent increase, and to figure out how you're going to find this new business.

So I decided, let's practice. How do I create a form that makes it harmonious for me in this business world? And mantras were one of the keys. I asked Khen Rinpoche about the Vajrasattva mantra and he said, "Yeah, of course! Do as many as possible! Do a Vajrasattva retreat." So that became my mantra of choice. And I would do it at lunch hour. I would just kind of use it during the day. I'm not a great manager. I was a great salesman. I could really sell anything, and the concept that went along with it. But then I had to manage five people, and I needed to hone my skills doing that. But the whole point of me practicing, and how I attempted to go into the business world was by making sure I had something of true value, and a service that would give the outside world a business, and give us a fair profit in the process of doing business.

And my company was quite unconscious about things—we weren't using sweatshops—but we were making everything in China. And I'd been to China. And you go into these factories and their breaking every pollution and safety rule known to man. You know, people are making a dollar sixty a day, pumping out things for our market here. And it's quite shocking. And it's all about margin. How much you can get it for. A five-time mark up is nice if you can get it. So I had to take a different tact in terms of what I could do for my company. And in sales you always know that the customer who is doing an eight thousand dollar sale will take as much work as the eight hundred thousand dollar customer. It's just uncanny that the amount of maintenance for that eight thousand dollar customer who orders twice a year, and the 2.3 million dollar customer is the same. It always seems to fall into play that way. So I always went after the business that gave us the better bang for the buck, and continuity. And when my presentations

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were put out on the table I just would not play the game of trying to sell the merchandise. I'd just worked the concept. I would just sit back and quietly present our services, our business, our products, and our concepts of how we did business. And I just didn't do anything else. I just felt I did not have the time or energy nor did I want to present some kind of illusionary dog and pony show.

And it worked. It just worked. I stripped out all the highlights of what a normal person would do to get a sale. And I felt strongly that I could go in there and if the person was serious you knew in a minute and half if you were on board with them, and their time was precious, and my time was precious. And that's all that mattered. If you had something for them, I wanted a yes or no. And it worked. And it elevated a lot of energy that had to be dissipated that can burn you out in business. So the inner relationships in work are probably more important in how you deal with people in your workplace. That's where your karma ripens, that's where individuals can liberate you in so many ways.

You know the screaming boss. I didn't have a screaming boss. But I had a wrathful dakini as an owner of a company. And she is a remarkable woman. But she was a wrathful dakini. And there were a lot of people that were under that umbrella. I was not a part of that circuit. But I knew I could help people that were always suffering in their job. You could see the suffering on a given day. I used to bring my begging bowl to the merchandisers because I was always looking for merchandise in our company. We had a catalog, and that catalog was the bread and butter of the business. I mean it was a two hundred million dollar business. There were six thousand items in our inventory. And I was trying to generate a business where I could actually supply merchandise on hand immediately. And so I had to skillfully go into these merchandisers, who were like guards of the merchandise—they were tough, and always being called on the carpet for whether they had not enough or too much merchandise, because that can just kill your business. And I used to bring my begging bowl over there and say; I need six hundred widgets immediately for this customer in California. And look at our margins here. They used to get a kick out of me. They were under such pressure, and I was kind of like this rogue in the company. I had no one really to report to. I had to report numbers and things like that, but I could do what I had to do to make my business grow. And it worked. I got to know them personally, and I got to share with them what they were going through in a given day. It was just so hard to work at this place. And we were known as a revolving door in the business. It was known that there were 17 VP of finances in my company over 18 years. I went through 9 marketing VP's. It was just uncanny. Of course I didn't know that going in. I probably would've never taken the job. But for some reason, I had a position that allowed me to do my thing without any intervention, which made me stay there nineteen years. It was an incredible run.

But at the same time, I thought my mission was to really help those individuals that did not have that protection that I had in this company. And on any given day, there would just be panic with people who were under such severe pressure, and if I could go into their office and not talk about business, and just share some things with them to lighten their load, I thought I was doing my practice. I thought I was helping them take a moment and not be under such severe strain. And my friends were all these incredible women who were middle management, who were really doing the bulk of the work. You

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know, companies just poured it onto people—middle management just gets everything. That was my task and my mission. To help these people through what I can give in a non-business way. And it wasn't about taking them to lunch to schmooze them. It was about, what's going on with you today? What are the dynamics of the politics? Who's doing what to whom? How can I help? And this was a way that I could process my practice. They kind of knew I was Buddhist, and they knew I was kind of a bit weird, too. But they never talked about it. They would say, "Oh, His Holiness is coming to New York." Or there would be these cute little things that people would cut out for me from Time magazine. Little did they know.

Geshe Michael has given us so many gifts on how to take this practice into the world and how to use the emptiness teachings and the karma teachings into the world. When Geshe Michael went into retreat he asked me to take over ACIP and... *he is such a salesman*. I went out with him one day when he was taking his laundry from Sixth Street down to the Laundromat in New York on the lower East Side, and he just quietly said, "You'd really be good at ACIP." He said, "it's great...you should do it...it would really be good." And by the time we got to the Laundromat, I said of course I'd do it. It's just like; it's sowed up in three point four minutes. And then, before he went into retreat he said, "I am so glad that you have ACIP. Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha." He really just laid it on me like. "It's yours. Take it. Take it. But it's not mine anymore."

ACIP has been the diamond in the rough for me. I really love this organization. And ACIP, the obstacles...I had no idea the obstacles. But I did know the beauty of the project and the product of the project had so many dimensions to it. There were so many dimensions to ACIP, and I had no idea when I took it over. I thought, Oh, Okay. We've got these women and some monks putting in input and we're saving these texts. But then I went to India. And the first trip I went to India, I got to know the grassroots of these beautiful people that were doing this work. And the Tibetan refugee camps in Southern India. The women in the Tibetan refugee camps, it turns out are seventy percent more productive than the monks. And they're very, very accurate. So a lot of the work went into the Tibetan Refugee Camps. And we set up these input centers where twelve to twenty women would have this opportunity to be trained and then actually put in input into our software program—into Tibetan, their indigenous language. These remarkable precious texts, and we paid for it. And we have a sliding scale of incentives. And they can be at home with their children. It was so wonderful to actually be there and work with them, and then their kids would run in at two o'clock after school. And they had it all figured out. Three of them would go home with the kids, and the others would manage. And it was just this beautiful product.

This is one of dozens of ripenings of beauty that I saw and experienced, and I totally fell in love with the project when I saw that. Most of the Tibetan refugees in Southern India have to go to this city of Mysore and sell sweaters on the corners to make a living. And it's a two and a half bus ride on a terrible road. And that's how they sustain themselves. So here was this precious jewel that Geshe Michael had created that just was flourishing. So you know, it just captured my heart and it started to pull me in. So the practice for ACIP for me is realizing that I'm simply a servant to anybody in this organization—whatever I can do for them, I will be there for them. And figure out ways to make their life more comfortable. Figure out ways that make their jobs easier.

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There are Tibetan monks, ex-monks, living in St. Petersburg doing a project, which I will talk about later. They changed their lives. They went into a culture that, well first of all, anyone that's a foreigner in Russia is a bit intimidating if you're not Russian. And they went into this place and started this project for Geshe Michael to catalog one of the rarest Tibetan text collections in the world—twenty two thousand volumes of texts sitting in this dusty palace in St. Petersburg. And here are these two monks coming from Sera doing this catalog project with these wind chill factors six degree below zero in the winter. So I got to know the players and I fell in love with the project, and I consider myself their servant. That's really how I feel. That I need to do anything possible to expedite the work effectively, as well as to lessen their burdens in their realities. And realize they're making a significant contribution on the merit scale, not only to their culture but also to their world and to their future. There is nothing in this project that is not a win/win for everyone involved. That's the other beautiful thing. The world will ultimately be so much better for this work.

So now I'm kind of in a different practice. I do a *sadhana* everyday. I try to do a *sadhana* everyday. And I try to do my meditation everyday. And I try to do a series of mandalas and/or mantras to keep me going. And to understand karma, in general. I think the "How Karma Works" Course describes in very simple form how karma is the single movement of the mind. That's our karma—the single movement of the mind. And there's 64 or 65 of them every second. And those 65 movements of the mind are creating our reality, this conventional reality. Today we're creating this incredible mandala as a collective, as all of us experiencing this karma, which is a remarkable possibility for our lives and our future. 64 times a second. And we need to know how to change our karma.

And we need to know what the vehicles are to bring us into a clear mind. Geshe Michael is giving us so many possible ways to do that, for all levels. These endless gifts of how we can understand our karma. Of how can we relate to the possibility that we can experience emptiness in this lifetime? How can we actually grasp that? How can we chew on that? That we can actually do this in one lifetime. It's so possible. So I continue to struggle. I continue to fight off the *lelo*. I'm not a morning person anymore, after I quit my job. My whole discipline just evaporated. Totally evaporated. I mean, I see myself in a robe and it's ten o'clock in the morning. You know...it's funny. My neighbor across the street... living in New York everybody leaves his or her windows—nobody cares. And I'm having my tea or something, and I'm on the phone, or on the internet, or doing some work and I'm in my robe. And people kind of check me out. Oh... What a nice life he must have. It's ten thirty. But it's not like that at all. Not like that at all.

So we need to form this discipline in our life. We need to create a process that gives us the benefit of mindfulness during the day. I don't do anything anymore in New York. I used to be a like, they'd call you culture vultures—I had tickets for Carnegie Hall, and all that stuff. Now my pleasure is: it's two thirty, I'm going to go to the post office, and I've got to run to Buy Rite and get some things. I'll pick up some Chinese on the way back. It's great. I've got an hour to go out. It has a different meaning. It's this adventure. I'll go out into the world. I mean the daily pleasures of doing the ordinary things can be remarkable. It's amazing. The post office experience in New York is such a trip. It's just wonderful.

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So my enjoyment, my entertainment now is going to Duane Reade drugstore, and just checking out the merchandise. Or just having a sweet connection with this horrible job of the cash register person. I mean, god, you've got like six hundred people a day marching through that little store in one little place. I always see if I can make eye contact. They never look at you. It's like, how can I make eye contact. So I'll kind of pay slowly. And it works. They'll kind of look at you like—"What are you doing? Give me the money." And you see their eyes, and you have a connection with them for six seconds or something. And you can... sometimes they will smile through their eyes. And you'll break that moment of the mechanism of pumping out the work. And yeah! And then, just walking the streets of New York. People love to hate New York. I love to hate New York sometimes, too. It's not an easy place all the time to be there, but I just love the idea that you've seven million people on an island that's only seven miles long. And it all seems to work. And it's jammed packed with stimulation. Even if you strip it down, suddenly somebody will lay on his or her horn, for it seems for like thirty seconds. And you will get pierced and your ears will start to bleed. Recently, the noise has become so overwhelming for me in New York. I just jump sometimes and realize this is normal noise pollution we're having today. It's a hot day and it's reverberating off the buildings louder.

But the people, looking at the faces, and this kind of... it's such a trip in self-existence when you're in New York. Everybody has this contained way where they're in their minds and they're constantly figuring out their next strategy it seems. Not always, but some days I can just see that in people. How they're not in the moment, they're just in their head figuring out the meeting they're going to be involved in two hours from now, and everyone is on a cell phone in New York. Nobody is checked into the moment. They're all reaching out to touch someone on their cellular. I've never seen anything like it. And it just suddenly changed recently. But that's my entertainment. I don't need more than that anymore. I threw away my television in October, so I went through this withdrawal to get that out of my life. And then I became a radio junkie, which I've weaned out now. I only listen to the BCC occasionally and NPR or something like that.

But it's eliminating these things in one's life to simplify your life over a period of time, that you open the space in your heart and mind that allows you room to just experience your nature, who you are. What you're projecting onto the world. It gives you clarity, and it gives you focus, and it gives you possibility of seeing the raw data sometimes. You know, how can I... What is the antidote to this? Why am I experiencing these damn *kleshas* (mental afflictions)? How can I figure out the antidote? So that's part of my practice one day. You go into the streets of New York and stuff comes up. What are the antidotes? I got to find the antidote to that. There is one out there. I don't know what it is, but I'll find it. And that's what my practice is these days.

We had a couple of meetings with Geshe Michael these last few days, and he's full of new ideas. There are so many new opportunities for everyone here. It's extraordinary. There's enough opportunity for everyone in this room to get involved. And we're not over with the meetings yet. So fasten your seatbelts. Geshe Michael is really going to give us something so sweet and precious in all of our future, and it's going to be a remarkable opportunity for all of us here going forward. I think I've said enough. Thank you. Don't forget to dedicate.

Afternoon: Day One ❁ April 17
Geshe Michael Roach

We'll have a special meditation led by one of the care deities.

Venerable Elly: Since there is this new book, *A Tibetan Book of Yoga*, coming out, I thought I would just do the *tong len* as it is presented in the book. OK so, first thing, sit comfortably and watch your breath. Try to count to ten and if you lose count start again from the beginning.

[silence]

Now bring your mind to the spot between your eyebrows. Then move your focus up a half inch up toward the top of your head and go about an inch into your head, and focus your concentration on that spot.

[silence]

Then bring your thoughts down to your heart. Go deep into your heart to a place an inch or two in front of your back bone. Seat there the diamond in the rose. It has always been there. Smell the fragrance of the flower and gaze upon the sparkling clearness of the crystal.

[silence]

Next, think of someone you love, friend or family, who you know is going through some kind of physical or emotional pain right now. Try to picture clearly the room in which they are.

[silence]

Now imagine that you've gone to sit just in front of them. You are invisible, they can't see you but you can see them.

[silence]

Now pretend that all the pain they have in their body or their mind has gathered into a little pool of darkness at their heart. It looks like a small cloud of black ink about the size of a coin. Pause here for a few minutes and think about how their pain feels to them. Think of the different worries which must be going through their mind right now. Be specific. Get to the details. Your mind will want to wander off, bring it right back to their problem.

[silence]

Think how wonderful it would be if you could take away their pain. But what if the only way to do that were to have the same pain yourself? Decide that you would be willing to do even this. It is the kind of decision that brings true meaning and happiness to our whole life together on this earth.

[silence]

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Decide then without any doubt or hesitation that you will take their pain away and take it upon yourself. We do this by taking several deep in-breaths. Each time we breathe in, the little cloud of darkness moves a little further, carried by this gentle wind. It moves slowly up their throat and then out of their nose in a black stream, like cigarette smoke.

[silence]

This stream of darkness collects in a little cloud again, just in front of your nose. Pause and take a few quiet breaths, to get ready for one last in breath, this is the one which will actually bring all of their pain into you. Be brave and decide again it would be better if you hurt than that they would hurt.

[silence]

Take one last look at the diamond in the rose; the diamond is sparkling, radiant with light and power. It can destroy anything that touches it. It is absolutely crucial at this point that you think about how the power of the diamond is going to destroy all of the darkness in the very same instant that you breathe in the little cloud. This is because our very willingness to take on someone else's pain destroys all of that pain forever, for both them and ourselves. Never think for a moment that any of that darkness will be left inside of you.

[silence]

Now listen to the directions and I'll tell you when to do it. In a single breath, you will see the darkness come into your nose like a stream and collect in a tiny ink-black cloud just in front of the diamond and then it touches the diamond as you're breathing in. In the moment that the edge of the cloud touches the edge of the diamond, there is a sudden explosion of golden light inside the inside of your body. It is as if a very powerful photo flash has gone off within you at your heart. After the flash, all you can see is the diamond lying lovely within the rose, glistening as it always does. You see a tiny wisp of white smoke vanish into the air and all of the pain is gone. It is very important to see that all of the pain is gone. Nobody will ever be hurt by this pain again.

So then, when you are ready, breathe in and do all of that at once.

[silence]

Sit for a few moments more quietly. Again, you're sitting in front of that same friend or family member and you are still invisible. Just rest here for a moment, silent, and enjoy the look on their face. Suddenly all of the pain and trouble they have been having is completely gone. They don't know why, but they don't really care. How good it feels now. Enjoy their happiness and be proud of yourself that you had the courage to take their pain away.



Then I think if the birthday girl would be willing to lead us in a chant?

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Ruth Lauer [*chanted*]:

Om. Om. Om.

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu..

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.

May all beings everywhere be happy and free.
May all beings everywhere be happy and free.

May I offer my life to that happiness and that freedom.
May I offer my life to that happiness and that freedom.

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.
Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.

May all beings everywhere be happy and free.
May all beings everywhere be happy and free.

May I offer my life to that happiness and that freedom.
May I offer my life to that happiness and that freedom.

Om.



I think before we do anything, I'd like to propose a moment of silent meditation for the child who was born yesterday. Fontaine McCullough came into this world, the new son of the director, Winston and his wife, Andrea. And also please pray for Andrea's health, and that she quickly recovers from the birth. I heard she had a fairly easy birth but it still must be very hard, so we'll do a moment's meditation for mother and child.

[silence]

OK, then we'll start. I think the big news is that the retreatants have come to the end of the main part of the three-year retreat. *[applause] [laughs]* I think that there is

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more applause from up here than from down there. *[laughs]* We still have another month or two of decompression inside the retreat boundaries.

It's been very, very, hard for all the retreatants. It sounds very romantic to sit in a yurt for a thousand days and meditate all day, but it's very, very hard, very difficult, and there were many external difficulties. The heat, the cold. . . I think one retreatant said she measured a one hundred degree range in one day. It is a difficult area; there were also wild animals, snakes, to deal with. And then there were the inner difficulties.

The retreatants have met together and we started speaking about two or three weeks ago. We have been trying to record some of our experiences, and two of the retreatants will be making a manual for people in the future who do long retreats.

The one experience that everyone mentioned independently was that going into retreat felt like dying. There was this very slow death. It started maybe six months or a year before retreat began and then slowly, each retreatant died, in a way: losing their dear friends, saying good-bye to their parents and their families, losing their former work, careers, and identity, and then finally, losing all of the external world that they knew. And then beginning the process of losing their own normal emotions, and maybe losing their mind, also. *[laughs]* But, everyone has mentioned — and I think it must have been similar for the caretakers and the director and his family — that it felt like dying and so it was really hard.

I think that what is obvious to me is that each retreatant has become a very powerful person inside, some kind of great, incredible strength of will and spirit has been created, and just to be in a room with them is a very powerful experience. I think that it is inevitable that the inner power they have developed will attract sincere people and naturally some of that experience will be spread in the world.

Sometimes we do fire offerings here after every deep retreat. It is a custom that goes back 5,000 years, I think. We do a special mandala out of sand and then a special platform that holy Lama Khen Rinpoche taught us to do, and then we make a fire and then we pour in sacred grains with long prayers. Sometimes it takes five, six hours. Then we imagine the smoke going out into the world and helping to bring peace, not only on this world, but many worlds. And I think the three year retreat has done something like that.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, great, beautiful Supreme Being, spoke in Central Park before we went into retreat. He said, "I can talk all my life, I've been talking all my life to people about doing good things. But when I think of Mother Theresa, the late Mother Theresa, she didn't really talk so much, she just did it. In many ways, that's more powerful than all words I've ever spoken."

Then I think the fact of the three years, the fact that each person gave up so much and struggled so hard to make the retreat and finish the retreat, I think it makes a statement to the world which is more than all of us who teach people in public can ever do.

And so, just from my own side, I wanted to say that it was a great honor and a privilege, and it was a great lesson for me to see the determination and the holy intentions fulfilled of the retreatants. Such brave people.

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Recently, we saw, each of us, a list of people who have helped the Great Retreat. Also we've been having extraordinary meetings with the caretakers and with the directors of all the projects and organizations that have grown up out of the work of everyone here. This morning I looked at the list; I was thinking how many people have helped us, and if you only count physical help, material help, I think you can say that there were a hundred people behind every person in retreat. For every person in retreat there were a hundred people behind them, helping them. A hundred different people for each retreatant.

We're sort of at one hand very grateful to you and on the other hand it's sort of overwhelming to realize that we can never repay what you have done to give us this chance. Many, many people gave up their whole lives for three years. Especially the dear caretakers, the three original caretakers have stuck it out the whole three years with many difficulties and even physical illnesses. There is one special caretaker who came, I believe, over a year ago to add his strength and power to the staff and all of them have worked selflessly. And, needless to say, the director and all the other Diamond Mountain board and volunteers who we have had the pleasure to meet now, some of them, in the meetings. It's very, very beautiful and exciting to see the energy and the talent and the commitment of those people, some of whom we've never met before.

I think the three-year retreat was exhausting for the retreatants. We found out that over three year's time there is a tremendous drain on your body and your mind. To try to struggle with your own heart and your own mind, day after day. Looking at the caretakers and the directors, I know you've had the same struggles; I know you've had the same difficulties: personal, and with time, with your careers, and with giving so much of your life to this. We see it in your faces; we know you have given everything.

And I just wanted to say, before we start the Yoga Sutra, that the blood of your lives which you have given is not in any way wasted. It's not that when the retreat ends that all that energy is finished. It's just the beginning of a much greater energy. I can tell you, maybe the most important thing to tell you this whole weekend is that forces, energies, have been set in motion by your holy work. And those forces are not just something in a small part of Arizona and not just something in this country or not just a power that covers this world. But, your holy act has created forces which are working through many worlds at this moment. They will ripen into something extraordinary, beyond your imagination.

So, we'll start the Yoga Sutra, and then in a while we'll take a break. Just before the break, I've asked two of the directors of two of the projects or organizations which are working to help serve the world under our general umbrella. We call the umbrella "World View." In one way because it covers the whole world; it's meant to help every person in the world. Secondly, because it involves a true understanding of where the world has come from, and how to change the world and remove the suffering in this world. And so, I think holy John Brady, will be first at that time, before we take the break, and he will speak about the efforts of himself and his team around the world to save ancient books of wisdom, which are the foundation of all that we do. And then Gary Hirsch will speak about what we call Enlightened Business Institute, which is an effort to bring holy ideas into corporate life.

Then we'll take a break after that and then we'll have some more Yoga Sutra. Then I thought to ask one of the retreatants, each day, to speak. I gave them a tough

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assignment. I said, “You have to tell everybody the most important thing you learned in the three years.” *[laughs]* They’ve been sweating for three weeks. I think partly out of nervousness and partly because it’s so impossible to choose a single thing that was most important thing they learned. So today, Petra-hla will be speaking just before the second break, about the most important thing she learned during retreat.

We see this as part of what we can offer to all of you who helped us. We don’t have any money; we don’t have anything that we have made, physically. But, I’m sure when you go home after this weekend, you will still remember the one thing that each retreatant felt was most important that they learned in a thousand days in hell. *[laughs]*

Then after that, we’ll take the second break of the day and then we’ll do some more Yoga Sutra. Then I thought that as we get toward the end of each teaching, we would talk a little bit about the life of Naropa-hla. Naropa is the great Indian saint who taught many high teachings to the Tibetan people for the first time a thousand years ago. And I thought it would be fun when we are all tired and your butts are all sore, that we could just kind of chill out and talk a little bit about holy Naropa’s life.

So let me check the time. *[laughter]* Is it 3:30 already? Oooh. *[laughs]* OK, I’m sorry we’ve gone late already. I think we’ll stop around 4:00 for the talks by John and Gary.

I’ll just say a few introductory words about Yoga Sutra. In three years of retreat, I began to get a strong knowledge that all the languages of the world are connected. I think those of you who attended the last teaching saw how the English language and the ancient Sanskrit language and all of the languages of Europe and much from the Middle East have come from one language. And I think one result for myself — in deep retreat — was to see how they all are one. And we’ll be speaking about that.

I think a second understanding was that on a very deep level, all the spiritual teachings on this planet so far have all sprung from the same source, and the deeper your practice gets, the less difference you see between the great religions and the great teachers. In the past we’ve talked about Jesus and his teachings. I think with the Yoga Sutra we are exploring on one hand, the great Hindu tradition of ancient India and also pointing out the great confluence of two great streams of religious thought: Lord Buddha’s teachings and then the teachings of the ancient Hindu traditions, which flow together for several thousand years in India. And that flowing together reaches a peak about the time of Naropa, a thousand years ago in northeast India.

I think at that time, you could say that there was not much difference between Hinduism and Buddhism. The great teachings that had come down even from the time of the Vedas had been crystallized in India and in the great Buddhist monasteries of that time in India — Nalanda and Vikramashila, huge monastery universities, around the area of Bodhgaya. These great traditions had married and were being followed very deeply by thousands of monks. And there was a deep tradition of a yogi or the wandering wise men, wise women, and so it was sort of a special time in the history of this world.

It didn’t last very long, about a hundred years later, 1199, the Turks invaded that area and all of those universities were burned, all of the monks were killed, the holy books were also destroyed. Only what had reached Tibet survived on the one hand, and then a strong tradition went underground, under the Muslim forces. A strong tradition of

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yoga and deep meditation began to prosper underground in India, and those teachings, over the centuries, turned into the modern schools of yoga. Whether you are following the physical yoga of Master Iyengar or Sri K. Pattabhi Jois or any of the other great yoga schools of India, they all spring from the same source. And if you are studying any of the great teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, and especially the higher teachings, these have all come from the same source.

The two great lineages combine just before Naropa. We have lists of the great teachers of the yoga traditions, especially in the opening pages of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, and we have similar lists in many of the Tibetan scriptures of the great Indian lineages. But what is very exciting to see is that the names of a great many of the teachers are the same; which is to say that all of the Tibetan lineages are cousins of the great Indian traditions of yoga.

Some of the shared masters are Master Shebera, who, some people say may be Saraha, the teacher of Lord Nagarjuna. Then there is Matsyendra, Goroksha, Chaurangi and Charpati. Some of these masters' books are even found in the *Tengyur*, the holy books of Tibetan Buddhism. There are many works by Master Charpati and there is at least one major work by Goroksha. And it seems that Matsiengra may be Matsiadara, who is Luipa, who is the great grandfather of all of the lineages of Chakrasamvara and Vajra Yogini. So, clearly, the great yoga traditions of the world and our Tibetan Buddhist practice have come from the same masters.

So I think it's very exciting, for me, to think that we could recover the original combination of these two great lineages. That's one reason why we are studying the Yoga Sutra. I don't have to repeat, I think, that the Yoga Sutra, out of about 200 lines only has two or three lines about physical exercises; only one percent of the book is about yoga exercises. The rest of the book is about truth and about dharma. The rest of the book is about how a person can stop the pain of themselves and everyone else in their world.

The Yoga Sutra contains the entire contents of all of the eighteen courses of ACI, the Tibetan Buddhist and Indian Buddhist courses that you have all been taking, and I think you will see that easily. But if I had to boil it down into one goal, it comes down to the same thing we spoke about last time. I've asked Ven. Lobsang Chukyi to put up a painting of the head of our lineage, Je Tsongkapa, who was the teacher of the First Dalai Lama. And in that painting up here on the wall somewhere — maybe she can point to it — we've blocked out again an extraordinary meeting between Je Tsongkapa and his main guru, Kenchen.

When Je Tsongkapa, as you remember from last teaching, was walking down the road to meet Kenchen for the first time, Kenchen appeared in his house, at the doorway, and he's looking out at the road watching this monk come down the road. But when he gets close, Kenchen suddenly sees Je Tsongkapa as Manjushri. He sees a divine being coming to his house. He's not pretending this is a divine being, he's seeing a divine angel walking up to his house. At the same moment, Je Tsongkapa is looking at the doorway and sees a holy being, Vajrapani. So two people have walked up to each other and suddenly seen that each one is, in actuality, divine.

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And the whole purpose of yoga — physical and mental — and the whole purpose of all Buddhism and Hinduism and Christianity and Judaism and other great religions is to reach a paradise in this life and to make sure that everyone else comes to that paradise also. And that's what paradise would be, we don't need to go to another place. If we had enough holy seeds in our minds, if we were kind and ultimately compassionate to all other creatures, then this world would become paradise and heaven for each of us, without death and without anymore pain or hardship. So that's the goal of studying the Yoga Sutra, and I think you will easily see that as we begin to go through the verses.

I wanted to say in warning that they will be going through some of the most important Sanskrit words and Tibetan words that mean the same thing. And as I mentioned last teaching, this is because Sanskrit and its mother tongue, which we call Indo-European, are the basis of all of the languages from west India up through the Middle-East up to all of southern, central, and northern Europe; England, Ireland, even as far as Iceland and Russia. All those languages come from the same mother as Sanskrit. So I think when we study something in Sanskrit it has a deep effect on our subconscious and then we said also that by studying Sanskrit seeds are put in your mind. All the enlightened beings of history, according to our tradition, speak Sanskrit when they become enlightened. And then each being who listens to them hears their own language, it could be English or French or Spanish or Hebrew or Chinese or whatever, and that language has this power. And then lastly, that Sanskrit comes from the very sounds within our bodies, the deep subtle sounds within our inner bodies. So it's important to get a little taste of Sanskrit.

Then for each line we will go through its meaning, we will go through how it fits into the whole Yoga Sutra, and we will go through what it means to your life. I don't think it is useful to teach anything like this if we can't connect it directly to our own lives.

I presented the verses in a special order. Sometimes only part of the verse will be treated. And so don't get confused from that. Where the verse is in bold letters in the Sanskrit, that's how much of the verse we are talking about. We'll be having different people come up and speak the verse, and then we'll talk about each verse.



We are going to start on the Yoga Sutra. You should have your book open to the first verse. We are going to try to go over, first, three verses that we missed last Thanksgiving because we had to stop on time on Sunday, which we will also do this weekend. I know many people schedule their flights tight on Sunday evening, so even if the other evenings don't stop in time, Sunday surely will.

Also I wanted to make two points about the teaching. The first is that these holy sutras — like the Heart Sutra or the Diamond Cutter Sutra or the Golden Light Sutra or the Yoga Sutra — these are all like medicine for mankind, humankind, and therefore they should be free to all. You should take good notes. You should make sure you get it straight and then you are very welcome to use anything that is taught here. You can copy the materials for your own classes whether they are connected to this World View group

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or not. If you are teaching yoga to one or two people, or a hundred people, you are very welcome to copy materials, use everything. . . tapes. . . We don't charge anything and there is no copyright. It should be spread freely throughout the world in the way that it was given to us by our great lamas.

Secondly, it is a tradition in our lineage that you should look over your notes. Try to look them over twice before the next class tomorrow. I strongly encourage you that the best way to review is to meet with other people. And I have heard that that had been very successful last Thanksgiving, that I really encourage you to just walk up to someone who looks interesting at this teaching, maybe somebody from another country, maybe someone old, someone young, it doesn't matter. But whoever strikes your fancy. I very much encourage you, say during the next break, just come up to them and say "Do you want to review together the Yoga Sutra we heard today?" And then make a time to meet tonight at a coffee shop near your motel or plan to meet in the morning someplace. I very much encourage you, the best way to review is to sit together and just talk about these things, what is going to be taught today. So we'll begin.

I don't know if we'll finish all of today's verses today, but hopefully we will catch up over the next three days. So I would like to ask that the first person to read a line could read the first line.

Cathy Hinman: And another way is to ask the Master for their blessing. *Ishvara pranidhanad va.* (I.22)

Thank you. This line is from the first verse of the sutra, *ishvara pranidhanad va.* First we will talk about the meaning of the Sanskrit words and then we'll talk about the Tibetan words. Then we'll talk about what it all means. Lastly, how can you fit it into your own life?

Ishvara is normally the name of a deity or a god in the Hindu tradition, but it can also mean "a master of anything." It's sort of a generic word for "a great person" or "a great master" or something. Master Patanjali, who wrote the Yoga Sutra, defines what he means by *Ishvara* in the next line, which is *klesha karma vipakashair aparamirshita purusha vishesha Ishvara*, which means. . . *Ishvara* is "a very special kind of person who is no longer bound by the problems of negative thinking, or the bad deeds that negative thinking makes you do, or the whole storehouse of seeds which is created by what you do."

So what he is saying is that, "When I say "*ishvara*", what I am referring to is a special person — *purusha vishesha* — who is free of negative thoughts, and then the bad deeds of body or speech that negative thoughts make us do, and is therefore free of all the negative seeds in their mind." As we go on through the next few lines of the first chapter, he says, *sa purvesham api guruh.* What I'm referring to is the lamas or the teachers or the gurus of people gone by in the past."

So from that we learn that the word "master" here, or *ishvara*, is referring to "a spiritual teacher." *Ishvara* has two parts to the name. *Ish* means "to seek something" or "to look for something;" "i-s-h." The root in ancient Indo-European, even before

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Sanskrit, is *ais*, “a-i-s,” and it has come into the English word “to ask” or “to seek for an answer.” The second part of the name *ishvara*, *vara*, means “to select,” or “to choose something,” or “to be very good.” The ancient Indo-European root is *werh*, “w-e-r-h,” and is found in a very interesting word in English, “eureka,” which means “I found it.” So in a way *ishvara* means “to select” or “to find what you are seeking for.” And later the word “*ish*” came to mean “a powerful person” or “a master.”

We see the word *ishvara* in the word “*Avalokiteshvara*.” The Tibetan name for the deity Avalokiteshvara is Chenrezig, and it’s believed by Tibetan Buddhists that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is this deity. And so you see *ishvara* used in the word “Avalokiteshvara” as a powerful being who *avaloke*. *Avaloke* means “looks upon all creatures with love.” So His Holiness’s real identity is the *ishvara* of *avaloke*; the powerful being who looks upon all of us with great love. The corresponding Tibetan word is *jewo* and it means “a master” or “a lord,” as in master and servant. We see this *je* in the name of Je Tsongkapa whose paintings are spread all over the walls of the tent and who is the teacher of the first Dalai Lama, and who began our lineage, the Gelukpa lineage of the Dalai Lamas.

I think the next key word is *pranidhana*. *Pra* means “to come forward” and it’s the basis of the word “forward” and also “proud,” “coming forward,” or “the prow of a boat,” meaning “the front or forward part of a boat.” *Ni* means “to go down” and is found in the English words “beneath” and “nether world;” the “nether” meaning “down.” *Da*, *dana*, means “to set something down.” The Sanskrit root is *dha*, “d-h-a,” the ancient, ancient root is *dhe*, “d-h-e,” and we find this root in many English words. For example “to do,” “deed,” it’s the root of the word “doom,” meaning “something that is fixed.” When this word goes into Latin it changes into, let me see, *ef* and becomes the word, the basis for the word “fact” or “factory,” and then coming in through Greek it changes into “t-h-e,” like in the word “thesis” — all of them meaning “something which has been set down.” A fact is set down, a deed is something set in writing, and a thesis is something set down in an idea. So *pranidhana* means “to set down,” “to reach out,” and then “set down something.” And it’s become a word for “a prayer.” The Tibetan is *munlam*, which means “to make a prayer.” And so really what this line says is that you should find your *ishvara* and you should go set your prayer at their feet, down at their feet, and you should ask them to bless you.

It is natural that in the very beginning of a Sanskrit ancient book there should be some description about the importance of a teacher. We’ve said countless times that when you learn anything you must find a great teacher. You can’t learn the secrets of the universe from a book. You can’t just guess them for yourself. We need to build on a lineage of thousands of generations. We need to find a lama or a guru who has the complete lineage and who has actually realized those things in their own mind and their own heart. When you find a person like that, you have to go to them and beg them to be taught. You have to ask them for teaching.

There are many lists of qualities of a true teacher, but I think the one that is most succinct is the one that says a teacher should have three qualities.

The first one is that this teacher must be working on a higher plane. This teacher shouldn’t be concerned with worldly, temporary things. This teacher must truly see the

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suffering of this world and they must be intent on bringing themselves and others out of ultimate suffering: death itself. It has to be their real motivation.

Secondly, teachers should have kindness. I think of two kinds of kindness in this world. To me they look like an airplane flying through the sky. The first kind of kindness is to serve others' temporary needs. To me it is like the airplane stewardess going around and serving orange juice and peanuts to people. If they still give them peanuts, I don't know. But ultimate kindness is the pilot who realizes that the airplane is having a serious technical problem and is about to fall down and kill everyone in the airplane. I mean a real lama, guru, should be working on the level of kindness that addresses people's ultimate suffering: death. The rest of the kindnesses are almost like to me orange juice and peanuts in an airplane which is falling down. The lama or teacher should be operating on this level of an ultimate kindness of trying desperately before the airplane hits the ground to find a way to protect all of the beings in that airplane to bring them to safety. Among this second quality is a sense of the universality of it all. A teacher should be working not for themselves, not for a few students, not for even just one country, not for a single planet. A teacher, true teacher, should be working for the ultimate benefit of beings on countless planets and attempting to appear and teach in those planets all at one time.

The third quality of a true teacher is to have the knowledge that would help countless people. Without the knowledge, in the scriptures, they say, you are like a mother with no arms. How can you pick up the baby? How can you help the child? A true teacher must have a clear, hopefully direct knowledge of how to actually protect countless beings. Not in the sense of peanuts and orange juice, but in the sense of protecting them from death itself and from the suffering of life itself on countless planets. And so the third quality is a true knowledge of how to stop suffering.

The line says *ishvara pranidhanad va*. *Va* means "or," "or else," or "you can also." Master Patanjali has just completed talking about the five powers of the second path, the path of preparation. He says they're *shraddha*, *virya*, *smirti*, *samadhi*, *prajna*. These are five qualities that we need at the beginning of our spiritual quest.

The first is "faith," meaning you believe in this teaching and a particular teacher because you have begun to see the importance of what they are teaching. *Virya* means "effort." You have started to take great joy in the practices you need to reach the final goal. *Smirti* means "recollection." Throughout the day you are aware of your mind. You are thinking about karma, emptiness. *Samadhi* means "you are learning to meditate deeply." *Prajna* means "wisdom." You are struggling to understand where suffering and death itself comes from. Those are five extraordinary methods that all of us need to use even at the beginning of our practice, but then Master Patanjali says "*Ishvara pranidhanad va*." *Va* means, you know you could save a lot of time just by asking your teacher; just by throwing yourself at the feet of a truly qualified guru or lama. *Va* means you could cover the same mileage just by finding a true teacher. We'll talk more tomorrow about that idea because we will be talking about how Naropa found his teacher Tilopa and how he learned from him. Let's go onto the next verse please.

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John and Nancy Yates: Learn to withdraw the mind from your physical senses; freed from its ties to outer objects, the mind can arrive at its own real nature. *Svavishaya- asamprayage chittasya svarupa-anukara ivendriyanam pratyaharah.* (II.54)

What is the first keyword here? *Indriya*. Oh, I like this word. *Indriya* means “your sense powers:” the power of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body to touch, and the mind to sense. We count five physical powers and one mental power. Here Master Patanjali is talking mainly about the five sense powers: seeing things, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling things (touching).

I like the word *indriya*. It comes from the word *indra*, which, as you know, means a powerful god or deity, called Indra. There’s a big debate in the ancient texts about where Indra’s name comes from. Some texts say there’s a root called *inder*, but most people agree that’s just made up later from the word *indra* itself. Some people say the very word, *e*, which means “to go” or “to drive something” is the root for this powerful deity’s name. But I like the scriptures which say the name of this deity, “powerful one,” comes from an ancient root *und*, “u-n-d,” and the “u” changed to “i” later. *Und* means “to make wet,” *undra* or *indra* means “the one who makes something wet.”

This was believed to be, even in ancient Vedic times, a god who sent the rains because rains are so powerful. Everything, the whole food supply of the entire culture depends on this wetness of the rains sent down by the powerful god. The ancient Indo-European root is *wed*, “w-e-d,” and we see it in a lot of English words, like “wet” or “winter,” meaning, “the wet season.” We also see the ancient root *und* in the word “inundate,” meaning to “drown” or “cover something with water.” Maybe the funniest two words are “whiskey,” the word “water” itself, and also “vodka.” The “v-o-d” comes from the “w-e-d.” They all mean “something wet,” a beverage. The Tibetan word is *wangbo*, and those of you who know about some Tibetan, the word *wang* means “an empowerment.” So again you have the sense of power.

Why do we call the sense powers, “powers”? The ancient Abhidharma texts say because they assert energy or power toward their objects. The eye, for example, has the power or capacity to go out and grasp an object. So we call them sense powers. Also, each sense power has power or authority over a certain realm, only the eye can perceive colors and shapes. Only the ear can perceive sounds. So, in a sense, each of them has power over a different realm.

What’s the next key word? *Pratyahara*? *Pratyahara* is a nice word; it means “withdrawal of the senses.” In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, which is a much later but extraordinary book on tantric practices, basically, and which we shall study someday together, there’s an example of this word used in its original sense. There’s a special yoga practice called *dhauti*, where you swallow a length of cloth and then pull it back out of your mouth to remove impurities in your esophagus and other parts of the upper chest and body. And that has an effect on the inner channels. But in the verse in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, it says don’t forget to *pratyahara* the cloth, which means that you have to pull it back out. So in a sense you see how the word means to withdraw something.

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Prati is found in the English words “portion,” or “part,” meaning, “one by one” or “piece by piece.” *A* means “onto” or “at” and probably related to the English word, “at.” *Hara* comes from an ancient Sanskrit root called *hir*, which you can spell as “h-i-r,” which means “to grab” or “to pull.” And the ancient Indo-European root is *gher*, “g-h-e-r,” and that came into English in many nice words. For example, the word “garden;” the “gar” comes from the same root as *pratyahara*. Words like “grab” or “grasp” come from the same. The word “court” or “courtyard” comes from “a closed in place” meaning, “everything has been closed in or confined,” “withdrawn from the normal world.” It comes into Russian as *gorod*, as in “Leningrad” or “Petrograd” or “Norgorod.” And I like the word “*koros*” in Greek, comes from this, which originally meant, “an enclosed place for sacred dance.” And then the English word “choir” and “chorus” have come from that, because in the Greek times, the sacred dance had singing accompanying the dance within the *coros*. So you see where *pratyahara* has this sense of “closed in,” bringing your senses back into your body, away from the outside world. The Tibetan equivalent is *so sor dupa* or *sordu*. *Sor* means “to bring in the senses one by one.” Suck in the eye sense, close it down; suck in the ear sense, close it down; stop the nose and ear senses; stop the stimulation to the body sense. *Du* means “to draw back.”

I think the next one is *svarupa*. And then we’ll get the meaning of the whole verse. *Sva* means “self,” your “self.” The ancient Indo-European root is *swe*, “s-w-e,” and it has come into words like “self” or “suicide,” meaning “own self.” It gets changed to “s-e-d,” *sed*, in Latin. And then from there it goes into words like *id* or *idiom*, meaning “self.” When it comes through Greek, that “s-e-d” changes to “e-t-h” and becomes the root of the word for “ethics” or “ethnic,” meaning “the own system,” or “the own way of the people.” And of course the word, “idiot,” [*laughs*] “i-d,” comes from the same root, meaning “a very peculiar, self-oriented person.” So we see where *sva*, means “self.” Then *rupa*, I think many of the Buddhist people here know, means “body” or “form,” “physical.” And we see the word like *rupakaya*, meaning “the physical body of an enlightened being.” The ancient Indo-European root is *kwrep*, “k-w-r-e-p.” The “k” drops out, and the “w,” and you get words like “rib,” meaning “part of the physical body” and “midriff,” meaning, “the strong part of the torso,” “the physical body.” This root also becomes the word “corpse” and “corps,” as in Marine Corps, meaning “a body.” You also see it in the word “rupee” in India nowadays, meaning “physical value” of a coin. So it has meanings of “physical body” or ‘nature.’ So *svarupa* means “your own nature.”

Now I have question to ask all of the Buddhists here, “Do you have a *svarupa* or not? Do you have a nature or not?” There is a “yes,” any “no”s? There’s a lot of “no”s. Any yawns? No. [*laughs*] By the way, *rangchen* in Tibetan means. . . *rang* means “own,” *shen* means “face” or “likeness.” Do things have their own face? Do things have the way they are? Do things have their own *svarupa*? To answer this question and to understand the Yoga Sutras — and many, many people throughout history have not understood the Yoga Sutras — you have to understand Arya Nagarjuna, Asanga, and also Vasubandu, who lived in the same time as Master Patanjali, roughly. They divide your own nature into two. There is a *yugu rangshen* and a *megu rangshen*; there is a nature that you have, and there is a nature that you don’t have. In the Yoga Sutras the same word is used for the nature that you do have and the nature that you don’t have.

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So I'll ask you another question. If Master Patanjali is saying, "Look, if your meditation is good, if you do *pratyahara*, if you can withdraw your senses, and go deep within your own mind, only then can you discover, your *svarupa*, your nature." Do you think he is talking about the one you have or the one you don't have? [laughs] It's a slippery question actually. The one that you have, is the one that you don't have. But anyway. . . [laughs] We'll give the example of a difficult person that you met today, because it's always good to discuss these things in terms of pain and suffering. That's the only time when we are really interested in the true nature of things. How did this person show up in my life? What is this person's real nature? Because if I could know the key to their real nature, maybe I could avoid them tomorrow. Maybe I could make them go away. This applies to everything up to physical illness and death itself. But we'll talk about it in terms of a person that you don't like.

Do they have a nature of being unpleasant? [laughs] Some say "yes," some say "no." The test in Buddhist philosophy is, "can you perceive it?" Of course. Of course; the person is unpleasant. A person comes up and says something to you which breaks your heart. Someone you love, someone you have served for years, perhaps, says something very cruel to you. This is unpleasant; this has to be something unpleasant, it has a nature. There is a nature of being unpleasant or you couldn't perceive it. And then in Buddhism we have to ask, "But is that nature belonging to that person?" Does the nature of being so cruel or hard belong to this person? Then we have to say, "No." We have to say the nature of being hard or cruel or unpleasant to me is coming from my own mind, they don't have that nature. Prove it. There are many people who love them; there are many people who find their words to be true and pleasing. They can't be true and false at the same time; they can't be pleasant and unpleasant at the same time. It must be something which is coming from my side. There is some seed in me that makes me see them, hear them say something hard to me. There must be some seed in another person who makes them seem pleasant.

So, if we are able to withdraw from our senses, if we are able to bring the mind within, we can find the true nature of things, which is that they have no nature of their own. And bringing the mind in is very difficult. If you ask the retreatants what was one of the most difficult practices of our retreat, for three years, it's to have these extraordinary caretakers cook extraordinarily wonderful food and deliver it at the same moment each day. How do you control your urges for eating? You know, it's not like the old days when you just picked up something on the street in New York. Here you've got this big, huge basket of wonderful food twice a day. And you're all by yourself, looking at this basket and you've had a whole hard day of meditation. *Pratyahara* means, "Can I control my tongue? Can I control my urges, my stomach?" And it's a very difficult practice. But you can't succeed in meditation if you can't withdraw when you need to withdraw from things like music, sounds, or talking with other people, which is the opposite of silence, or looking at movies, or looking at people, or looking at the thing on the other side of your retreat fence. If you can't withdraw your mind from these sense objects when the time comes to do it, then you'll never see the real nature of things. It has to be done wisely, you need to enjoy food and you need to use it wisely, and the same with the other sense perceptions. Next verse please.

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Lisa Schrempp: The first commitment is to cleanliness. *Shaucha santosha tapah svadhyayehvara pranidhanani niyamah.* (II.32A)

[laughs] Obviously, the English is only part of the verse. I broke some of the verses out because they had like four or five separate subjects.

I like the word *shaucha*. The ancient Sanskrit root is *shuch*, meaning “to gleam” and the ancient Indo-European root is *skai*, “s-k-a-i,” and from this root come the English words “scintillate,” which is why it’s spelled “s-c,” also, “to shine.” The one I like is “scone,” which originally meant “a shiny pastry.” And even the word “squirrel” comes from *skai*, meaning “a flash,” something you usually only see as a flash. *Shaucha* means “to be clean.” The Tibetan word is *tsang*, *tsang-je*. To give you an example of the Tibetan word, when we make holy offerings on an altar or when we offer tea to a being like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, you will often see the attendants wearing a mask across their face. This is called *tsang-dra*. *Tsang-dra* means “ritual purity.” Meaning you have to keep... Normal people like us have dirty minds. Our minds are very disorderly and mixed up, and then wearing something over our mouths when we serve a holy being or when we prepare sacred offerings is a sign that we are hoping that the uncleanness of our own hearts will not pollute the offerings.

I think the next word in *niyamah*. *Niyamah* is an important word in the Yoga Sutra because, as you know, Master Patanjali outlined eight major activities that can lead us to enlightenment. Eight in Sanskrit is “*ashta*,” branches or parts of a practice are called “*anga*,” and then *astanga* became very famous in this country as a name for a special school of yoga. But in the Yoga Sutras these are eight different activities that we need to engage in if we hope to achieve the yoga of seeing everyone around us as a sacred being. *Pratyahara* was one of them and now we have *niyamah* as another one. I’ll talk about the word... *Ni* again means, in this case, “definite.” The Tibetans translated it with *nge*. *Yama*, to me, is a very beautiful word. The ancient Sanskrit root is *ya*, “y-a,” and it means “to reach out for something” in the sense of reaching for the reigns of a horse and trying to control that horse. So *ya* came to mean “restraint,” “trying to restrain something.” The Tibetan equivalent is *sung*, which means “to hold,” or “to restrain,” or “control something.”

This root split into two different meanings. Because of the reigns of a horse, which are the earliest method of control, the root came to mean “double” or “duel.” This came into ancient languages, Indo-European languages, as *gem*, “g-e-m,” meaning “twins,” and that is the root of the word “Gemini,” meaning “the twins.” The other half of the root split off meaning “to seek” or “to reach for the reigns;” became the Indo-European *ye*, “y-e,” meaning “to reach,” or “to seek,” or “to desire desperately,” and comes into English in the words “jealousy,” and “zealot.”

It’s an interesting story of how this word that means either “twins,” or “to control,” or “to restrain” came into Indian mythology and into Tibetan Buddhism. If you say the word as *yama*, *yama* means “reigns” or “control,” but if you make the accent on the end and you say *yama*, it means “the Lord of Death.” When we say “Yamantaka,” we mean “the Lord of Death.” *Yama* meaning “the Lord of Death” and *antaka* meaning “the one who makes the end, who brings the end.” So, “Yamantaka” means *Yama*, “The Lord

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of Death,” who is the *antaka*. *Anta* means “end;” *ka* means “to do,” like in “karma.” “The end doer.” “The end bringer.” Yamantaka, The Lord of Death, often carries a *pasha*, a noose, and he uses that to restrain the spirits of the beings who died. So, in that sense, he’s also the restrainer.

The way he got his name, *Yama*, is that when he died — he was a human — he died and then his sister was crying for him, and so she asked the gods, “Could you stop this pain I have of my brother having died?” So the ancient gods of India said, “We will give you a half day off; we’ll create something called ‘night.’ And during the night you can sleep and rest from your mourning.” And so *yama* and *yami* came to mean “night” and “day,” or “the twins,” you see? Another twin.

Yama, in the Yoga Sutras, and *niyamah* are two words that refer to the restraint of our own behavior; self control. *Yama* in the early days of the Yoga Sutra refers more to “self control;” you would call it *dompa* in Tibetan, meaning “to control oneself.” Then *niyamah*, its sister, came to mean “commitment,” or “activities that you commit yourself to.”

Here, cleanliness is described as a commitment, along with four other activities. It means attempting to keep your mind clean. But it also means attempting to keep your physical world neat and clean. It’s important for people who meditate or wish to do deep retreat that you live in a simple place that doesn’t have many objects. There should be lots of cleanliness and tidiness about the inside of your yurt. If you maintain this inner and outer cleanliness of your thoughts and also your environment, then you plant seeds in your mind which will help create the paradise that you will live in. Next verse please.

John Brady: Stay in that one pure thought, and never forget it; that single most important thing: things are empty of being what they are by themselves. *Smirti parishuddhau svarupa shunyeva-artha matra nirbhasa nirvitarka*. (I.43)

I think the first key word is *smirti*. *Smirti* means “to remember” or “to stay aware of something all day long,” so it means “remember” in a general sense. But when it is used in spiritual books it most often means “to stay aware of something all day long.” “What am I saying?” “What am I thinking?” “How do I view my world?” The ancient Sanskrit root is *smir*, you can spell it as “s-m-i-r.” The Indo-European root, even older, is also *smr*, “s-m-e-r.” Oftentimes an original “s” gets lost and so we find the *mer* in the English word “memory.” Oftentimes when a word depends on being repeated, you see — you should be remembering what you’re speaking and what you are thinking all day long — then in ancient, ancient languages, the word is repeated: *mermer*. And it became “memory.” It is also found in the word “to mourn” because one remembers the lost one, and “memorial,” and other words. The Tibetan is *drenpa*, which means “to pull” or “to remember,” “to pull up a memory.” We see it in the instructions on how to meditate. *Drenpa* means “the ability to keep the object in front of your mind,” “to be able to maintain this object in front of your mind.” The sister to *drenpa* is *sheshun*, as you know who have studied meditation, which is sort of an alarm that goes off when *drenpa* loses its grip on the object. So that’s what “memory” or “awareness” means in this line.

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What's the next key word? *Svarupa*. Sound familiar? [laughs] We said there were two *svarupas*, two natures that things have. One is the nature that things have and one is the nature that things don't have. With reference to that irritating person you met today, they do have a nature of being irritating and it's naive to think they don't. You can't go around pretending that irritating people aren't, because they are. But they don't have a nature to be irritating from themselves. The thing you find irritating in another person being projected from your own mind, again, because many people find them to be quite pleasant. That's a mini proof that they don't have a nature of being unpleasant by themselves and it's time for all of us to take responsibility, personal responsibility, for stopping the unpleasant things in our world. They are coming from us; they are the result of our own mistakes in the past. This person is *shunya* of any self nature. I think that's the next word, no? *Shunya* means "empty" or "blank." It's obviously the basis of the word *shunyata*, which is the famous Buddhist idea of emptiness.

I never want anyone to go away from a teaching at Diamond Mountain or ACI or any one of our other programs by any of our, I don't know, there must be fifty great teachers now. . . thinking that emptiness means anything else except that this irritating person you met today is void, or blank, or empty of being irritating from their own side. That's the only thing that emptiness means. It doesn't mean some kind of black hole, it doesn't mean absence of form, it doesn't mean not thinking about anything. Those are all very foolish and very wrong ideas. Emptiness means that people you meet who you don't like are empty of any *svarupa* or nature of their own. You are creating them; your mind is creating them. Then emptiness becomes the key to happiness. If you finally get it, if it finally dawns on you, that the people or the events that you don't like are being created by your own mind, forced to do so by your past deeds, then you can't ever be again angry at irritating people. You should punch yourself.

The Sanskrit root here is *shu*, which means "to swell up into a bubble shape" and came to mean something empty or with a cavity inside. The old Indo-European root is *kweu*, which is "k-w-e-u," and comes into the English words "cave" and "cavern," because they are swollen places that are empty inside. I think it is very interesting that the word "church" comes from the same root, originally meaning "a holy place that was swollen with sacred power."

And it's important, Master Patanjali is saying, that we walk around all day long with this understanding, this constant awareness of emptiness. Religion, you know, spiritual practice at its most gut level, is all about trying to avoid pain and unhappiness. It's all about trying to avoid everything from an irritating person or an irritating thought in our own mind, up to death itself. Master Patanjali is saying you must, as you walk around during the day, maintain this awareness. Every time something unpleasant comes to you, look at it and realize that it's empty of being what it is from its own side. It's coming from us. We have to try to keep our *niyamahs* and *yamas*, we have to keep our own ethics and morality clean, and then we won't be seeing these unpleasant things.

I'd like to do one more verse and then I'd like to have one of the retreatants talk about her most important realization.

Oh, I'm sorry, did I miss a word? *Nirbhasa*. I like this word. It's in the Sanskrit verse and it's not in the part of the English that I translated for this class. But it's such a neat word that we have to do it anyway. *Nir*, in this case, means "to go out," "to shine

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out.” *Bhasa* means “to shine.” The Sanskrit root is *bha*, “b-h-a.” You find it in the word *Amitabha*, which is mispronounced as “Amitaba.” *A* means “not.” *Mita* means “measurable.” *Bha* means “light.” *Amitabha* means “the deity or the holy being who is shining with infinite light.”

The ancient Indo-European root is *bhe*, “b-h-e,” and I think it is kind of exciting because it shows up in the English words “beacon” and “buoy,” which used to mean “a light signal.” In the Greek side of our family, it comes up as “p-h-o,” as in “photo” and “photon.” So *bha* becomes *pho*, “photo,” or “photon,” and also “phenomenon” comes from that, “p-h-e.” On the Latin side of the family, it comes in through the words like “fantasy,” as in “f-a.” The Tibetan equivalent is *osel*, which means “clear light.” So *nirbhasa* and *usel* mean “clear light.”

As you probably know, the holy reincarnation of the extraordinary Lama Yeshe was given the name, “Lama Osel.” *Osel*, or “clear light,” is just another word for emptiness. It’s not to imply that emptiness is anything physical that you could ever see with your eyes. You can’t. Oftentimes, the word “clear light” refers to emptiness, especially in the tantric teachings or the higher teachings because when you use your physical body — when you work on your physical, external body with things like yoga exercises or breathing exercises, and then you seek to effect your inner channels and inner *chakras* through this method — the goal of all those is to perceive emptiness in a unique way by using both inner and outer methods, which is even a vow that we have when we reach the higher teachings. We must avail ourselves of both external methods, like physical exercises, breathing exercises, and we must avail ourselves of inner methods, like compassion, *tong len*, the study of emptiness. And then that will bring us to clear light, in the sense of the ability to see emptiness directly, and achieve the body of light as well. Next verse please.

Kevin Laughton: Countless seeds in our minds make us see the great variety of things around us. *Tad asankhyeya vasanabish chitram api para-artham sanhatya karivat.* (IV.24A)

[laughs] I like your pronunciation.

If this irritating person you met today is not irritating from their side, if their irritating-ness doesn’t exist within them, then where does it come from? And the obvious answer is, it’s being projected like a flashlight onto them from your own mind, from my own mind. We can’t blame other people ever again. Once you walk out of a true Yoga Sutra teaching, you are cursed to understand that every stupid, irritating, ugly, hard, painful thing you ever meet is being projected from your own mind. You made those things, you are making them now.

How does that work? In the past we were irritable, we were the person who was negative and angry, unpleasant. That puts what we call a *vasana*, or a *bakchak*, into the mind. There is another word, *sanskara*, or *duche*, and in the teachings on karma, *sanskara* most often refers to a seed at the stage of being planted in the mind — in other words, when you were unpleasant to someone in the past. And then *vasana*, or *bakchak*,

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often refers to the seed as it begins to ripen in your own mind, which could be thousands of years later.

The word *vasana* comes from an ancient Sanskrit root, *vas*, “v-a-s,” meaning “to stay” or “abide.” It can also mean “to clothe” or “to cover.” The same with the Indo-European root, which is *wes*, “w-e-s,” which comes into our language in the words “vestment” or “vest,” meaning “clothing.” And its sister root comes into our language as “was” or “were.” So that you see how *wes* means “to abide,” or “to stay,” or “to be hidden and covered,” and that’s exactly what mental seeds are in our own minds.

When you are unpleasant to another person, the very perception by yourself of your own unpleasantness plants seeds, *vasanas*, deep within your own mind which will abide there, hidden, until the day they ripen into the next irritating person you run into. So, ultimately, we are responsible for everything around us.

The Tibetan is *bakchak* and I like that word because it is so easy to remember. Often you’ll hear people, ACI teachers, referring to *bakchaks* and now you know what they’re talking about. There’s nothing in the whole variety of existence: your own mind, your own thoughts, your own body, the people you meet, the traffic jams you get into, the financial situation in the entire country, the stars above, everything is being sent out from your own mind — from *vasanas*, or seeds, deep within your own mind.

The only way to reach a paradise, the only way to reach a holy angel’s body and mind of ultimate compassion, the only way to become a ultimate guru or lama and be operating on multiple planets, countless planets, at the same time, serving every living being in exactly the form that they can relate to. . . . The only way to reach this is to plant different seeds in our minds. And that comes from keeping *yama* and *niyamah*. We have to keep our lives clean and pure, and our thoughts pure.

I thought since it’s getting hard on your rear ends now, I’m sure, and I’m sorry for that, but we don’t have much time together, so we’re going to push through some more verses. But first, I thought to ask Petra-hla to speak about her retreat briefly, and then after that we’ll take another break. I really encourage you during the break, this break, you know, go up to one or two people that you don’t know and say, “Where are you staying? Do you want to get together sometime tonight or tomorrow and talk about the ideas that were presented today?” But first, Petra-hla will speak.



Petra: Hello. Well, as Geshe-hla mentioned, he gave us this incredibly impossible assignment to talk about the most important realization that we’ve had in three years, and the minute he said that I just thought, “There’s no way!” So much had happened. So much still is happening.

When he said that, I was in a middle of a period where every two or three days I’d write in my journal, “Oh, this is the most important thing. Oh, this is it.” And then two days later I go, “No, no, no. It’s this. This is the thing.” So he said that, and I said, “Well, you know, there’s no way. It’s impossible.” And of course, about four and half seconds later it became completely clear to me what I wanted to talk about.

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So, it's kind of funny. I mean I usually don't talk about my meditative realizations, such as they are, apart from to my closest friends. But of course, your love and your prayers and your support have gotten us through this retreat. And so I think we all feel the very least that we can do is share some of our personal experiences with you. You deserve so much more than just that. So, I think what I'm going to do is just pretend that I'm back in Santa Cruz having a decaf, double-soy, chai, mocha latte with 200 of my best friends and telling them how the retreat was. *[laughs]* And I think it's pretty true, except for the decaf, double-soy, chai, mocha latte. Maybe that will happen soon, we'll see. Is that hinting? I'm not sure.

I think the most important thing for me in this retreat is really experiencing the difference between understanding things intellectually — and even whole-heartedly believing that they're true — and having a real heart-felt life transforming realization. Like I really get that. You know, the lamas always say that there's a difference. And I think I've experienced so many, especially *lam rim* topics, that for me were intellectual or something I understood, and I thought I completely whole-heartedly believed them. But feeling them transform into realizations has been just one of the most striking and significant aspects of my retreat. And I wanted to talk about one of them, because this one happened kind of early on in retreat and sort of set the tone for a lot of the rest of my work in retreat.

It happened. . . usually what I do when I first wake up in the morning, which is about 3:30 or 4:00, is do a round of prostrations to the 35 confessional Buddhas, and I found that a really shocking number of my epiphanies happened during this time when face down on a cold floor at 4:00 A.M. A real disproportionate number, and this was no exception. It happened. . . I remember the date because it was January 15th, the first year we were in retreat, the birthday of the great bodhisattva Martin Luther King, Jr., which seemed appropriate to me in retrospect. And what I was doing, as I was doing my prostrations, I suddenly flashed on, thinking about my mother who passed away about twenty years ago. And just thinking about my selfishness and my lack of kindness to her, especially as a rebellious teenager. And then in that moment, I just got this incredible huge realization of the depth and extent of my self-cherishing. And it was really shocking. I just realized the scope of my self-cherishing, and on top of that I really realized the thing that the lamas have always said, and I've heard over and over again for years and thought I believed, but I really got it. That self-cherishing is the source of every moment of suffering that I've ever had in my entire life. And it just hit me like a ton of bricks, this thing that I thought I understood and that I thought believed in, just hit me.

And for the next three days I basically just sat on my cushion crying, you know, on and off, pretty much non-stop, and just spontaneously reviewed my entire life and every moment of suffering that I'd ever experienced. Everything from just a moment of slight irritation to a life-long difficult relationship with my father, and saw that every moment was created by my self-cherishing, not to mention all the suffering that I'd created, that I caused other people to experience. And it was just relentless. I, my mind couldn't stop doing this process. And I was almost, at one point, sort of desperately looking for some exception to this rule, you know, that self-cherishing had caused every moment of suffering. There wasn't one exception. There wasn't one moment of

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suffering I'd ever experienced, just in this life that I remember, that was caused by self-cherishing, so I'm sure it was probably true for my life since beginningless time.

So I just cried, and cried, and cried. It was so intense. And at that point I remembered one of my favorite teachings, the seven-point *lojong* by Geshe Chekawa, and the five powers, and especially the fourth power, *sunjinpa*, which means "to rip something out by the heart." And what Pabongka Rinpoche explains, he says, "When self-cherishing raises its ugly head just bash it, like you'd hit a thieving dog." Well of course I wouldn't hit a thieving dog, I'd feed it scraps under the table, but I was going to be relentless about my self-cherishing.

And so I decided to just take this — the seven-point *lojong* and especially the five powers, and especially this one point — as just my heart advice, and to live my life by this. I started doing this, just applying it with this fierce determination because I'd just seen this relationship between self-cherishing and my suffering. So every morning before I even got out of bed, you know, the alarm would go off and I'd just say, "I'm going to do it. I'm not going to give it an inch. Just not even an inch. I'm just going to bash it whenever it raises its head." I was just relentless and determined.

So I started this process, and it was very interesting. I noticed another relationship that the *lojong* texts also mentioned, that self-cherishing and self-grasping are sort of inextricably linked even though they're different things. And I really saw this too, that, as I was tearing out the heart of my self-cherishing I was also really going for the jugular of my self-grasping and my ego. It was just this extremely uncomfortable and edgy process of not letting my ego have any slack either.

I remember reading something Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche had been teaching on emptiness, and there was a question and answer session at the end. And one of his students asked him, "Why is it so hard for us to see reality the way it is?" And Rinpoche said, "I think largely because we're afraid to see it." And the student said, "Well, why are we so afraid?" And he said, "Because we want an umbilical cord attached to our ego through which we can feed all the time."

And that was just so heavy for me, and I saw that. I just saw it. Even in total isolation, in a yurt in the middle of nowhere, how much I was still thinking of all these tricky, sneaky little ways to feed my ego. Just the sneakiest little things, in total isolation. You wouldn't even think it'd be possible, but, boy [*laughs*] it's incredible what you do to feed your ego.

So, this was happening, both the self-cherishing and the self-grasping, I was just relentlessly bashing them. And I noticed myself, I just felt more and more just stripped and shredded. I just realized how much of my sense of identity was linked to these two things — to self-cherishing and self-grasping — and how much of this identity I'd built up for myself was linked to these two things. And as I was bashing them, I felt like I was just kind of ripping my identity to shreds.

And like I said, it was this incredible uncomfortable experience of groundlessness, as Pema Chodron so nicely puts it. It was just this groundless feeling that there was nothing to hang on to, because everything that I'd been hanging on to and calling "me" was just, you know, I wasn't allowing it any breathing room at all any more. So it was this incredible feeling of groundlessness. But then the more I got used to it, the

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groundlessness just gave way to this incredible feeling of space, there was just spaciousness. Nothing to hold on to meant nothing to limit me, nothing to stop me from just this feeling of incredible spaciousness.

So I found that after this feeling of just being completely shredded came these incredible meditative experiences, just feeling my ego and self-cherishing and self-grasping stripped away. When I do bodhicitta meditations I would just have the most amazing experience, because I felt there was no “I” in between me and the other sentient beings, you know, there was just no little isolated, tightly defined ego-grasping “me.” All those barriers had just come down. And it was the most incredible experience when I’d do meditations and be sending out light rays and benefiting sentient beings. . . it just felt like there was no more “me,” and there was just this huge heart just like filling the universe. I mean, it’s so hard to describe in words because it was just this experience. It was this sort of poignant bitter-sweet rapture. It was this incredible experience of bliss, but it had this poignancy to it because I just felt the suffering. But it was just, there was just no “I” limiting me from the feeling that I really could benefit sentient beings. And it was just, you know, it was this physical sensation of just this limitless bliss.

So I really realized once again what the lamas have always said is so true. If you overcome your self-cherishing it’s the highest happiness. What we’ve been used to thinking since beginningless time — that looking out for Number One and looking out for ourselves will give us happiness — is just completely wrong. It’s just the opposite. And it was just a thousand-fold stronger than any feeling of happiness or bliss that I’d ever had in my life. And it just kind of went on day, after day, after day. And the only reason that that happiness was possible, because there was no more “me” to get in the way. It just didn’t have anything to do with me at all. I just felt that, and it was so incredible.

I saw from my experience that to get to this point you just need to be willing to give up everything. You just need to be willing to give up everything you’ve thought since beginningless time would give you happiness and comfort and security, you just need to strip it all down and give it all up. And what you’re really doing is just releasing yourself from this prison that keeps you trapped, like we’ve been trapped in this lie called “self-cherishing,” in this lie that looking out for yourself gives you happiness, and that’s what keeps you trapped in *samsara*. If you’re willing to give it up, you think you’re giving up everything, and you’re just experiencing a happiness beyond anything that you ever imagined. You’re really just giving yourself the highest happiness because out of the ashes of that level of renunciation just arises this phoenix of bodhicitta, which is the highest happiness that there is.

So of course my self-cherishing and self-grasping still come up all the time, but I know better now. You know? I had that experience, I just recognize them for the lie that they are. And I just don’t give them any space any more at all. I realize they’re going to keep trapped in *samsara*, because I’ve had this taste of this experience and I know that I just keep trying, and just keep being willing to just go to the edge. That I can live there all the time, that I can get to the point where bodhicitta is just my permanent address, and that I’m there all the time.

And so the way I feel now is I’m just never going to give up. And just having that taste, just that taste of that experience and knowing what real happiness is, and what

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the cause of that happiness is by far the most significant experience for my retreat, because I just got a taste of something, and it just means that I'm never going to give up until I get there.

And since I have another minute or two on the proverbial soap box here *[laughs]* I just want to thank you all so much, so much. Your prayers, and your love, and your encouragement, and your support, and just hundreds of ways completely made the difference, made all the difference in the world. Especially I'd like to thank my personal friends out there. I know that some of you have, if anything, even more faith in me than you have in yourselves. And that, you know, those times. . . it was really hard. It was really, really hard. It wasn't bliss and rapture, hardly, you know, being in solitary confinement with this mind for three years was no picnic, I can assure you. *[laughs]* And sometimes your faith in me was the only thing that kept me here, because I knew if I wimped out and if I couldn't make it, you'd never think that you could. I couldn't do that to you. I had to stay here for you. And sometimes that was the only reason that I was able to really make it through the hard days, so, thank you so very much all of you.

[applause]

Have some refreshments. Then there'll be a little bit more of sutra. We'll go late as usual.



Next verse please.

Reader: The way it works is that they organize other parts in a certain way. *Tad asankheya vasanabish chitram api para-artham sanhatya karitvat.* (IV.24B)

I think the key words are *para* and *artha*. This is a little. . . well, let's do the words first. *Para* means "around" or "beyond," and the English words that come from it are like "paranormal," which means "beyond normal," and also "paradise," which comes from an old Middle Eastern word, Avestan word, for "a walled-in garden." So it means "beyond." Also, obviously, *paramita*, the six perfections, "to go beyond." And then the Tibetan word there is *shen*, meaning "other." And we have the word *artha*, which can mean "a goal," or "an object." The root here is *art*, "a-r-t," which means "to pursue a goal." The Indo-European root is *ret*, "r-e-t," and it's found in words like "rotate," or "rotund," or even "rodeo," meaning "to spin towards a goal," or "to move like a wheel, quickly towards a goal." The Tibetan word here is *dun*, which can mean "meaning" or "object."

The point is this: if you really want to stop meeting people you don't like, unpleasant people, if you really want to stop getting into unpleasant situations in your own personal life, or even in your whole country, or even in the whole world, then it's very important to have a clear understanding of how karma works. It's not enough to say, "Oh, it's just karma." You have to really understand how karma works. "If this

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person is not irritating from their own side, then how is it that I'm seeing them as irritating? How does my mind make them irritating?"

And I think, obviously, it's important to say it's not voluntary. You don't want to see them as irritating. And you can't stop it either just by will power. That's a very wrong idea. It's not like you can meet an unpleasant person and just try to pretend hard that they're pleasant. It doesn't work like that. And that's true of all the suffering we go through. Buddhism is not about trying to think of unpleasant things as pleasant. Buddhism is all about unpleasant things never happening in the first place. This is the real goal. In between here and the goal, it may be useful as a path to try to find the best in a bad situation. But that's not the goal of our practice. The goal of our practice is that pain, and suffering, and death, itself, as the scriptures say, those words are abolished from our language. That in a future time in this world, people won't remember what those words were for.

So how does it work that your mind makes shapes and colors into an unpleasant person? There has to be raw data, what we call "raw data," *para-artha*. It just means "the raw data." What is it in the case of an unpleasant person? In my experience, it's usually sounds. High sounds, low sounds, clicks, palatal sounds, labial sounds, dental sounds coming from the mouth area as the tongue hits the teeth, or the palate, or the lips. You know, scientifically that's all that's happening. Clicks and buzzes and wheezes. [laughter] And those are the *para-artha*. You have to understand, those are the *para-artha*. Those are the other things which are being organized. By whom? By you, into intelligible words and sounds.

Arya Nagarjuna made a very strong point that even words have no meaning of their own. Even words have no nature of their own. It's only because we share karma that we can understand words as meaning the same thing. There's nothing inherently red about the letters "r-e-d." We have common karma. You and I have done similar deeds in the past, and therefore between us words have meaning.

So there is raw data, and then we impose upon it a picture of an irritating person. There are sounds coming out of their mouth, different sounds, but it is we who give them meaning, and not by any conscious process. It is those *vasanas*, those mental seeds that are ripening and forcing us to do that. Which means that we have no control in the present tense. We can't say, "Oh, I'm not going to hear these things as unpleasant." All we can do in the present tense is to try not to react in an unpleasant way. And then the seeds will wear out.

I think those of you who have studied the ACI courses, you'll begin to get a feeling of why the Yoga Sutra is so exciting. It contains all the holy information that we have studied through all those courses. Next verse please.

John Roadhouse: The storehouse is planted by the things we do. *Klesha mula karma-ashayo dirshita-adirshita janma vedaniyah.* (II.12B)

I think the key words are *karma* and *ashaya*. Is that right? OK. I like *karma*, it comes from a root *kir*, you can spell it "k-i-r," in Sanskrit. The Indo-European root, the

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older root, is *ker*, “k-e-r.” And we find it in words for “growing” or “doing things,” “causing things to grow.” For example, the word “cereal” means “a grain which grows.” And that’s why so many English words with a “c,” like “cereal,” come from the old Sanskrit “k.” We see it in the words “crescent,” meaning “a growing moon,” “a moon which is growing.” And we see it in the word “increase,” which means also “growing.” So *karma* comes from a root meaning “to do something,” or “to make something happen,” or “to grow.” The Tibetan word is *le*, and in modern Tibetan *leka*, means “work” or “things you do.”

Ashaya comes from two parts. *A* means “at” or “basically,” and then *shaya* comes from an old root *shi*, meaning “to stay” or “to lay.” Oftentimes the *sha* comes from *ksha* and in the ancient Indo-European was *kwa*. So the old root is “k-w-e-i,” *kwei*. It comes into English in the word “quiet,” and “calm,” and “requiem,” all meaning “something which is quiet,” “which is laying peacefully,” “lying down peacefully.” So *ashaya* as a word — I believe the Tibetan is *shi* here? It means “a basis” or “a place.”

Those of you who studied the Mind-Only school — Winston-hla is the master here I think — *kunshi* means “the storehouse consciousness,” a separate part of our mind in which the seeds are planted for seeing someone as irritating. What does it take to plant a seed? It’s very important to know how they’re planted. Every additional detail you can pick up how this all is happening will help you control it and stop it, and then turn things around into a paradise.

How is a seed planted into our minds? It’s very simple. We were unpleasant to another person. We got upset or angry in our yurt in 120 degrees with the person there, and we couldn’t say anything mean but maybe we did sign language, and sign language when you’re angry is very funny. [laughs] But what plants the seed in your own mind to meet someone unpleasant later is simply being aware that you’re doing it. OK? It’s just the perception of being angry, which you are always, even if it’s only a little bit, you’re aware that you’re moving your hands like that. You’re aware of your heart beating. You’re aware of the feeling of heat in your body as you get upset. Each of those awarenesses is planting a karmic seed. The very act of being aware of yourself as you do something negative is what plants seeds, *vasanas*, into the mental storehouse, and then they come out later as the next irritating person you have to meet. Which all gives us a clue about the approach we have to take. Next verse please.

Mark Ruggieri: There is a connection of cause and effect: the seeds ripen into experiences refreshingly pleasant, or painful in their torment; depending on whether you have done good to others, or done them wrong instead. *Te hlada paritapa phalah punya-apunya hetutvat.* (II.14)

If there’s any Russian doctors here, *te hlada*, *hlada* is the root for “*holigma*,” meaning “pleasantly cool.” So *hlada* or *prahlada* means “pleasant,” “cool,” “nice.” And then the opposite is *tapa*, which means... the word “*tapas*” is related, it means “hot and unpleasant.”

I think the first key word here is *phala*. *Phala* in the Sanskrit and *drebu* in the Tibetan means “a fruit” or “a result.” In everyday Tibetan *drebu* means “a fruit from a

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tree” and *dre* means “rice,” because rice is the most precious of all flowering things or produced things, or fruits, or plants, in all of Asia. The ancient Sanskrit word is *phal*, “p-h-a-l.” The Indo-European root is *bhel*, “b-h-e-l,” and that’s the root of many, many English words. I don’t think I can even remember them all. But “blossom” comes from that, “flower” comes from that, “flora,” the word “blood” itself, the “b-l” comes from that because blood spurts out, flowers out of the body. The word “fall,” the word “ball,” the word “bull,” because they are expanded beings, big beings. The word “phallus” comes from that, and any word meaning “a fruit” or “a thing which expands and bursts open.” So the idea of *phala* is “the karmic ripening,” how karma ripens upon us.

The next key word is what? *Punya*. *Punya* means. . . I think the Tibetan is *sunam*, meaning “good deeds,” “good karma,” “good things we do to help other people.” The Sanskrit word is *push*, meaning “to thrive.” Reconstructing the older root is difficult, but it seems to come from a root “d-e-u,” *deu*. It got an “n” stuck onto it and became *dwen*, and then the “d” dropped out and it was *wen*, and the “w” changed to “b” and it became *ben*, as in “*bueno*” or “bonus” or “beneficial,” all meaning “something good” or “thriving.”

And I think this is one of the most important lines of all religious teaching throughout the whole world, in all of history: “*te hlada paritapa phalah punya-apunya hetutvat.*” “Things don’t happen by accident.”

Hetutvat means “things happen through a process of cause and effect.” You don’t meet an irritating person in this tent by accident. *Hetutvat*. There is cause and effect at work here. If you do *punya*, if you do good things to others, there will be seeds planted in your in mind to have *hlada*, to have beautiful, cool experiences. If you do *apunya*, if you do negative things to other people, then you will get *tapas*, you’ll get suffering, hot, suffering.

This is the same holy message that Moses taught. The introduction of the Ten Commandments onto this planet is one of the holiest moments in all of human history. Obviously, it has kept us from countless acts of violence towards each other, and kept countless people from collecting bad karma that would come back to them. The whole concept that hurting others might have something to do with the pain that comes to yourself is earth-shaking. To be born on a planet where that truth of this single line has ever been spoken to anyone is incredibly rare, and incredibly precious.

One more line.

Summer Moore: We must become as gardeners. *Nimittam aprayojakam prakirtinam varana bhedas tu tatah kshetrikavat.* (IV. 3B)

[Laughs] This is from the fourth chapter, I believe. *Kshetrikavat* is the important word. Those of you who’ve studied *mahamudra*, the *mahamudra* course, you know what this is talking about. When you meet an irritating person you have two choices of what to do. We call the first choice “robo-claws,” which means like some huge stupid machine with pinchers, right? And you can try to adjust the situation, externally, you know? You can struggle between the two extremes of “should I hit them?” or “should I

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ignore them?” You see? You can struggle with yourself about ethical decision. “Should I do ‘A’ or should I do ‘B’?” “Should I respond, or should I not respond?” “Should I do violence, or should I not do violence?” “Should I reason with this person, or should I blow them away?” These are the two basic ideas that come into our minds. It’s the duality that comes into our minds. “Should I hurt them, or should I try to get rid of them, or what should I do?”

Both choices are bad. Both choices are bad. They don’t work. They just don’t work. You can be nice to a bad person, and they can hit you and cause you years more suffering. You can be bad to them, and they can hit you too. You can be bad to them and they change, you can be nice to them and they change. Did you notice it’s all random? There’s no telling how any of our intended actions will come out. No action seems to work all the time.

Even internationally. Should we do military violence against those who hurt us, or should we try to be peaceful? There have been peaceful nations which were crushed, like Tibet. There have been violent nations which have succeeded, like America. There doesn’t seem to be any sense. Some violent nations have been crushed. Some peaceful nations have been left alone.

The point is not to work with external events. Not to work with guns and airplanes, or even discussions and logic. The point is to get to the real cause of violence. And that’s coming from our own minds. If we want to live in a place where people are no longer hurting each other, then we must stop our own mind from collecting those kinds of seeds.

What were the key words? Oh. Then you’ll be like a gardener. You’ll work on your own seeds; you’ll work on your own mind. The thing about gardening is that you don’t get the plant the same day you plant the seed. There’s a time gap. Master Patanjali is saying you have to be like a *kshetrika*. *Kshetrika* means “a farmer” or “a gardener.”

The root here is *kshi*, which means “to possess something of value.” And it became the word for “field” because that was the most valuable thing, and probably still in India land is considered the ultimate kind of value. The root is *kshi*, “to own something of value,” and the old Indo-European root is *kweih*, “k-w-e-i-h.” This root means “to have something of value” or “to compensate someone with something of value.” It came into Greek, the “k” dropped off and it became the root for the word “pain,” because pain was considered like a payment. And as we mentioned in the other teaching, the “k” dropped off and became the word for “poem,” meaning “something which has been assembled together,” “something put together like earth,” “something of value.”

So the real way to stop meeting irritating people is to be patient and intelligent and plant the right seeds in our own minds. This is very beautiful at the end of the Sutra. Some day we should do a course at Diamond Mountain and do the whole Sutra, which would take about a year. But the final chapter is a very beautiful chapter on managing your mental seeds like a very patient gardener, slowly and purposely creating your own paradise. When you get there you can help others, you can teach them how to do it. This is real kindness.

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Now you should just put your books away and relax and spread your legs out. We're going to have story-time. I know you're tired, and we are too. We're not too used to being out much I think.

I'll just want to say a few words about Master Naropa. He lived a thousand years ago. His dates are 1016 to 1100 according to some sources. I thought to tell you about his story. I think it's important that even stories should come from authentic scripture. So I want you to know what I've used for this story.

A lot of it comes from what are called *The Blue Annals*, *Dipden Rinbo*, which were written in the 1470s by a great Tibetan translator named *Gu Lotsawa*. A lot of what I'll say comes from *Taranata's History* written in 1600. There's a much older history written by a person named Platsen Rinchen Nemgya who lived shortly after Naropa, and we are fortunate to have this ancient history. He was close to the disciples. He's in the lineage of Milarepa. There's another important biography of Milarepa, himself, from a lama named Dorje Taut, Rachin Dorje Taut. And I also used the biography of Marpa, who is Naropa's student, but a lot about Naropa-hla is contained in this biography. It was written by someone named Tsunyen Hiruka. *Tsunyen* means "crazy yogi from Tsun." [laughs] He was a little strange, he acted strange. He's also in the lineage of Milarepa, and it seems to be common that the great lamas of this lineage were perceived as unusual by other people. I think it's because they are so beyond us that what seems to them to be quite normal just seems to us to be crazy, because we're crazy.

So I think speaking about Naropa is good for many reasons. One, obviously, that he is an important holder of the lineage, which comes down through the Yoga Sutra and the great *maha siddhas*, which are common to the modern yoga traditions of Master Iyengar, Shri Pattabhi Jois and their teacher, Krishna Macharia and many of the other modern yoga lineages. Naropa's lineage, the early teachers who preceded him, are very important figures both for our own tantric lineages and for the ancient yoga lineages which are continued alive in India up to the present time. And even the great teachers we have sitting here in our audience, that we are honored to have, have studied directly from those great Indian masters for so many years. They are our true brothers and sisters by lineage.

So, why is Naropa so important for our lineage? You can say our lineage divides into the open teachings and the secret teachings. I think all of you would feel that the greatest open teachings of our lineage in Tibet are perhaps the *lam rim* teachings, and of course the five great books which the *lam rim* teachings derive from, which are the basis of the ACI courses. ACI... we took a monastic approach and we presented the entire series of courses through the five great books. There's another approach, which is to synthesize all those great books and teach them as *lam rim*.

So we are called *tsenyipa*, which means "the monastic scholars who studied the five great books in detail." And then people who studied a synthesis of the five great books are called *lamrimpas*.

The great father of all these teachings in Tibet, the open teachings, is considered, for our lineage to be Lord Atisha. He was born, some accounts say, about twenty years

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before Naropa and he was an extraordinary scholar in the great ancient monasteries. But later he was so overwhelmed by Naropa's knowledge and practice that he begged Naropa to teach him. Naropa became his teacher for large parts of what became the *lam rim* lineage of Tibet. He especially taught him the secret teachings of Hevajra, and all of the *prajnaparamita* which Lord Atisha was taught, were taught to him by Naropa. So this is an important person for us in the open teachings.

In the secret teachings Naropa is the direct link between India and Tibet for many important lineages. Mahamudra lineages came directly from him down through Marpa-hla and then eventually from Marpa to Milarepa, and then to Gompopa, and then down to Je Tsongkapa and into our lineage.

I don't think most people know that Naropa-hla is also the source for the Kalachakra tantra in Tibet. The Dalai Lamas have been the traditional teachers of Kalachakra secret teachings. But they came directly from Naropa and Naropa's disciples into Tibet. We owe the Kalachakra teachings to Naropa.

I think almost all of you who have studied in the ACI courses and with holy Lama Khen Rinpoche are surely aware that our practice of Vajra Yogini is called *naro kachu* because it comes from Naropa, directly from Naropa. That's a different lineage that comes down through the Pontingba brothers of Nepal, and didn't come down so much through Marpa. So Naropa is extremely important for us who are studying and devoting our whole lives. . . . The three year retreat was centered on the practice of Vajrayogini, and that's from Naropa-hla.

Naropa-hla also is the founder of the Chakrasamvara lineages for all of our practices. And when holy Lama Khen Rinpoche gives initiations he often gives the preparatory initiation from Chakrasamvara.

I was surprised when I studied the ancient *Blue Annals* that Naropa-hla is also the source for our practice of Yamantaka, or Bhairava, secret teachings, which Khen Rinpoche also often uses for the preparatory initiations for our secret practice.

He is also the greatest source of the Hevajra tantra and the Guhyasamaja, which was Je Tsongkapa's favorite tantra.

So really, although there are other lines, other lineages, say, of Kalachakra into Tibet, the major lineages of all the secret teachings of our holy lamas come down through Naropa-hla directly. So I think it's very fitting, for example, that Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche named his university Naropa University. So I think it's important to hear about Naropa's life.

In the early biographies he's described as a Buddha, someone who is already a Buddha and came to this world only to demonstrate how we should do it. So if we follow the steps of his spiritual progress, which according to the highest teachings were just pretend — he was just acting out for our benefit, repeating, showing the process that he went through millions of years before — but very clearly, whether it's a play like that or whether it's really that he was struggling to get enlightened in this life, a thousand years ago, either way, his life is an example for us. And I think the stages of his life are stages that each of us would like to go through.

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So how did he start? He was born into a royal family in Bengal, northeast India, not far from Bodhgaya, and even as a child he was showing very strange behavior. He would run around and tell people not to hurt animals and things like that, even as a very tiny child. When he reached eleven years old, he went to his mother and said, “I want to go study Buddhism.” And she said, “Well, is it nearby?” And he said, “No, it’s western India.” And he took off at the age of eleven to learn Buddhism.

He went to the great monastic universities in Kashmir. Kashmir was a very strong Buddhist. . . in the west of India. He studied for three years in those great places. And I think it’s interesting to see the topics which he studied. He studied the Kalachakra tantra, but more the words than the practice, you see, at the age of eleven. And for the next three years he also studied *Dom Jung*, which is an important commentary to Chakrasamvara. He studied Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammar. He studied medicine. And I think a good plug for ACI, he studied *tsemadeyden*, which are the seven great books of Buddhist logic, which you have studied in the courses on Buddhist logic and the courses on the proof of future lives. In the monasteries, even now-a-days, at about the age of eleven or twelve, a young monk would first be introduced into how to think clearly, the rules for thinking clearly. And as we follow Naropa-hla through the rest of his mystical life, I think it’s important to realize that he was grounded in thinking and logic and reasoning. And that’s an important part of every monk’s and nun’s training, is to learn to think clearly first.

He came back home at the age of fourteen. He spent three more years studying two great bodies of literature. The first is the five great books of Maitreya. They are represented in many of the ACI courses. The course on Refuge, for example, comes through that lineage. And of course the *drang nge* course, how to interpret the Buddha, comes directly through the five great books of Maitreya. We spent twelve years on the *Ornament of Realizations*, which is one of those five books.

We were thinking about what to teach here next fall, since the book tour was delayed until next spring, which I think Kimberley-hla will speak about, but we thought to have a teaching on one of the other great books of Maitreya. Maitreya is, of course, the coming Buddha. And one of my holy yoga teachers from New York, Sharon-hla, just spontaneously asked me one day if we would be going over these books of Maitreya. And then I was thinking about doing it myself, and then the same day Elly-hla mentioned that we should maybe try to do one of these books of Maitreya, called *The Sublime Tantra, Uttarantra*. It’s not a secret teaching; it’s not a tantra as a secret teaching. It’s an open tantra. So we’ll do that in the fall in a weekend like this.

But he studied those five great books. Then he went on during those three years to do the six great teachings of Arya Nagarjuna. Arya Nagarjuna’s teachings, of course, are the root of the Diamond Cutter Sutra teachings of ACI, and all of Master Shantideva’s teachings on emptiness all come through the same books. Also, later in his life, when he studied at Vikramashila monastery, Naropa-hla was taught both the Abhidharma systems and the Vinaya systems, and one of his buddies, Prajna Karamati, wrote the commentary to *The Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*, which was the basis of the commentary which we studied.

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What I'm trying to say is, over those formative years, from eleven to seventeen, Naropa-hla studied exactly the same subjects and same books that you are studying in the ACI courses.

Then he began to get pressure from his parents to marry. He hadn't become a monk yet, he had taken layman's vows. He had been given the name Guganagarba Numke Ningbo, which means "heart essence of the sky," referring to emptiness, when he became a layman with lifetime vows. But he hadn't yet become a monk. His parents, when he reached seventeen, put a lot of pressure on him to get married.

The story of his marriage is a very, very lovely, beautiful story which I would like to save for a later talk, maybe on Saturday I think, and what occurred between him and his holy wife. But at the age of twenty-five, eight years later, he and his wife agreed that he would become a monk and he would enter the monastery for further study.

And so the marriage was dissolved and he became a monk and he began to study in the great monasteries. He went back to Kashmir for three more years to study, and then he came back to eastern India and studied at a place called Pushpahari, which is supposed to be near Nalanda and is called Pulahari by the Tibetans. But while he was there he spent, I think it is a total of six more years in east India learning more subjects. Then he had an opportunity to come to Nalanda monastery, which was close by.

He got into a shoot-out, debate shoot-out, with one of the great scholars in Nalanda and he wiped him out. The monks of Nalanda begged him to become one of their monks and he agreed. Most sources say it was Vikramashila rather than Nalanda, although Nalanda was historically closer to Pushpahari, but all the sources agree that Naropa-hla became a great scholar at the monastery of Vikramashila.

I like Vikramashila. I see it like Diamond Mountain.

In modern Tibetan monasteries, the study of the open teachings and the secret teachings is divided, mostly. So we have separate tantric colleges for the study of the higher teachings, and then separate open colleges, like Sera Monastery, for studying open teachings. The three great tantric colleges in Tibet: Gyume, from which holy Lama Khen Rinpoche came; Gyutu; and then I don't think most people know that Segyu was the third great tantric monastery and it has largely been lost. There's a holy incarnation of an important Segyu lama who is living in California and teaching there. So I think it may be revived.

But in the old days at Vikramashila, people studied sutra and tantra side by side. So that in the monastery, for example, Hevajra tantra was very big and Kalachakra tantra, at the same time as all the subjects you study at ACI. And I think what's extraordinary is that in those days, everything was government sponsored. The Pala dynasty of India was very much into tantra and sutra being taught together, and the monasteries had great support from the people and from the government to study both secret and open teachings, deeply, in the monastery. And the common people also through the yogi system.

So I think it's a great, it's a great sign of what could happen at Diamond Mountain. It's very rare that authentic lineages of secret and open teachings mix properly. It's a very rare moment in the history of our planet.

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Vikramashila, the jewel of that system was wiped out in 1199 by invasions from the Turks, and then the Muslims took over most of India and those universities, like Diamond Mountain will be one day, were crushed. Because it's so rare for the secret teachings and the open teachings to continue for very long, it's a very rare, precious opportunity for us to be able to study both of them at the same time and at the same place.

And finally at the end of his monastic career, Naropa-hla became the abbot. Some people say of Nalanda, some sources say of Vikramashila. And then he became the gatekeeper, one of the six gatekeepers of the monastery.

This was a system by which there were four great entry gates into the monastery, and there would be one great scholar posted at each gate. So there was a northern gatekeeper, western, southern, eastern, and then by tradition, two gatekeepers in the very center of the monastery.

I don't think they actually stayed sitting at the gate their whole career, but what I know did happen is that people would come from other systems — people would come from other traditions — they would come to the gate of the monastery and say, "I wish to debate the greatest master here." And that was a very serious thing because, as I've mentioned in past talks, when a person came from another tradition and challenged one of the gatekeepers, if the gatekeeper lost, then the whole monastery had to become that tradition. It would be like if a Baptist could come to a Catholic church and out-debate the priest there, then all of the Catholics in that church would be sworn to become Baptist.

So it was a very serious system of debating. And you took your best guy and you put him at the gate. But I think also it reflects a deep wisdom of all the monks at Vikramashila that they're seeking truth and not a separate system. You see, the monks at Vikamahila, and Nalanda, and the other great monasteries, they weren't interested in defending Buddhism, or defending Mahayana, or defending this or that tantra. They were really interested in truth. And if a person could come and make a better case for a different religion, they would gladly change. I think that's a sort of extraordinary wisdom. They weren't gatekeepers to defend the monastery; they were gatekeepers to absorb the wisdom that might walk up to the gate, no matter what tradition it was called.

So that's how we leave Naropa-hla this evening. He has studied all the ACI courses, *[laughter]* he has been exposed to many tantras in a literary way, in an intellectual way, he has proven himself and later became the abbot for eight years of these great monasteries. So he's at the peak of his career. He is considered the. . . he's even Lord Atisha's book teacher. So he's at an extraordinary place in his monastic career, respected by everybody, looked up to by everybody. There were five hundred monks at that time at the Vikramashila; it was at its peak and every monk was counting on Naropa-hla. And they were looking to this great scholar and monk to see where their spiritual path would take them next. But for that you have to tune in tomorrow.

And I'm sorry we went late, but three years is a long time not to blab. *[laughter]* And it's all stuffed in there waiting to come out.

I'd like to thank, again, all of you for coming. It's so hard to get here. I know how it is to try to get time off your work. I know it's been hot or windy or noisy or dusty. I know you've been sitting almost all day now on a hard ground. And for us in

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the retreat as it ends, we are sort of very grateful for you, that you take the trouble and the time to come here and be with us. It's a very great thing for us. And if you see one of those hardworking directors or their staff or the caretakers, I hope you will thank them for all their hard work to prepare for these teachings. They don't get much sleep for weeks before. So we'll do the closing prayers and we'll see you tomorrow. And we'll catch up on the Yoga Sutra. Did we do the whole day one? That's strange. *[laughs]* We'll start then with day two tomorrow. Thank you.

[Prayers]

Morning: Day Two ❁ April 18
Venerable Elly van der Pas
Venerable Anne Lindsey

[Short Mandala in English]

[Refuge in English]

Venerable Elly: Maybe we could start off by just doing a few minutes of quiet meditation. Try to watch your breath, and count the breaths as they go out. Then when you get to ten, start over. And if your mind wanders, then start again at one. We'll just do that for a few minutes just to settle.

[Silence]

Okay. We're going to give a presentation on Geshe's new book, which is the one that's getting published. It's called The Tibetan Book of Yoga. This is the third one he's written here. I typed them all up and that's why I'm sitting here, because people figure I know what's in it.

Just for the record, so people know what's been written, there are actually three books that Geshe-hla has written about yoga so far. The first one, the one he started first but hasn't finished yet, is called Katrin and it's about a young woman who lives in Tibet in the eleventh century and how she studies. First she finished the equivalent of a Geshe degree, and then she went to India to study yoga, and following that, it's a day by day synopsis of what she studied with her teacher.

And her teacher was teaching her The Yoga Sutra. So it was going to be. . . actually I haven't finished typing it up. . . I don't know if Geshe-hla has finished writing it. Originally he said it was going to be eight hundred pages, with a reading for every day of the year. And then the publisher said, "We can't publish anything that's eight hundred pages." So he said, "Don't worry, it won't be eight hundred pages; it's going to be twelve hundred." *[laughs]* And so I don't know what we're going to do with it. It's a beautiful story, but it's just very long.

Then the next one after that is How Yoga Works, and that's the sequel. It's the one that was actually finished, and it's about her first student. And it's a similar format only it's shorter. So it's got something every day, but it's how she taught her first student. And it's also a very nice story.

Geshe-hla seems to like this genre of weaving the story together with the teaching, so it goes down very easily, but it's not something that's familiar to a western audience so much. I mean there's Pilgrim's Progress, but that was years ago wasn't it? And they say that doesn't sell. *[laughter]* But anyway, I'm sure that everyone will get a copy eventually. It's a very nice book.

Okay, so then the third one – the publisher said, "Listen, we just want hands-on, short, pithy, how to do it. We don't want to know anything more than what you actually do."

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And so then he came out with his third book, which is the one that's getting published in January. It's called The Tibetan Book of Yoga. And it's short, a hundred and eight pages, with lots of illustrations taken from the original woodblocks, and it's really cool. I mean, we were able to find, in a number of different places – John Brady found some totally unique illustrations at Saint Petersburg – just by accident, of course – and happened to mention it to me about a month before Geshe-hla asked for them. [laughs]

And then some more came from Gene Smith, from the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. He won't let us acknowledge him in the book but we owe him a lot. He's given Geshe a lot of books for his practice, and he's done amazing things. He pretty much single-handedly saved so much of the Tibetan literature, and just. . . he's very quiet and very unassuming and very accessible and he has this huge, huge library in New York. And he's totally worthy of sponsorship. Anyone who feels inspired should help him out because his project is so crucial. Anyway, I'm plugging him here because he didn't let us acknowledge him in the book.

So, I'm going to talk about the theory of yoga – why it works, or according to the book, how it works, and Chukyi is going to get a little more experiential, because I tend to be more direct and she tends to be a little bit more... [laughter]

But we figured it out. We'll take turns, because our styles are really different. So you'll hear me first and then I'll stop, and then you'll hear her. But she can cut in. So, okay. Geshe calls it Heart Yoga, what he's teaching in this book. Most of the yoga that you hear about that's being taught in this country comes from the outside. It's a physical thing and it leaks down into the subtle levels of your being, but generally from the beginning it's taught from a more gross level and then subtler and subtler and subtler. Heart Yoga is kind of attacking it from the very, very most subtle level and from the gross level -- all the levels at once.

And so it's an expansion, I think, from the way it's usually taught. And I think ultimately Geshe-hla plans to sneak a lot of Buddhism into the practice – I mean there's already quite a bit in the practice, the way he's presenting it.

It comes from two lineages, two different lineages. There's the lineage of the actual body exercises and that originated. . . well I think they both originated in India. The physical exercises came from the same lineage as the yoga that is taught commonly everywhere. It's the same lineage that people are practicing today. It went to Tibet originally through Naropa and others. And actually this is the juncture he's talking about in the books that Geshe-hla wrote, the two novels. But Naropa had a lot to do with it, and he also documented it very well and taught a lot of people. And what he taught was called the six practices. Sometimes you hear the six yogas of Naropa, and there's also the six yogas of Niguma, who was his spiritual wife. She was actually his wife, and then after that, he was a monk, then later she was his spiritual wife.

This kind of yoga is literally translated from Tibetan as “the machine of the body.” So these are exercises where you're working with the body almost like a machine. You're putting it in different positions and then certain things happen internally as a result of what you're doing physically. So that's how Geshe-hla translates it, as “machine of the body.”

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And that lineage went to Je Tsongkapa, who studied and taught it, and practiced. And then from him it went to Gyelwa Genden Drup who was the first Dalai lama, then it went into the Dalai lamas' lineage, and then from there we got these practices. It was practiced extensively at Sera and the other monasteries, and up until the time they were sent out of Tibet there was actually a special college where they practice that. Now it's a little bit more informal and I think certain lamas in the monastery are teaching it. That's were Geshe-hla studied.

So that's the body lineage. Then the other lineage is heart, what they call the heart lineage, or you could say the mind. That originated with the Buddha, and it's the *tong len* practice that we find in so many of our Buddhist lineages. It went to Atisha – Atisha also studied with Naropa as well, so he may have learned it from him – but anyway that particular lineage went through Atisha to Tibet, and Je Tsongkapa also combined it with the six practices in a book he wrote called *The Book of Three Beliefs*. Then from there it went to Gyelwa Genden Drup and the other Dalai lamas and so into the Gelukpa lineage. So that's how we got these practices.

So let's see. One of the things that I think is also covered in the other yoga lineages but maybe more explicitly talked about in the Heart Yoga book, is the five levels of your psycho-physical make-up. Your body-mind, what makes up you, has five levels. The first one is the physical level, that's your body -- all your parts -- and it's the thing that you are working with when you are doing yoga exercises, or asanas. It includes your nervous system.

The second one is sustenance. And that's something that we don't think about too much in those terms but it includes food, water, air, hope, sleep, and concentration, and it's things that restore your strength and your energy, and your heart in a way. It's the category for things that restore you. Of these, the most crucial is air, breathing, because if you think about it, you can do without hope for a week or so, and you can do without food for a few days. You can do without sleep for a few days but you can't do without air for more than a minute or two, or five maybe, unless you're a real high yogi. So air is the most immediately crucial of these sustenances.

So the next one, the third level is the inner winds, and that's the psychic winds in your body. Those move through what they call inner channels, and those are very, very subtle channels in your body. In the book Geshe-hla says they're like a light ray, right? They're that subtle. And the inner winds move through those channels. The winds are affected by your breathing, and your breathing is affected by the winds. So when you breath, when you concentrate on your breathing, it affects the movement in the psychic channels; it makes it calmer. And also when you start to get more agitated, the winds get agitated and your breath gets agitated.

So there's a direct connection through all these five levels, from one to another. And the other point is that the parts of your body form along these nerve channels, these subtle channels. So your nerves form along the channels, your bones, your veins and all the parts of your body form along the channels. And what happens is that if there's some kind of a blockage in the channel, then you get a problem in that area. Like a lot of people get lower back pain, there's a knot in the channels right there and when that becomes too clogged up then you have a problem. I've always had a problem around my heart, just various ways, and I've noticed that . . . I think it's the same thing, it's a

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blockage.

So when you're doing yoga, it affects these channels. . . it helps to straighten them out a lot. And then when you're doing breathing while you're doing yoga, it helps to push the energy through the channels in a healthy way. The thing about the channels is that, there are three main channels. The main one is in the middle, close to the back bone – in front of the back bone but close. And that one is about the size of . . . they say about the size of a drinking straw.

And then there are two channels on the sides. And all of your negative emotions flow in the two side ones and generally the middle one is pretty much closed – the two others wind around the middle one. And so what happens is that when you have, like, a lot of anger or something, there's a lot more energy in the side channels and it closes off the middle channel. And generally speaking the middle channel is almost always closed.

And then, particularly at the heart, and that's why we call it heart yoga, the side channels go around the middle channel. So the middle channel is like a clear mind, you could say something like that. And then the blockages – they're called chakras – are where the energy is blocked. The heart chakra is the worst. The side channels wind around the middle channel quite a number of times in the heart area, and so that one is the tightest. They say it's also the seat of your mind, so it's also the most important. Like when you die or when you see emptiness directly, then that one opens, but otherwise it doesn't. So it's like your ultimate, in-most self is in that particular chakra.

In the book there's this image of the diamond in the rose. This is the same as the jewel in the lotus, if you've heard of that. We use rose because it's something that resonates with us, it's something grew up with. You give your mother roses when you were a kid and your boyfriend gives you roses. You know, it's something familiar. None of us have ever seen a lotus, mostly. So the rose is something you can relate to.

Then inside is the diamond. And actually the thing about a lotus – it works a little bit better with the lotuses because they grow in the mud – and it's like the channels are all full of all your mental afflictions and all this garbage, and so this beautiful lotus is growing out of this mud and stuff and in it is this precious, inmost emptiness, your essential nature. It's the ultimate nature of your mind. So that's the third level, your inner winds and inner channels, okay?

The fourth level is your thoughts, and that's what's going through the channels, we said before. And those thoughts are connected with the winds. The thoughts are actually moved by the winds and they say that they ride them like a horse. So you have this movement through your body, and then all your thoughts are carried through that way. It's a little hard to describe it, but actually if you meditate on it, it becomes pretty clear. So the thoughts are moving through the channels, and it's not just thoughts but something like thought forms, in a way. And they're moving through the channels and they nourish all the different parts of the body.

So then the last one is what we call “world-seeds,” and that's something that's created by your karma. It is your karma you could say. World-seeds – it's when you see yourself doing something, it plants a seed in your mind that ripens later, and that becomes something that you experience later still. It's like sunglasses in a way – when you're looking through them, it shades your view of your world.

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So the way you see your world is totally determined by your karma, by your previous actions. For instance, if I get upset with somebody and yell at them, then I see myself getting angry, It puts a seed in my mind and then later on it becomes much easier for me to see someone else getting angry at me or to get angry at someone again. And that's how that works: it creates a sort of easiness for these things to happen again.

Okay. I was trying to prepare last night and what happened was that the wind was so strong, and it got in my eyes. I had eyes full of dust yesterday and my glasses broke and so I had to wear my contacts and I think. . . anyway, the upshot of the deal was that I was blind last night. *[laughter]* So it was really hard to prepare and *[laughs]* Anyway, that's my excuse, okay? *[laughter]* But now I can see okay. I was really afraid I couldn't see today and Chukyi was afraid too because then she'd have to do the whole thing. *[laughter]*

You know things happen during the retreats. Sometimes you get these things . . and so if something happens, and it might happen – you might get really sick – just don't worry. It'll go away. It's no big deal. It's just karma ripening. It's happened before. One retreat I couldn't walk. *[laughter]* Anyway, okay.

So then the other thing I wanted to mention is posture. And I just wanted to cover it quickly, because the posture is crucial. Yoga has a bunch of different postures that you get into but the main one that I'm familiar with is meditation posture, and so I thought I'd just kind of go through it quickly to sort of say how this works in terms of the Heart Yoga.

When you're sitting in the meditation posture you're supposed to have your legs crossed and your eyes are supposed to be in a level plane, your back is straight, your shoulders are level and your head is straight, and your lips and your teeth are loose. And that's important because you have channels that come from the sides of your lips and they go up. And so, even when you smile it makes a difference, it actually affects your channels. And then your tongue has to be loose, and so on, and all these things affect your inner channels. All these things are connected to the way your channels are laid out.

And then the last point is the breath. Then when you get your whole body into nice alignment, and you're relaxed, then when you breathe it moves nicely through your body, as nicely as it can, because of your posture. And that allows the inner winds to move nicely. And so then you can get into the meditation. So that's actually the first exercise in the Heart Yoga, is sitting that way. And that allows you to get into a nice meditation, it allows things to be able to happen.

So then the second thing that is done in Heart Yoga is chanting. And that's another way to open the heart. Everything in this book is about opening your heart, so chanting – and what happens with that – well, there are always many levels of these things. The fifth level I'd say is that you're chanting holy words and they resonate in your mind and it creates a mental seed, the world seed we talked about earlier.

And then there's the physical aspect of the chanting. It vibrates, it actually vibrates the heart. And so your mind is in a holy place, and there's this vibration going, and then the winds are moving nicely and so it helps your heart to start opening. And then, when you're doing a yoga posture, if your channels are blocked, it's as if you have a hose and it's got a kink in it, and you turn it on. You can break your hose that way.

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And that's where you. . . I think it's the same with sports and dancing and things like that, if you don't warm up nicely, then you can hurt yourself. It's because you need to get the kinks out of the channels before you start.

So that's the way the physical aspect works. And then *tong len* also works from level five. So once you get into this meditative state, then you do *tong len*, you think about someone who's suffering, and you're trying to take away their suffering and to give them happiness and to give them various gifts. Geshe-hla calls them gifts -- generosity and patience -- and it's basically the six perfections. So what this does is, it creates good karma for you in the future. And also the fact that you're doing it with your breath is causing it to affect the other levels. It's affecting all the way down to the physical level. So it works the whole time you're doing your practice. And this you can take to regular yoga practice too – if you're thinking about helping someone the whole time you're doing it, then what happens is whatever you're thinking about, whatever your motivation is, is what you get, right? So if you're thinking about, "I'm going to do yoga so I'm beautiful and thin and whatever," well, that's the kind of thing you're creating in your mind. And if you're doing it for others, then what it creates in your own mind is this openness to helping others and also to becoming someone who can help others.

And so really the only worthwhile motivation, when you're doing that kind of thing, is helping others. It's the thing that really makes us happy. If you think about what really makes you happy, it's helping someone else.

So anyway, that's pretty much, I think, what I was going to say about this practice. So maybe Chukyi-hla can take it from here.

Venerable Chukyi: I think the word that Elly was looking for was "mushy," so she does the factual stuff. I'll say it. It's my role at Diamond Mountain. Somebody has to do it. So just because I can tell you, because I'm sitting up here, stand up, please. [laughs] Wow, such power.

Stretch. Don't hit your neighbor but, stretch out a little bit. Look at all our yoga dakas and dakinis over here. Stretch like they're stretching. Okay, back and forth. And when you feel a bit relaxed sit down again. I'm not going to pretend to teach yoga, you can ask Lisa how. Now take a moment. Find out where you carry tension. For me it's often my shoulders. You know, look at Carolyn, she's got it. I love this. Buddhism is infiltrating yoga and yoga is infiltrating Buddhism, and they're the same, because they'll get us to where we're going, you see. So take a moment and sit down. Put a slight smile on your face. It will do two things. It'll stimulate your side channels, as Elly told you, and it will make me feel like you like what I'm saying. [laughs] We're going to say some special words now, okay? They're not magic by themselves but we're going to say something first. I'm going to say one line at a time and you repeat it after me. We're going to do it one time in Tibetan. Please, whoever listens to this tape and who has a good ear for pronunciation, correct this in your mind. We'll do it one time in Tibetan, three times in English. And then we're going to talk about how you can actually get to a place. The end of The Tibetan book of Yoga talks about *chulam kyi nelnjor*.

Say *chulam kyi nelnjor*. Actually the *kyi* isn't in The Tibetan Book of Yoga. *Chu* ... this isn't *chu* like dharma. This is a different spelling for Tibetan scholars. Don't ask

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me how it's spelled. I don't remember. *Spyod* or something. It means "the practice." Geshe-hla calls it "all day yoga." It means "carrying it into your life and into your world." So that's what I'm going to focus on here. And if you'd like, the rest you can come to the ten day retreat after. Sit down, close your eyes gently, or keep them partly open and staring downwards. And focus your concentration at the point between your eyebrows first, as Elly taught us yesterday, and then move it up about half an inch or couple inches, and about an inch into your head. And then let it flow down. Imagine your concentration is like a point and it's flowing down through that central channel that Elly described. And it's going to flow down into your heart. Right behind your heart in this beautiful clear channel that's right in front of your backbone. And in that chamber see a beautiful red rose. And it's very fragrant. Its fragrance permeates your body. It represents love. It represent the kind of love that Petra was talking about yesterday, a love that fills up the skies. It's all of your love and you have it. And inside the rose is a diamond, picture it there, beautiful, large, Elizabeth Taylor sized diamond. I'm dating myself. It's pure, it's clear, it's sparkling. This is your knowledge of how the world really works. Your knowledge of emptiness. And it sends light throughout your body. And then I'll say this prayer one line at a time, and if you'll just repeat it after me.

*Dena jetsun lama thukje chen,
Magyur droway dikdrip dukngel kun,
Malu data dakla minpa dang,
Dakki dege shenla tangwa yi,
Drokun dedang denpar jin gyi lob.*

And then we're going to do it three times in English.

*And then my high holy-lama
Lord of all compassion
Give me your blessing please.
So all the pain of mother beings
Their bad deeds and their obstacles
May ripen now on me.
And so I may now give them
All my good and happiness
And in this way assure
That each one has all happiness.*

Isn't that part of what brought you here? I don't think there's probably a being in this room who hasn't wanted to stop suffering. And don't worry, even if it's just a desire to stop your own suffering, that's where you start. Because what blocks us from caring

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about other people, what blocked me from thinking about my friend's breakfast this morning, thinking about taking care of her, was that I was anxious about doing this talk. If I wasn't suffering, I'd think more about others and make sure they were cared for. So it's okay to start with yourself, and we'll talk about that.

How do we integrate this into our daily lives? There was a holy word used yesterday. I get to use it, it's the only Sanskrit word I know. Salim will have to do all the Sanskrit for us please, when he talks. It was *smirti*. Who remembers? Did I say it right? Who remembers what *smirti* means? Who **remembers** what *smirti* means? *[laughs]*. . . hmmm?

[Audience: inaudible]

I'll give you a hint.

[Audience: recollection]

Recollection. Okay. What is it in Tibetan, I forgot.

[Audience: drenpa]

Drenpa, wow, people studied. So we need to talk about how we can remember as we go throughout our day, what we're here for: which is to serve others and to open our hearts. The Heart Yoga in the morning. . . there are ten exercises. I sat down to do mine this morning; thought I'd be a good example. When I sat down, I remembered I couldn't find my wallet last night, so I started worrying about my wallet. *[laughs]* And that's how our minds go, right? Am I the only one? I may be. You may all be Angels who are tricking me into doing this. *[laughter]* You won't admit it. Geshe-hla says people. . . they just don't admit it. They tell you you're crazy, until one day they tell you that they are angels. We want to get there, right? We want to get to where we're not thinking about our wallet when we could be thinking about holy things. And we want to do it two ways. We want to work from the outside in, which is the yoga postures, but even the yoga postures aren't just exercises. I think the holy teachers will tell us, and Carolyn. . . everyone who got the opportunity to be in on her class this morning knows. Carolyn was here at Diamond Mountain, and everyone went to her yoga classes at the beginning, the whole Diamond Mountain team. I didn't get to go. I actually got stuck in the kitchen. I had no karma to go. Keith would come back from yoga, and Kevin and Miriam would understand this: Keith would come back and say, "she's brilliant." I can't quite say it right. That was close. And so anybody who teaches yoga, like our holy Lisa who comes and says, "if there are any serious yoga students here I'll come at seven thirty in the morning from Tucson and". . . and she will tell you better than me, physical postures don't work by themselves. And she always reminds us of this. If your heart and mind aren't thinking the right thing, if you're not concentrating. . . I have no problem concentrating during yoga because the pain is pretty evident, *[laughs]* but with people who are flexible, she's always saying, "you have to concentrate." *[laughs]* So we work from the outside, with our physical being.

Using *tong len* is really cool, because what are we using? You're using your breath. Breathing is also a kind of food. It feeds our body. It gives us sustenance, right? It's food, we can't do without it, as Elly said, for longer than a minute, two minutes, five minutes if you train or unless you're a great yogi . . . and then they can stop, because their inner winds are moving. So *tong len* means that we can feed ourselves with our

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breath, and then if we use it to take the suffering of others away, we can save the world. It's kind of cool. Okay. That may be one thing we could do as we walk through our day. You know when that guy. . . you're on highway 80 and it's sixty five miles an hour and you want to get to the morning yoga class, and the guy in front of you is going thirty five? And your mind starts doing what? Right? "Ohhh, I'm supposed to go to a holy yoga class so I can become a bodhisattva to help all beings." You know? [laughter] I drove to Chicago to teach *tong len* and on the way I was getting irritated, catching myself doing this and like, "I'm trying to get to Chicago to teach *tong len*," and you know, this guy's in my way, and so [laughter] you know those moments. At that moment you stop. Your mind is like this, right? How do you know the guy in front of you isn't also like that? How do you know that they aren't worried? How do you know that they aren't elderly, and not sure that they can see? How do you know that their mind isn't on their wife or child or husband and they're just not thinking? How do you know that they're not doing holy prayers as they drive and their foot is just easing off the gas pedal? Do *tong len*. Take away their suffering. Somebody cuts you off on the road, bless them. Give them that. Give them the victory.

So, okay, I'm not following my notes at all, so. . . Okay. I've not tried this with so many people, but I thought I'd tell you a little bit about my own practice. I think for dharma to work, for myself, we have to live it, right? We can memorize all the eighteen books. We can get a hundred percent on every homework and quiz -- unless you're me and you give your homework to Elly to grade. But we can get it all, and live none of it, it means nothing. It's just another thing that we can hold up and say, "Oh, well, John Brady can recite the Heart Sutra by heart, I'm going to learn it by heart. I'm going to memorize even more than him." It just becomes another tool to increase our suffering. So unless we live it, it doesn't work. Unless we try it, it doesn't work. And that's why Geshe-hla keeps telling us to do the book, which, I left here. It was in my things, and I didn't realize it for several hours. Shows you how good I am at it. But. . . because we have to make it real. So in order to make it real I thought I'd tell you a little bit, sort of about my own journey, so you can understand that somebody who is far from perfect can try to do this. I heard people say after Petra's beautiful, amazing sharing of what she did in three year retreat, I heard people say they got depressed by it. Watch that. You know why they got depressed? Because they said, "oh, she's there. I should be there." She worked for lama Zopa for how many years? [laughs] And did great merit. We can get there. Hear hope in that, not despair. You know. Where do we all start?

I was working as a clinician in New York City, a therapist, and a supervising psychologist for the Archdiocese of New York. I was an undercover Buddhist in the Archdiocese. [laughter] Not so undercover once my head got shaved. I had to explain to my boss [laughs] because I had long hair. I had hair down to here, and the next day I came in and it's shorter than it is now and my boss. . . the director of my agency looked at me and said, "Now I have to deal with a bald supervisor." [laughs] And then I thought maybe I better tell her what I did so she doesn't think I'm absolutely raving mad, because I'm not quite young enough to just pull it off as the "in style". But I was really working with inner city kids. And we were a drug abuse prevention program. And we were supposed to work with at-risk kids. Guess how many kids in New York City are at-risk?

[Audience: all of them]

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Right. So you are one person, trying to help, and you learn what it feels like to feel helpless and feel like you can't do anything to help. Walk into a third grade classroom. Ask the kids, "raise your hand if you know somebody directly who's been murdered by these gang, maybe drug dealers shooting it out on the streets," and have all but three children in the room raise their hands. Have kids tell you. . . one little kid said to me, because I said, "what do you do to make yourself feel safe?" And one little girl says, "my mommy lets me keep milk and cookies next to my bed and when the shooting starts at night I can get down on the floor, and that way I could be under my bed and I'd have milk and cookies." Okay, that's her way of coping. And that's America. Now think of Baghdad. How are you going to help? You know, I had this dream that I'd be able to help. I had this kind of narcissism, this little grandiose notion, "I can save people. I don't need a spiritual path. I'm cool." You know. And then I found out I couldn't. I couldn't even run my own life. You know. I'm, I've been married and failed at it, more than once. That's how compassionate I am. And I was about to give up. See I grew up with my dad saying, "you know Mahatma Gandhi? He's this guy. You know Martin Luther King..." I actually grew up hearing Martin Luther King, and then seeing him get killed. And actually I used that as a weapon against my dad when he said, "do you have to be a Buddhist nun?" You know, it's like, "where did you get this from?" My dad was born Jewish, he's now a born-again Christian with great, great faith and is an amazing, amazing being. And I said, "Dad, remember when I was a kid you used to talk about Gandhi? You made me think I could become a being like that. And you know for me, Buddhism's what works, and for you Christianity is. And that's cool." And he stopped.

But I was about to give up hope. And then I walked in, first to this group at the Three Jewels, this Ani named Ani Pelma, you may notice the beautiful nun who comes in from the three year retreat. And Ani Jigme Palmo – Ven Elly. And then finally I landed in class. And I walk into Geshe Michael's class. I'd met these amazing beings and they said, "well, you think we're good. Go hear this other guy." And I'm like, "well who is this guy?" And I walk into class and I walk into *Chunjuk*... it's the only short title I know because Geshe-hla said he had forgotten when he met a lama and he taught us you should always know what book you're studying. And *Chunjuk* is short for The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, right? The *Bodhisattva Charya Avatara*. And all of a sudden, there was not only a possibility I could become this being, there was a way to do it. There was something called bodhichitta, where you could care so much about other beings that you would do anything to get enlightened yourself so that you could emanate in millions of forms and help all beings. But not only was there a word, because I'm good at words. I'm chattering on and you're looking at me like you're actually listening to me. But there was a path to get there. And guess what? Everybody started out just like us. Lord Buddha telling stories about his past lives. He'll tell this story about a monk who was jealous of another monk and tried to kick him out of the monastery and then he'll say "guess who that was? Me." You know. Okay, well if he could do it, maybe it's possible, right? So that's sort of the background here. So then I heard Geshe's vision. I got scared. I warn you all, and everyone you see, he's out to get you. He's out to get the world enlightened. The whole world, not just Buddhists. He'll do it any way he can. He'll act in any way he can. He'll get there and then he'll drag us, kicking and screaming. [laughter] Can He do it for us? Can He just take away our karma that makes us see the world as lousy, that makes us see a war where we don't want to see a war, that makes us see a windstorm that hurt Elly's eyes, that makes us irritated,

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that makes us whatever; can he just take away that world for us? Can he?

[Audience: inaudible]

I hear a debate going on. I hear no's and I hear yes. How is our world created, who created your world?

[Audience: inaudible]

Okay. Everyone said, "I did." [laughs] And then you have to own the good stuff too, the nice stuff, the times that people hug you, love you. You created that too. You remember it with the bad stuff. We're not so good at remembering the good stuff. We created our world. So who can create a different world, a better world? Who?

[Audience: inaudible]

Us. The spiritual guide can do what? What is the most powerful thing a being can do for us?

[Audience: inaudible]

Show us how. Teach us what to do. The Tibetan Book of Yoga is teaching you what to do. And be careful, it'll infiltrate. It's like a morning exercise that's both *tong len* and physical yoga.

[Student (sounding angry), arguing that lama's can take our bad karma away for us.]

Okay. So what do you do with that one, if your heart is upset and disturbed? Maybe breathe it. See, this works. One thing I like about Buddhism is it works, at your worst. Yoga's the same. I have to give it equal time here. Ruth, an Angel just said that. So yoga's the same. That's cool isn't it. Lots of pasts, lots of people, lots of combinations. Geshe-hla's trying to find the one that will get us there quickest, and teach us. Okay, so I came out to Diamond Mountain and I heard Geshe-hla's vision and I wanted to run away, but I didn't. I decided. . . the reason I was scared is I knew I was going to give up my life. I had this sane. . . well, I didn't have this sane life. I don't think anybody in New York City has. . . well, no I shouldn't say that. There are a lot of New Yorkers here, I'm going to get in trouble. *[laughs]*

You know, I had a professional job for the Archdiocese in New York. That's very respectable, I guess. And they were great. I had this great job, actually. Everybody in my job was a bodhisattva. I had amazing people around me, and I was burning out. It wasn't working. And I knew when I met him that everything was going to change. So I came out to Diamond Mountain, and I begged to be a care lady. I was the last one he let know. He made a point of saying in one teacher training, "these are my three care ladies, Elly's the boss, and Amber and Anne. . . " and then he said, "and I didn't choose them for their cooking ability." Now since Amber and Elly happen to be master chefs, I took that personally. And I'm glad he made me fight so hard, because he let me know at the last minute. He said, "I guess you could come." And then I was trying to say, "I will." And he said, "you think about it." And now I know why, because I would have quit six times over if I didn't remind myself, "who wanted to come? Nobody made you. You chose this." So I came out to Arizona thinking, "Okay, Arizona. Working for my lama, taking care of the retreaters," you know? "I can cook and I pour in nectar into their food, I'll

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just visualize nectar.” You know, “I’m not a good cook but I’ll visualize nectar.” [laughter] I mean, what, they’ll get, they have Cheerios in the morning, I think Elly will agree with this, and rice and beans in the afternoon, some simple meal that will take a couple of hours to cook. And the rest of the time we’ll get to study and meditate and do all those things.

So we come out to Arizona, there’s nothing here but sand. I remember Elly said, “oh look at that flower, I wonder if we can pick some for Geshe-hla.” And I went to pick it and it had all these fine thorns that you couldn’t see from a distance. Arizona. You know. And we’re in tents in the desert with no kitchen at first. We’re cooking on the dirt, and we’re flipping out at each other. At least I was, very mentally afflicted, very angry. Mad at the building crew because they came at ten and left at five and left all their dishes, even though they worked out in the sun, by the way, doing heavy, heavy physical labor trying to get the yurts done for our retreaters. Mentally afflicted, horrible mind, trying at the last minute to do mantras as I deliver the food, so at least my negative energy doesn’t get in. One day Amber turned around to me and said, “you’re too old to be this insecure,” [laughter] and I’m like, “guess what sweetie, get rid of it now because the *bakchak* just gets bigger.” [laughter] I was thinking of this yesterday, I was thinking the difference for me trying to practice here, and in New York. Yesterday John Brady was up here doing this great beautiful talk from his heart and gave us this Zen Buddhist mantra, so I have to use it today: I have David Stumpf here who promised to laugh at this, where are you David? You’re back there, okay. And John gave us this Zen Buddhist koan mu. It’s also Diamond Mountain’s koan. You walk out of the kitchen yurt and, [laughs] you yell “moooo”. And then you get trampled because all of the cows got used to eating all our leftovers and if we didn’t feed them on time... So mu here had kind of a different meaning. And the cows lived by it. Elly got kicked by one.

We love them. We love them, but it’s been a drought and they’re hungry. So my mu is coming up against my own limitations at the present time. My mu now is trying to realize that those limitations, just like the rest of me, aren’t self-existent. I’m not a bad cook from my own side. [laughter] I’m not an irritable, whining, complaining, insecure forty eight year old, almost forty nine, from my own side. That means I can change. That means maybe I can face anything that comes up in my mind and face it with honesty. Pema Chodron. . . I steal everything from Geshe Michael and Pema Chodron and all the holy beings around me. Pema Chodron, one of her books is called *The Wisdom of No Escape*, and it’s a book on *tong len*. And she has this great quote, so I thought I would share it with you. She said, “You can take heart. Beings are the wise ones who sit in front of us, to whom we prostrate when we do prostrations. We can prostrate to them as an example of our own wisdom-mind of enlightened beings. But perhaps it’s also good to prostrate to them as confused, mixed up people, with a lot of neuroses, just like ourselves. They are good examples of people who never gave up on themselves and were not afraid to be themselves, who found their own genuine quality and their own true nature.” Let’s give a commentary on the commentary, okay? Tell me something. What’s the difference between seeing enlightened beings and seeing mixed up, ordinary beings? What’s the difference?

[Audience: inaudible]

Karma. Our projections -- us. Where does a holy being come from? Us. So if

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someone says. . . if you have the bad karma from disrespecting your lamas from the past and you see a being who you think can guide you out of suffering, and who's holy to you, and you see that being that way, and somebody says, "that being isn't holy. That being's ordinary. They ticked me off the other day." Do you punch him in the face for offending your holy being? *[laughter]* Or do you recognize that you created that too? I once said to Elly, "Lamas aren't self-existent. . . " I said this thing, and she said, "oh, you're figuring it out, huh?" *[laughter]* And I admit, I haven't. I've only figured it out mentally. I still think Geshe Michael is holy from his own side, and anybody who doesn't see it. . . except the days that I think he's not because I'm mentally afflicted and insecure. It all comes from us -- our own projections and our own minds. Okay, so now I have another question for you. I want to see. . . well actually it would scare me, but I want to see, directly instead of just suspecting that this may be true, an army of Angels in front of me. Glowing light, you're all light bodies. You think you have a pain in your back or neck. Uh, nah. Not really. You're pretending, because you're really an Angel. I want to do that now. Can I do it?

[Audience: inaudible]

I see "yes" and "no's." I see "no" from Carolyn. Carolyn, why not?

[Carolyn: because you want to have that but you have to create the causes as well.]

But Gail said "yes." Why "yes?"

[Gail: Because the causes can ripen at this very moment.]

[laughs] Who's right? Give a round of applause.

[Isadora: If you project seeing everyone as a tantric Angel, you will eventually get to see everybody as a tantric Angel.]

Shhh. Don't give away secrets, okay? It's a good thing to pretend. But when that divine being tells you you're being mushy, you might still get irritated at them. Just warning you.

In the scriptures on *tong len*, giving love and taking away suffering, they say the order of taking starts with who? Guess? Yourself. Ourselves. Why? Well the scriptures say because we're used to thinking of ourselves first. We're used to self-cherishing, as Petra talked about, finally really realizing how much we self-cherish. I haven't realized it yet. I'm still. . . but I'm trying. They say that. But I think the other reason is that if we don't work with our own suffering, if we don't watch our own minds and see what arises, we can never change it. And of course negative emotions arise. You're feeling jealous and you're like, "oh, I'm a bad bodhisattva. I'm jealous of them. They got to sit closer to the lama than I did and he. . . he mentioned their name and not mine." I'm talking about myself, of course, being jealous. And then you're like, "I'm such a bad person. I'm supposed to be a bodhisattva. I should be rejoicing for that person." *[laughter]* That's a kind of aggression. It's a kind of beating yourself up. It's a kind of whacking yourself over the head. It doesn't quite work that way. Of course you think that. Of course you get jealous. We've been doing it for eons. We're really good at it, or at least I am. The difference is that we know where it came from. We've been jealous in the past, we've taken things from others in the past. And then we watch it and

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we let it go. And then we make ourselves pretend, we rejoice, even if it's not whole-hearted. And then we plant a new seed that will flower into something else.

If we can't be honest with our own suffering, how can we look at someone we don't even know well yet and look into their minds and understand them? How, when somebody yells at us, are we ever going to tell ourselves the story. . . I used to tell stories to myself as a kid to keep myself from killing people. I was a little angry... and I'd say to myself, "oh, this person was mean to me because they got up this morning and they were upset and they were worried and they don't mean to be mean." And those stories don't really work. They work temporarily. What really works is realizing where that angry mean person came from, and it ain't them. But if we don't start with ourselves and we don't start being honest with ourselves, then we can never see that.

[Audience: inaudible]

The question was, do you. . . I call it gentle bashing on the head of our self-cherishing. You know, for me the firmer bashing doesn't work. I'm really good at bashing myself. I'm really good at putting myself down so for me. . . we all have to find our own middle way. . . so for me. . . "uurrghh, I shouldn't be thinking that way, that's terrible" doesn't work. But, "oh, of course I'm thinking that way. I've thought that way before and I'll probably think that way again." But then I look at that mental affliction, and think, "your days are numbered, seed, because I'm going to get you." You know, it's like that. *[laughter]*

So we take. . . Pema Chodron also says, "our hang-ups are our wealth." And I believe it. They are our strengths. They are what's going to help us have compassion for others, right? So, we spend our wealth on our breath. We use our breath to take away other's hang-ups that are causing them pain, and we use our breath to give them all the happiness. So maybe the simplest daily practice is two things: honesty as much as you can stand it . . . I have trouble sometimes being honest with myself, like I used to have trouble writing things in my book because I didn't want to put it down. It somehow looked more real if I put it down. Honesty as much as we can stand it and catching ourselves, and using our breath. And imagine for a moment that you're breathing in to reach out and bring in suffering and destroy it with that wisdom and love in your heart. And imagine as you breath out that you're giving all good things. Geshe-hla says, that in Tibetan Buddhism they always say you start the breath with an out breath, and you end it with an in. In The Tibetan Book of Yoga he says something really cool. He says, "you know why we do that? What's your first breath? What was Fontaine. . . Winston McCullough, Fontaine McCullough's and Andrea's beautiful new child was born the day before yesterday. What do you think the first breath was? In. What's your last breath before you die? Out. Breath in and live. Breath in other people's suffering and destroy it. Breath in and be willing to take on others' suffering and live. That's all.

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I think one of the caretakers will lead us in a meditation.

Amber Moore: I thought we could just do the Seven Limb Prayer in order to set our minds for today's teaching. So get in a comfortable meditation position. I'll just go through the different steps, and maybe suggest some thoughts, but please feel free to do your own thing if you like. So let's just breath out and then in for ten breaths, and just draw our attention inwards.

[silence]

So, the first step is refuge. And let's take refuge in the wisdom of the realized beings, the wisdom which has awakened to whatever extent in all of us here. This wisdom realizes that all appearances are coming from our own actions and deeds.

[silence]

The second step is bodhicitta. We have all suffered and continue to experience suffering in different ways. And we all want to be happy. This is what we, as sentient beings, all have in common. The best way to relieve the suffering is to develop a wise and loving heart. We cannot teach others to truly be happy unless we are a living example. We learn by example and teach by example, regardless of whether we think we are learning or teaching at all. So resolve to become a living example of love and wisdom.

[silence]

The next step is recalling the lama. Bring to mind a being that inspires you.

[silence]

Now respectfully bow to that mentor, that example of compassion and wisdom, and thank them mentally.

[silence]

The next step is offering. Let's offer our resolve to develop those good qualities, all those qualities that we see in our mentor. And offer to resolve to become like that ourselves — an embodiment of kindness, compassion, and wisdom.

[silence]

The next step is confession. I was thinking about what Petra talked about yesterday. And so let's bring to mind these self-centered ways, which are the cause of all of our suffering. And if possible, think of something specific.

[silence]

It is this pride that makes us think we're so different from others. We can't relate to them. When we forget our sameness as human beings, as fellow sentient beings, it is

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easy to forget kindness. So let's resolve to banish our pride and selfish ways, and accept all beings as our brothers and sisters.

[silence]

Next is rejoicing. So let's do that and remember, always, that we all have the ability to do great things. By changing ourselves we can change suffering into happiness. Even without any material ability, we can bring happiness to others by developing a good heart, or just by smiling.

[silence]

The next step is requesting to teach. One aspect of this is, just like Milarepa who is often shown in a state of continuous listening, we too can be like that. We can receive teachings from the world around us. So let's pray that we can listen, hear, and understand the teachings today and the teachings of all the realized beings.

[silence]

The next step is to ask all of the Buddhas and angels to stay and guide us, and to know that they will.

[silence]

Now picture a pure being, an embodiment of all that is good and wise, and invite them to come to the top of your head.

[silence]

Then invite them into your heart to stay, and watch them melt away into your own heart.

[silence]

Know that they'll be there for love and guidance. And eventually you will become them.

[silence]

Thank you.



I'd like to request Lama Ruth-hla to lead us in a chant.

Ruth Lauer *[chanted in call and response]*:

Om. Om. Om.

Asato ma.

Asato ma.

Sat gamaya.

Sat gamaya.

Tamaso ma.

Tamaso ma.

Jyotir gamaya.

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Jyotir gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.

Asato ma.
Asato ma.
Sat gamaya.
Sat gamaya.
Tamaso ma.
Tamaso ma.
Jyotir gamaya.
Jyotir gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.

Asato ma.
Asato ma.
Sat gamaya.
Sat gamaya.
Tamaso ma.
Tamaso ma.
Jyotir gamaya.
Jyotir gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.
Mrityor-ma amritham gamaya.

Lead me from fear to faith.
Lead me from fear to faith.

Lead me from criticism to gratitude.
Lead me from criticism to gratitude.

Lead me from judgment to love.
Lead me from judgment to love.

Lead me from pollution to silence.
Lead me from pollution to silence.

Lead me from my will to thy will.
Lead me from my will to thy will.

Lead me from the small self to humanity.
Lead me from the small self to humanity.

Om.



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Okay, we'll start.

I think it's good or auspicious to say today is the day that Jesus gave his life. And there were two events, I think, that were the immediate cause. One was that Jesus had been invited to the home of a man in Jerusalem, with some of his disciples. He was having dinner and a woman burst in the door. She forced her way into where Jesus was sitting and she was holding a small box of white stone. She opened it and she went straight to the end of the table where Jesus was sitting. She opened the box and she poured some precious oil over his head into his hair. And the disciples were watching and they said, "This incredible thing, she's pouring this precious oil worth..." I think it would have been worth thousands of dollars nowadays.

Some of the disciples were unhappy. They said, "We could have sold the oil and fed many poor people." Especially the disciple named Judas; at that moment he lost his faith in his teacher.

Jesus said, "You people don't understand what's happening. This woman is a special woman. She sees what's going to happen to me. And the oil she has put on my hair is the traditional anointment of oil upon a dead man."

Then Jesus was in one of the great temples, and it was a holy day, Shabbat, Saturday. A crippled man came to him and asked to be healed, and Jesus healed him in the temple. And some of the religious authorities, who were perhaps envious of Jesus, accused him and said, "Why are you doing healing on a Saturday? We're not allowed to work on Saturday. You have violated the law of the temple."

And Jesus stood up and said, "I have not come to violate the law of the temple. I have come to fulfill the law of the temple."



So let's start the Yoga Sutra. I'd like to ask the first person to read their verse.

John Stilwell: And these negative thoughts are their very root. *Klesha mulah karma-ashayo dirshita-adirshita janma vedaniyah.* (II.12A)

I think the first keyword here is *klesha*. [laughs] It's our favorite subject in three year retreat. [laughs] *Klesha* is "a negative thought or negative emotion towards another person, or even yourself."

I like the definition. We had to memorize it in the debate ground. *Rang gyun dengyi gangsak shegyu ma shiwar chepay semjung sempa nyonmong gyi tsennyi*, means "any thought which a person has which disturbs their peace of mind is a *klesha*." This is the definition of a *klesha*. So *klesha* means a "negative thought" or "harmful thought." I like the root. It's *klish* in ancient Sanskrit, "k-l-i-s-h." And in the older ancient Indo-European, the root is *kel*, "k-e-l." It's interesting, the words in English that have come

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from *kel*, which means “to distress” or “to bother somebody.” The word “holly” comes from that because the prick that you get from the leaf of holly is very like a little disturbance or painful to your finger. So the word “holly” means “the little distressing leaf.” Like a mental affliction. And the word... what’s that word? There’s a word for disaster that starts with “c-a-l.” “Calamity” comes from the same root. The “c-a-l” comes from the same root as *klesha*, meaning “a bad seed.” And there’s one more . . . oh, “gladiator” comes from the ancient Latin word *gladis*, which means “a sword” or “something to stab somebody with.” And all of these relate back to the same root for *klesha*. So a *klesha* is a thought which disturbs your peace of mind. The Tibetan word is *nyonmong*. And it mix up roots that mean “to bother somebody,” and “to be in a foggy state of mind.”

What’s the next keyword? *Mula* is difficult; there’s no clear Sanskrit root. It’s probably something like “m-u.” But the Indo-European root is *mei*, “m-e-i.” And it comes into Latin in words for “foundation” or “wall.” And the word “mural,” which is a painting on a wall, comes from the same *mu*. And the word “ammunition,” which is stuff to be used in a fortress with strong foundation, comes from the same. . . the “m-u” comes from the same root as *mula*. So *mula* means *tsawa* or *shi* in Tibetan, meaning “the root.”

What Master Patanjali is getting into is how karma works. He has just finished discussing the five *kleshas*, five main negative emotions. And then he points out that behind every negative thought we ever have, behind every negative word we ever say, is a *klesha*, is a negative thought. The root of all *kleshas* is ignorance, is not understanding where something we don’t like comes from. If there’s a person who irritates you and you don’t understand their real nature, then you can get upset at them, which is a *klesha*, and then you will do something bad to them, harm them, or even just think badly about them. But if you are *kshetrika*, as we said yesterday, if you’re a gardener, and if you understand where things really come from, then you know that when a person upsets you or bothers you, that you are really seeing a reflection of yourself, of your own karma, of your own seeds in your own mind. Then you can’t collect karma anymore. You won’t react to this person in a negative way. So in this line, Master Patanjali is saying, “Watch out for negative thoughts. They are the root of all bad deeds and speech.” Next line please.

Rebecca Vinacour: The first form of self-control is avoiding harm to anyone.
Ahinsa satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah. (II.30A)

I think the first word here is *ahinsa*. I’m a stickler on pronunciation, and people who study Tibetan with me know. In the first days when Sanskrit was spread in the West, all the scholars agreed to use an “m” with a dot under it to represent what we call a pre-nasal, a nose sound that comes before another letter, like in French when they go, “wha, wha, wha.” And so that letter changes according to the letter behind it. So although it’s spelled in scholarly publications with an “m” and a dot, you have to change it for each circumstance. So really this word is *aninsa* with an “n” sound before the “s.” And that’s exactly where the root comes from, which is *hins*, “h-i-n-s,” which comes from an older root, *ghan*, “g-h-a-n.” The Indo-European root is *gwhen*, which is “g-w-h-e-n.” I’ll ask you if you can guess the one English word that comes from *gwhen*.

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[Student: I think “gun.”]

Yeah, “gun.” The one word that comes from *ahinsa* in English is the word “gun;” comes directly from the same root. So *a* means “negative,” like we see it in English with “atheist,” and “atypical,” and all the words that begin with “a” which are negative. So *ahinsa* means literally “no guns,” and it means we can’t hurt other beings. This is the first and greatest *yama*. This is the first and greatest rule of moral conduct – not to hurt other beings.

We’re going to see that the first four of the *yamas*, or moral codes, are the same in the ancient Buddhist traditions. No killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, and no lying. And these are the foundation of all accomplishments. If you have any hope of reaching a paradise in this world, and helping others to reach it, the first thing to give up is harming other people. Next verse please.

Ben Brewer: The pain that we are ridding ourselves of is all the pain that would have come to us in the future. *Heyam dukkham anagatam.* (II.16)

I think the first word here is *heya*. *Heya* comes from a root *ha*, “h-a,” and *ha* means “to discard something,” or “leave something,” or “abandon something.” The Indo-European root is *ghe*, “g-h-e.” We see it in the word “to go,” “g-o,” which means “to leave,” and we see it in the word “heir,” meaning “somebody who inherits another person’s property,” because the original meaning of “heir” was “the person who gets abandoned or left behind.” And “hereditary” comes from the same root. So the basic meaning of *heya* is “something that you should leave behind.”

In Tibetan, the word is, I think, *pang ja*. *Pang ja* is a very beautiful idea. It’s a subject that we study in the monastery for years. In the first twelve years, when we debate Perfection of Wisdom, we are often talking about *pang ja*. *Pang ja* is a holy idea. It means, “If you and I can reach certain spiritual levels in our lives, certain specific spiritual levels, then we can *pang ja* certain *kleshas*,” meaning “we can give up, forever, certain kinds of negative thoughts.”

You could give the example of jealousy. Jealousy is a *pang ja*. It means that jealousy is not an inherent part of the human mind. We can eliminate jealousy from a human mind forever. And there comes a stage in your spiritual development when you give up jealousy forever and it becomes a *heya*.

I mean, sometimes when I’m having a bad day in the yurt, I like to just imagine that I could give up some negative emotion forever, that I could get rid of some negative thought forever. I mean, what would it be like never to have jealousy? What if you are a person who had overcome desire completely? How does a person like that feel when they walk into a grocery store and they see the Seven-Eleven poisons [laughs] – chocolate, coffee, sugar, pastries, TV Guide, Playboy magazine – how does this person perceive those objects now? What do they look like to a person who has given up desire forever?

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The next keyword, I think, is *anagata*. When you want to make a negative out of a Sanskrit word that already starts with “a” you use “a-n.” So, *anagata*. We see this in English, like, what’s an example? Anachronism, maybe? Or other words that start with “a-n” where it means negative. “Another” is an example.

Anagata means “to come,” whereas *ha* means “to go.” I think some of you remember it from Heart Sutra: *gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi soha*. The Sanskrit root is *gam*, “g-a-m,” and the old Indo-European root is *gwem*, “g-w-e-m.” We see it in the word “to come,” and sometimes the “g” drops off and becomes a “v,” and all of the Latin words that start with “v-e-n,” like “adventure,” or “venture,” or “avenue,” or words that include a word “to come.” Also, the word “basis,” the “b-a” comes from the same root because it comes from the Greek word “to come.”

I think this is one of the most important lines in the whole Yoga Sutra. If it’s true that when we meet a bad person or an irritating person – if it’s true that this is coming from the seeds in our own mind which we put there before when we were unkind to other people – then you see there’s a time lapse, there’s a time gap between the time you do something and the time you get a result. What that implies is that most of the good and bad things in our whole life are caused by things that happened much longer ago than we thought.

I think this is important for people on a spiritual path. The Bible says, “Why do the wicked prosper?” And doesn’t ever answer it. The other question is, “Why do good people suffer?” It’s because *heyam dukkham anagatam*. We can’t stop suffering in the present moment. When you do a good deed, it takes time for that seed to ripen, which explains why a person here, who’s trying to be a good person, might go to another person, try to tell them the truth, and then they simply don’t believe you, or they even do something harmful to you. It’s important to realize that this is coming from times in your past when you lied to other people and you didn’t tell the truth. But telling the truth now will definitely give you some happiness in the future.

So when you try to help another person who’s in pain, and things go wrong and they get angry at you, or they don’t appreciate you, you have to realize that your good deed, because of your good motivation, must have a good result. But it will come later. So you can’t get discouraged when you do some pure-hearted deed like telling the truth about something and then there’s a bad reaction. You have to realize that the bad reaction is coming from something negative you did earlier. And telling the truth or being truthful can only bring a sweet, holy result. But *anagata*, in the future. And that way we don’t get discouraged when we’re trying to be truthful or to practice spiritual path. Next verse please.

Judy Brewer: These various forms of self-control are mighty codes of conduct meant for people in every stage of their personal development. They go beyond differences in race or social status; they go beyond the borders between countries; they go beyond what is modern, or old; they go beyond the various creeds and convictions. *Ete jati desha kala samaya-anavachinnah sarva bhauma mahavratam*. (II.31)

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I think the first keyword is *jati*. *Jati* means “birth.” In the Tibetan it’s called *kyewa*. And in ancient India birth was very important. It implied what caste have you been born into. Are you high caste or low caste? There was a very strict division. I remember the first time I went to India, I was very young, twenty-one, I think, or twenty. And there was a flood, and it carried away a bus. And there was a high caste man sitting in the bus and a low caste man threw him a rope to pull him out of the water. And he refused to touch it, and he died. And that’s how strong caste can be in India.

The word *jati* comes from a word *jan*, root “j-a-n.” The corresponding root in Indo-European is *gen*, “g-e-n.” And you can guess that many, many words for being born come from this root, like “genetics,” or “gene,” or “genital,” or “pregnant,” the “g-n” in “pregnant” comes from the same root. “Kind,” in the sense of “type,” comes from this root, and a word like “kin,” meaning “type of birth” or “family.” All these words come from the same root as *jati*, meaning “your birth or social status in your own culture.”

I think the next word is *desha*. We’ve had it before in the last teaching, meaning “a place in the body.” And sometimes it means specifically, “a spot of your body,” especially when you’re studying *chakras* and channels, *desha* is important. But on a bigger scale, *desha* means “country.” The Sanskrit root is *dish* or *diksh*, “d-i-k-s-h,” and the Indo-European root is *deik*, “d-e-i-k.” We see the Sanskrit root in the words for countries, like Bangladesh means “countries of the Bangla.” And in English, the old Indo-European root comes into a lot of words, like “to teach,” “to indicate,” the word “digital” comes from this, the word “indicate,” the “d-i-c.” And there’s one more interesting. . . “to preach,” it’s an abbreviation of “predicate,” which comes from the same root. And all of these roots mean “to point in a direction,” “to indicate a direction.” So “direction” came to be a word for “country.”

I think the next one is *kala*. *Kala* you know – I think everyone knows – from the word “Kalachakra,” which means “the wheel of time.” And *kal*, “k-a-l,” an ancient Sanskrit root, means “to drive something” or “put something into motion.” The Indo-European root is *kel*, “k-e-l,” and we find it in the word “accelerate.” It’s the “c-e-l,” “to push something fast.” And “celebrity” comes from this, the “c-e-l,” meaning “someone who is often in a place,” and the word “car,” meaning “automobile,” comes from the same root. Here it refers to “time” in the sense of modern times or olden times.

What’s the next keyword? Ah, *samaya* you know; it’s an important word. The Tibetan is *damtsik*. I think most of you have heard the word *samaya*, meaning “the pledge” or “commitment,” especially between a teacher and their disciple. I think we’ll talk more about that later today when we speak more about Naropa. What is the nature of *samaya*, or the promise or the commitment between a teacher and their disciple? *Sam* comes from the old. . . it means “to gather” and it comes into English in all the words with “c-o-m” in it, like “committee,” or “commune,” or “community,” words like that. *Aya* comes from the ancient Sanskrit root, which is simply the letter “i,” that is found in Indo-European as “e-i,” which means “to come” or “to go.” We see that in the English words “circuit,” the “i-t,” and “exit,” the “i-t,” and “itinerary,” all meaning “to go.” So really, *samaya* means “to come along.” *Samaya* means “to make a promise or commitment or pledge to join with some idea or principle, and to keep it and never break it.” In Tibetan, the definition in the debate ground of a *samaya* is *dorda me ulwa*,

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damtsik gi tsennyi. “That promise which you should never give up,” is the definition of a *samaya*. In this particular verse, *samaya* means “creed,” “religious creed,” or “conviction.” What religion do you follow? This is your *samaya*.

So Master Patanjali is saying, “I’ve just listed five *yamas*.” *Yama* means also those five moral codes: not harming other living beings and yourself, not stealing things, not committing sexual misconduct, and not lying. Master Patanjali adds here, *aparigraha*, which means “not being possessive or acquisitive,” trying to get more possessions.

Then he says something very powerful, and I think it’s one of the most beautiful verses of the whole Yoga Sutra. He says it doesn’t matter if you were born in a high caste or a low caste. It doesn’t matter if you were born in the eastern part of the world or the western part of the world, it doesn’t matter if you were born in 200 AD or if you were born in 2000 AD, and it doesn’t matter what religion you claim to follow – Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jew, Muslim – it doesn’t matter. These codes of conduct – not hurting other people, not taking other people’s things, respecting other people’s relationships, with their spouse especially, respecting the truth, and not trying to acquire too many possessions – these laws of moral conduct, they go beyond all time, all space, everyone must keep them. It doesn’t matter where you’re from. It doesn’t matter where you live.

I grew up like you, in a country where we were taught – many people – the Ten Commandments. And it was the word “command.” “Command.” You were told, “You have to keep these things. You must keep these commandments.” And they are very holy and pure codes of conduct. But the feeling of the word “commandment,” I think, is a little bit of a problem for many people. It’s like someone’s ordering you to follow these codes of conduct. Ultimately, every one of us must follow them, not because we were told to do so, not because it is the custom in the country where we live. Not because it’s against the law if you don’t follow them, not because everyone else is following them or not following them. We have to follow these codes of conduct because we understand that to violate them is to cause suffering not only to others, but ultimately to yourself.

I think ultimately, when these codes become a law which is followed voluntarily by every person on our planet, it will be only because they finally realize that when you break these laws you hurt yourself first of all.

Death itself is not unavoidable. Death itself is not something that has to happen to anybody, here or elsewhere, in this whole world. Death itself can be easily... well, fairly easily, stopped. It’s not our condition. It doesn’t belong to us inherently. It’s removable. It’s a mistake.

Every pain that every single living creature ever endures on this planet, even death itself, is a simple error of not following these codes of conduct. And we have to, as people on a spiritual path, we need to meditate, practice deeply ourselves, struggle to keep these vows ourselves, and finally come to the point where we can directly perceive the day that we will leave the condition of death ourselves. The day that we will, ourselves, become an angel who can never suffer again. And when you reach that certainty, when you have seen it directly, then truly you can be of service to other people.

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It's gonna get cool so make sure you have a wrap on or something. Next verse of the Yoga Sutra please.

Pat Turrigiano: The sixth obstacle is a mistaken view of the world left uncorrected. *Vyadhi styana sanshaya pramada-alasya-avirati bhranti darshana-alabdha bhumikatva-anavasthitatvani chitta vikshepas tentarayah.* (I.30F)

Thank you. This is a list of obstacles to a spiritual life by Master Patanjali, and I think this obstacle mentioned here is the most serious one. The first keyword is *darshana*. *Darshana* comes from a Sanskrit root *dirsh*, “d-i-r-s-h,” and it means “to look at something.” And then the Indo-European root is *derk*, “d-e-r-k.” The words in English that come from this old root, the main one is “dragon” and it comes from a Greek word that meant “the creature with the evil eye.” And if you’ve ever gone face to face with a rattle snake you’ll understand why. They have this sort of sleepy evil look, and so snakes and especially dragons, were called *drokon*, from this root.

The word “dragoon” in Dragoon Mountains also comes from the same root, because the flag or the banner carried by certain kinds of troops in Europe looked like a dragon, swinging like that. The Tibetan word is *tawa*. *Tawa* means “worldview.” *Darshana* and *tawa* mean “how you view your world.”

And I’ll put it very simply – very, very simply. You meet a person you don’t like. Something happens today that hurts you, something you don’t like. If you have good *darshana* you look at it and you say, “This is a neutral or empty or blank object, like a blank blackboard, and my mind, forced to do so by my past deeds, is seeing this as unpleasant.”

And so then you don’t get into these moral quandaries where you’re deciding is A better or is B better. The solution to anything unpleasant that comes to you is to fix your own heart, and your own seeds, and your own mind. Then you will never see these things again.

I think *bhranti* is second? *Bhranti* means “mistaken” and the Tibetan I think here is *norwa*, which means “mistaken.” *Bhranti* comes from a root *bhram*, “b-h-r-a-m,” which means “to wander around.” The corresponding ancient root is *wer*, “w-e-r,” and it means “to go wrong” or “to be twisted.” And the words that come from this root into English are like “wire,” meaning “something you twist backwards,” “wreath” of twigs or branches, meaning “something which is twisted into a shape.” The word “wrong” comes directly from this same root, the word “wrath” meaning “a twisted state of mind” or “an angry state of mind” comes from the same root. The “w-r” is the same as the “b-h-r” in *bhranti*. They come from the same root.

He says, “*avirati*.” *Avirati* means “that you haven’t corrected.” So the whole study of the Yoga Sutra, the reason to fly to Arizona twice, and take all the trouble to come here is to try to fix our *darshana*, to try to fix our view, of where things are really coming from and stop blaming other people, stop trying to make judgments on other people. But rather realize that all the things we see are coming from ourselves and we

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have to fix our own mind. We have to change the seeds in our own mind, and then we will see only good things.

I have a Christian friend, I spent a weekend with him when I was in retreat once in Flagstaff, and he said, “I enjoy your presentation. I understand what you’re saying. But it seems almost cruel to me that there should be people in the world who walk around with some kind of rose-colored glasses called ‘different karmic seeds.’ And then they don’t see all the terrible things that are really happening in the world.”

So is it just the case that we are trying to collect good seeds and then we don’t perceive other people suffering in pain? We don’t perceive a person as having trouble? You see, that question assumes there’s a reality. That question assumes there’s a real way that things exist. That question assumes that there’s really an irritating person sitting in front of you.

There is no such thing. It’s not that there’s something bad and we’re trying to see it as a nice thing. There’s something blank and we have a choice to see it as something pure, or something wrong or harmful. And the way we see it will only depend on the how we’ve treated other people in the past.

So the cure for all the problems of the world is basically *ahinsa* — don’t hurt other people — and then you will see the world as a paradise, and it will be. And at the same time it may be hell to someone else. And that’s the emptiness of the world.

Antar is very easy. The corresponding English is “inter,” “i-n-t-e-r,” as in “interrupt,” or “interstitial,” or “intermediary,” meaning “something that comes between.” And *antar* or *barche* or *bar* in the Tibetan means “something that comes between you and your spiritual goals,” “an obstacle that comes between you and your spiritual goals.” And the Tibetan word *bar* is the same one as in *bardo*. And I think many of you have heard the Tibetan word *bardo*, which means “the in between the state of death and rebirth.” So again, that feeling of being in-between. But in this verse it means “to interrupt or block our spiritual progress.” Next verse.

Mercedes Bahleda: The second form of self-control is always telling the truth. *Ahinsa satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah.* (II.30B)

This is the second of the five moral codes or forms of self-control that are said to be the basis of all yoga. Maybe it’s a good place to repeat what we talked about last time we met at Thanksgiving. And really, if you want to know why we’re going to go around the United States and teach this Tibetan form of yoga, this is the answer. We want to try to share with anyone who’s interested how yoga really works. Why is it that you go into a little room and some sweet, holy yoga teacher comes in and they force you to bend and twist and sweat a bit? And then maybe, if you keep that up for a few months or something, you start to feel more healthy and more strong. How does that work?

And the ancient teachings, all the way from the beginning of the Yoga Sutra have taught that – you have to understand something – yoga is only meant to affect your inner body. So we have an outer body, a physical body, and you stretch it or move it in certain ways. Then you have a subtle body that’s almost like made of light, and then physical

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exercises have some very gross or very rough affect on these inner channels. If the inner channels are flowing well, then your health becomes very, very good.

Another level that you can work on these inner channels is your breath. If your breath is calm and regular, and if you learn special ways of controlling your breath, *pranayama*, then you can actually affect your channels. Inside these channels, like light rays inside the body, are moving special winds which are attuned to the physical breath. It's not that your breath moves through the channels, but if you can breathe in special ways, then it affects the inner winds.

Connected to the inner winds, like riders upon a horse, are your thoughts. This is the exciting place where thoughts, and mind, and matter meet. You see? This is like the holy grail of many forms of science or psychology. This is where the mind and the body have their border. Within the subtle channels, there are subtle physical winds moving, and connected to them, always indivisibly connected to these subtle winds, are your thoughts. That's why if you can calm your breath, your thoughts get calmer. That's why if your thoughts get disturbed or angry, your winds get stirred up and you start to breath faster.

So what we had in mind is going to teach the ancient Tibetan methods of yoga to people who are already learning yoga. And I think it's important to say that this Heart Yoga idea is meant, first of all, to compliment whatever yoga a person is doing. I don't think it's our primary idea to go out and spread a new kind of yoga. It's more like to meet people who are doing any kind of yoga already, and try to explain how you can enhance your yoga practice, no matter what kind of yoga you're doing, by working from the inside.

If we can do special practices like *tong len*, compassion practices, as part of the physical exercises, then the thoughts which are riding upon the inner winds are calmed down. It's like instead of trying to control the horse, you try to calm down the rider. So if you can do physical yoga, and at the same time do a yoga which is really compassion, using your breath to develop compassion and kindness towards others, then you've got this incredible combination. It feels like gasoline and matches to me. On the outside, you're working downwards to affect the inner channels and the winds. And then from the inside you're working upwards and affecting the same parts of your body with thoughts of compassion, beautiful thoughts.

So really the ultimate yoga would be to have perfectly clean and compassionate, kind thoughts running the inner channels at the same as you're doing beautiful, graceful exercises with your outer body.

And really, all of this can only happen if you have the seeds for it. If you go into a yoga class and you don't have seeds in your mind to see the *asanas* work on your body, even if you go into a yoga class and try to do some kind of breathing practice to develop compassion, if you don't have the seeds that we've been talking about, you will fail; you will get injured, you will hurt your back, you will hurt your shoulder or your neck. You will come out feeling more competitive and angry and jealous, envious of other students than when you started your yoga practice.

We have to work at the very, very bottom level of reality. And I think if there's one message we would like to tell people as we travel around and teach this ancient,

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ancient Tibetan form of yoga, which came from whom? Naropa. That's why we've been talking about Naropa. *[laughs]* I forgot to mention that! *[laughs]* We'll be teaching Naropa's system of yoga, which is meant to link onto whatever yoga a person is already doing. I mean, if people are interested we could start centers called "Ancient Heart Tibetan Naropa Yoga" or whatever, but that's not really the point.

The point is whatever yoga you're doing, if you understand where it comes from, if you understand where the reality actually is being produced from, then you will succeed. You will be healthy, you will be happy. And if you pursue this type of yoga to its ultimate end, your body changes into the indestructible body of light of an angel. And this was the intention of the yoga practices from the beginning.

I don't think. . . you and I know, we can't go out in a bookstore, Barnes and Nobles, and start pitching indestructible bodies to people. But we can start leading them that way in their thoughts and in their mind. It's the same as Gary's Enlightened Business Institute. You start trying to get people to understand that money is produced by giving. The only source of money is charity towards others. And the only source of health that people, twenty million people are seeking with yoga, is to serve others and to practice non-violence.

So really, Master Patanjali is teaching the original *Ashtanga* yoga. And the very first limb, the very first part is, you must understand your body is being produced by how you treat other people. Your world is being produced by how you treat other people. The economy of your country, peace or war, internationally, is all being produced from a tiny drop of consciousness in your heart where all the seeds of your past deeds lie. Your entire world is being produced by how you treat other people. It's not a metaphor; it's not a moral teaching. It's just the way things are.

So we need to practice first, the moral codes, which produce the seeds which make you healthy. If you run around serving others, helping others, making sure others are healthy, you can't avoid having a body like a sixteen year old person. Your body will start to change. The ultimate end of that is to become a being whose body is made of light and can appear on countless planets to serve countless beings. You all have this destiny. Each person here has this destiny. You were meant to be that.

Twenty million people are dabbling in yoga because they've got some hunger to reach the destiny, which they are supposed to reach. We're not meant to do business, and raise families, and eat, and drink, and defecate, and die. Each person here is meant to be an angel, indestructible, who can appear on countless planets in countless bodies and serve countless other people. It's what you want. It's what you were meant to be. And this is what yoga was originally taught for.

So here we get the second great moral teaching of the Yoga Sutras. We can't lie to other people. We have to practice *satya*. *Satya* means "truth" and it comes directly from the word for "exist." "A-s" in Sanskrit, *as*, and "e-s" in ancient Indo-European. And the English words, as we mentioned before, that come from here are "essence" and the word "yes," meaning "it is." And I think the one word, *satyagraha*, you might know, Mahatma Gandhiji's main philosophy, *satya* meaning "truth," *agraha* meaning "founded," "steadfast," "immobile in truth." We can't be stirred away from truth.

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To really be a truthful person requires a knowledge of what we said before: *heyam dukah mana gatham*, which means “you can’t expect truth to work immediately.” Mahatma Gandhi’s great realization was that if you continue to be absolutely truthful in everything you do, then in time, the seeds will change in your mind and there will be truth all around you, constantly.

So even when it’s difficult, even when you know it’s going to cause problems for you, we have to be one hundred percent absolutely truthful. Even when it’s not. . . even when it seems to cause problems, even when you know people are going to think you’re strange, or maybe they’ll be angry with you, we have to tell one hundred percent the truth. And then everything will come to us.

What is it ... *satya pratishthayam kriya phala ashrayatvam*, later in the Yoga Sutras Master Patanjali says, “You want everything, every project you ever try to do, to come out one hundred percent beautiful? Just be truthful all the time, one hundred percent truthful.”

And then I think *yama* is just repeated here, yeah? We had that before, meaning “moral code.” Next line please.

Oh, that’s great. [*laughs*] I can’t believe we finished on time. We’ll have to do something, let’s see. [*laughter*] You haven’t been in a real teaching until your butt is so sore that you go home, like, limping. So then I think it’s a good time, I’d like to ask one of the retreatants to speak about, again, this impossible assignment of the one most important thing she learned during retreat. And we’ll be hearing from Ani Pelma, Debra Ballier, the mother of the Three Jewels in New York.



Ani Pelma: Hello everyone. It feels really good to be here. It was very exciting to see some of you for the first time. The process of coming out of the three year retreat is very interesting. It’s pretty amazing to meet and to talk with our care-ladies. Just to see their faces and to hear them was pretty moving. Their faces told a beautiful story. The love from them just poured out. I wanted to take the time to really thank them and to tell them how much I miss them, and to ask them to stay forever.

The second experience I encountered was sitting with a group of very kind-hearted and enthusiastic beings. And I wanted to take this opportunity to thank them for helping us keep our speech pure. As we re-entered the world, it was very exciting to sit around beings and talk about working for the benefit of others.

Geshe-la asked us to tell you about our retreat, and I’m so grateful that you’re here so that we have someone to tell about it. We couldn’t have done it without you. So many things happened during the retreat and it was pretty difficult to decide what was most beneficial to tell you. So I decided that I would narrow it down, and I really tried, to give you some insight about what happened in my mind.

The thing, the one thing, that happened with my mind is that it developed a very acute awareness of what was happening in it. Because your body is not roaming the

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earth, everything becomes magnified thousands of times in your mind. You start to develop an acute mental awareness of what your mind really, really is like. Silence causes you to probe very deeply.

For example, say if your mind was a clock. When you were not in retreat, you would just want to know what time it is. During retreat you are more interested in figuring out what causes the second hand to move, how does the alarm work, and how does the darn thing run. *[laughter]* Just having this special awareness helps you to see your thoughts. And this could be very profound.

What is more profound is understanding what generates those thoughts. You clearly see all your motivations and your attachment to them. You observe the distinctive patterns of the behavior of your mind. There are times you become sad, angry, jealous, very disturbed by your mental afflictions. In the world outside your retreat, it is easy to blame others for your mental afflictions. But when you are alone and you see them come up, in some cases, you understand where you got them from and you have the capacity to destroy the roots, because you also deeply understand that they're only your projections.

So you have this mental awareness of watching your mind constantly. And this allows you to really, really comprehend that there's no one to blame for any actions you have experienced. This is something that happened and you realize that there is no "me" and "them," that the "them" doesn't exist, that there's just "me," because you know everything is coming and you're convinced, there's not a question in your mind, that all of these emotions are coming from within you.

Also, with this special mental awareness, you really start to get logical and you make friends very quickly with the four laws of karma. And you begin to live by them. It is very interesting to discover that karma really begins inside of your mind. It is how you think that creates the seed to every good and bad thing you encounter.

Another mental awareness that I experienced was, what it feels to be a human being. Because you are doing the same activities over, and over, and over again like waking up, taking care of your altar, doing your book, meditating, reciting, eating, going to the bathroom, taking care of your body, exercising, without any outer disturbances, there is something special that occurs. You learn what human beings do and you begin to question yourself and wonder, "Why did I get this kind of body?" There's a different relationship that develops between you and your existing body, because now you know the true form. Once you clearly see your body for what it really is, this causes you to become very spiritually grounded. You then begin to ponder about other realities outside the human realm. This is just an amazing experience, to become convinced that there are actually other realms that you can go to and one of the vehicles that could get you there is having this deep renunciation about your life as being a human being in this suffering world.

Many things in the physical environment can affect your mind. Like for example, if the wind blows off your dome to your yurt, at two thirty in the morning in 20-30 degree temperatures *[laughter]* while you are sleeping and *[laughs]* you physically can't put it on yourself. In these times you really develop deep renunciation about a human being. *[laughs]* These situations can help you to learn about how to pray *[laughter]* and believe in holy beings, and your faith is really tested.

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Another mental awareness that I realized, is that strong emotional feelings give birth to different kinds of thoughts. In other words feeling is the mother, and thought is the child. Your feelings become very intense. This causes the mind to fluctuate, like waves on the ocean, when you are in retreat. In general, you can divide feelings into two distinct categories: liking things and disliking things; hatred and love. These two emotions can affect your feelings drastically. Then, it feeds your thought process, which can cause you to become joyful or depressed. This is not good for your meditation. [laughs] It became very apparent that one should work on these two major obstacles inside the mind. Because there was no one around, these two emotions played out their characters on objects that came into my yurt.

If you have a very independent personality, and you have lived by yourself, and was fully responsible for every aspect of your life, having someone deciding what you should eat is a great teaching, because food is like your DNA – the thing that distinguishes you from others. It is a unique form of energy which fuels your body. This is the object that I didn't like for the first six months. My food basket had lots of power over my mind. The food was okay [laughs] and we always had more than enough. But my mind had to find something to transfer that pattern of not liking things. The food basket was used as a practice for me of harnessing my negative thoughts. It was the only thing that was coming in the yurt. [laughter] And the day I decided that I would no longer feel happy or sad. . . one day I decided I would no longer feel happy or sad about the food basket [laughs]. . . I discovered that my mind really wanted to embrace equanimity, not feeling good or bad. And you can only acquire this by neutralizing your mind. And because of this special awareness I started working on my feelings through doing meditations on equanimity, which involves loving your enemies [laughs] and hating the people that you hold dearly, brings you to a really sweet place of freedom. Your mind could then experience higher levels of meditation, by simply having equanimity becoming one of your main practices. You gain great insight into what it could feel like to see the world as being totally pure and what is the real cause for this, and who has blessed your mind and has given you endurance for the retreat.

The only person that I didn't thank was our lama. And I want to do so by dedicating this poem to him because he is so precious, and has taught us how to look at him as the object that we see, because he's really emptiness itself.

This poem is called "Timeless" and it was inspired by doing *tong len* meditation.

You are in the hollow channels of time
The skies in the crack of dawn
Basking on high peaks
At noon-time you are resting on a blade of grass
Flirting with Tara, the Goddess of Eternity
And then you gently glide in on the light rays
Which float in and out of the power inside my lungs
I suddenly exhale and you travel beyond existence
To capture the gist of life
I fly on the winds of my endless breath, my lama,
The lining of the twilight zone forever.

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Thank you.

[applause]

Please have a break, and don't forget to run up to one of those three directors and offer your services. Have a break and then we'll do a little bit more about Naropa-hla.



We'll do a little of Naropa-hla's story, and then I think you'll have some time to have a quiet evening. And I encourage you again to . . . if you hear the Yoga Sutra taught properly it's a great blessing. And the minute you hear it you have to take responsibility to pass it on to the next generation.

It's very wrong to have a clear teaching on a holy book and not try to get it all clear in your mind and organized, and be ready to teach it to the next generation. It might be in a coffee shop in New York, talking over a few lines of the Yoga Sutra to someone who needs it that day, or it might be giving a presentation to a large group somewhere. But either way, you have to be willing to be the next link in the lineage. This is your holy responsibility.

The great gurus and lamas of history, ever since Master Patanjali's time, almost two thousand years now, have taken that responsibility or we wouldn't have the Yoga Sutra. And now it's your responsibility to look over your notes at least twice before tomorrow's class. But I think more importantly, to . . . the blessing of meeting with your fellow seekers here, wherever you're staying, and I again encourage you to talk to someone, perhaps that you don't know but now looks interesting, and get together and look over the lines that we've done so they'll be firm in your mind when you teach the next generation.

And I wanted to say in that regard, what Winston-hla and Alistair-hla didn't mention about Diamond Mountain that I was so happy to hear, was that, I believe almost all the staff at Diamond Mountain, the directors and many even of the new volunteers here, many of them have been spreading out throughout the world and teaching the various courses, the ACI courses. And I have heard beautiful wonderful things all the way from Singapore to Lake Tahoe *[laughs]* about the teachings that they have so kindly given, and for me — and I'm sure for Khen Rinpoche and Geshe Thupten Rinchen and the other great lamas who have entrusted us with this sacred duty — it's just incredibly joyful news to hear that there's a new generation of wonderful teachers. I got so much news in the last few days, tons of letters from people who are so grateful to you. And I salute that.

Also, you should know that after holy Lama Khen Rinpoche granted us the instructions for deep retreat, I think it was around 1980, he encouraged us each to do four deep retreats in our lifetime. In the first ten years or twelve years, in the town where we were staying in New Jersey, we were only able, between all of us, to do I think about five *le rungs*. All the students there, and myself included, we didn't have time or really the effort to do more than I think a total of five deep retreats.

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To give you an idea of what Diamond Mountain is really about, if you count all the retreatants, the deep retreat cycles they have done, and all the deep retreats done by the staff and the other volunteers and people who have visited here, I believe it's a hundred and fifty deep retreats. So I would like to applaud everybody. *[laughs]*

[applause]

And that's really what it's all about here: training, and then doing, which brings me to the picture on the front of your notebooks. I'd like to ask. . . who shall I pick on? How about Elly-hla. . . if you could read slowly, the caption of the picture.

[Ven. Elly: inaudible]

Okay, good. Please repeat:

keshing [audience: keshing]
drubnye [audience: drubnye]
penchen [audience: penchen]
Naropa [audience: Naropa]

Let's explain the words. *Ke* means "learned." *Ke* means Naropa was a great monk, a learned monk. *Shing* means "and." *Drup* means "*siddha*." It means he not only learned everything, he went out and practiced everything. So *keshen druppa* means "he learned what he needed to learn and then he went out and actually practiced it and accomplished it."

Nye means he was able to do both of those things: learn what he had to do and then go out and actually walk the talk. *Penchen* means "*maha pandita*," "great *pandita*," and then *Naropa* is obviously his name.

But the point is that the person you see there is Naropa during his *drup* days, not his *khe* days. Okay? He went through his learning days at Vikramashila as a very proper and famous scholar monk, and then came his practice days, *druppa*, *siddha*, as a meditator and a deep practitioner.

The picture you see there is from a very famous text that was carved in the Potala Palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and it shows Naropa-hla during his yogi days. I read recently that the tiger-skin mat was used because when they would meditate out under the cactuses and the skeet trees *[laughs]* rattle snakes would smell the tiger scent and not disturb them.

So, let's talk about the *siddha* days of Naropa-hla. We left him at Vikramashila Monastery. He had mastered all the ACI courses. He had gotten to be the gate-keeper debater. He was also said to be an abbot even. And five hundred monks were looking up to him as the model of a great, pure, monastic scholar.

Then one day he was out under a tree, studying. . . you can still see this even, say, in Gyu Mey Tantric College. People take a little cradle-looking thing that they can fold up and they put an ancient scripture on those old leafs, loose leafs, and they go out under a tree and they might memorize for a few hours. So Naropa-hla, in the late afternoon was memorizing and studying. And he had his back to the sun. Suddenly a great shadow comes over him and he blocks out all the sunlight. And he's afraid and he turns around quickly and he sees a short old woman standing there.

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In the biography of Naropa-hla it says she had thirty-seven signs of ugliness and terror. *[laughs]* She was bent over; she had a stick, a walking stick. She had a hunch back. She was slobbering. Her hair was torn off, disheveled, and there's a whole list of thirty-seven qualities. And he was relieved that she wasn't as big as he thought she was from the shadow. But he said, he didn't. . . he was speechless.

And then the old woman came around to the front and said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "I'm studying epistemology."

And she said, "You understand all that stuff?"

And he said, "Yeah."

And then she says, "The words or the meaning?"

And he says, "The words."

And then she starts to dance, this beautiful dance, and she's jumping and leaping and laughing in delight.

And he's like, "Wow, she's all changed."

Then she comes back, this ugly dirty old woman and says, "Yeah. . . " No, I'm sorry. *[laughter]*

And Naropa says, "Oh, oh wait. I also understand the meaning."

Then she throws down her stick and she starts to scream and wail and cry. And she's like, all weeping and angry.

And Naropa says, "What did I say that was wrong? Why are you dancing first when I said I understood the words, and then when I said I understand the meaning you start to have a tantrum?"

She says, "When you said 'I understood the words' I thought you meant 'I only understand the words' so I thought I had finally met an honest monk scholar." *[laughter]* "Now you claim you know the meaning, too. And now I know you're not telling the truth and it upsets me."

So Naropa was offended, of course. *[laughs]* And he said, "If I don't understand the meaning of this thing, as the greatest monk of Vikramashila, then who understands it?"

She says, "My brother understands it."

So Naropa-hla says, "Well, go call your brother. Bring your brother. I wish to learn from your brother."

And the old woman looks him in the eye and says, "You don't ask someone like that to come to you. You go find him, and you beg him to teach you the meaning." And then she disappeared.

And Naropa-hla, his whole life transformed in a moment. And he walked back to the monastery and he understood, then, what she had said was true. He's forty-two years old already. He has a whole reputation built up. Thousands of monks and other people

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look up to him as an example of monkly knowledge and propriety. He has everything to lose, nothing to gain by changing his life. But he goes back to the monastery. He thinks for a few days and then in front of the assembly he says, “I’m leaving.”

And they say, “Why?”

He says, “I have to find my true teacher. I have to honestly, truly, get enlightened in this life. It’s not enough to build up some reputation, have many people looking up to you, thinking you’re a great speaker or a great teacher. You have to actually find enlightenment before you die. I have to find my true lama.”

Then he says, “I’m going to become a wandering yogi monk. I’m going to give up the robes, not my vows; I will always keep my vows, until the end of my life as I have sworn to. But I’m going to now change and take on the yogi’s wandering way of life and find my lama. I will wear a simple cloth around my waist.” You can see it in the carving. “I will grow my hair as the yogis wear it and I will find my true lama.”

And there’s a huge debate, and a controversy breaks out in Vikramashila Monastery and also in the local towns, and even reaching as far as the king and the governors of the whole country. People, starting with the gate-keepers, the other five gate-keepers, they come to him and they beg him in two ways. “If you leave the monastery we’ll be left without any great teacher. You are our greatest teacher.” And secondly, “If you make this change in your life and your appearance, you will hurt the *sangha*. Everyone will lose faith in what we stand for.”

And he said, “But what’s more important? I can’t continue to live as some kind of an object or some kind of a figure-head, and not actually attain all the things I’ve been talking about. I need to leave and truly practice what I have been learning.”

Then even the king and the ministers came to him and begged him not to leave and threatened him also with. . . it would be a scandal and an embarrassment to the public and all the citizens of the country if this great monk scholar would just simply leave like that and take on the appearance of a yogi.

And he said, “I understand what you’re saying. It’s true. But if I can’t actually achieve everything I’ve talked about, then it has no meaning. I have to find my true lama.”

And he leaves Vikramashila alone and in disgrace. The people look upon him as a failure. He goes to a special. . . it’s a *shmashana*, or a burial ground. In the old days in India, if you could, you would cremate a body. If you couldn’t afford the sandalwood or precious woods to burn the body, you might just leave the body on the ground in a special area. And it was a very dangerous area because it would attract very fierce animals, very commonly tigers or other very powerful dangerous animals. And there were, of course, many negative powerful spirits in this place where so many people had left their bodies. And it was considered an act of courage to go into one of the charnel grounds and do your meditation there among the bodies.

And so he left and he prayed for guidance. He had been studying mainly Hevajra tantra and he started to do the prayers for Hevajra *Sadhana* – *the dakkye* – over and over.

And then a voice came from the sky and said, “No. If you are going to meet the Buddha, if you are going to meet your lama, then you must do the Chakrasamvara tantra.

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You must recite the *mantra*, the holy words, of Chakrasamvara who is the holy husband of Vajra Yogini.”

And so he recited, tradition says seven hundred thousand times, that mantra, sitting among the dead bodies.

And then a voice came from the sky and said, [*cries*] “You can find your root lama, his name is Tilopa, if you walk to the east.”

And so he started to walk to the east; just aimlessly walking east. Then tradition says that he encountered twelve visions, which were to be followed by twelve hardships, after which he would be granted twelve deep teachings. I can’t tell you all the twelve visions but two of them I think are good to talk about, for the time we have.

Naropa was walking. He came upon an old man and an old woman. They were plowing a field – the man, and the woman was fishing in a near-by pond. And they said, “What are you doing? Who are you?”

He said, “I am the great *pandit* monk Abhayakirti” . . . was his name at that time. He wasn’t given the name Naropa until later. Abhayakirti means “the fearless one whose fame is spreading.”

And so he sat down with them and they said, “Would you like to eat? Are you tired or hungry?”

And he said, “Yes, I would be grateful.”

So the woman, the old ugly woman builds a fire and she puts a frying pan on top of it and the old man comes over and the woman goes to the side of the pond and picks up some fish and some frogs, live, and throws them on the frying pan, into the hot oil. And they are dying and screaming in the way that they do. And Naropa is frightened. He’s especially concerned. He’s a good monk. He is keeping his vows purely. And a Buddhist monk or nun cannot accept the body of an animal for food which has been killed for them. And so he’s hesitant to eat and he’s watching the suffering of these beings in the frying pan. And the old woman sits down and brings some into a dish. And then the old man comes and sits with them. And Naropa-hla refuses to eat.

So the old man says to the woman, “What’s the problem?”

And she says, “I don’t know. He looks like a monk, and I think he’s retarded.”
[*laughter*]

He says to Naropa-hla, “What’s your problem?”

And he’s hesitant to explain that he has his monk’s vows, and despite his appearance, he can’t eat this thing. But finally it comes out and he explains.

And so the old man picks up the dead fish and frogs and throws them back into the pond, and they swim away nicely. And then he and the old woman disappear into a rainbow.

And then Naropa is sitting there wondering what has happened [*laughs*] and he has a realization that the frogs and the fish represented his own mental afflictions, his *kleshas*, his own anger and jealousy and desire, and that perhaps he could have found Tilopa if he had seen the sacred thing that was really happening. It was all a play, it was

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all a divine play of his lama to show Naropa-hla that he has to stop and kill his mental afflictions. And so he wanders on, for months.

Later he comes to a terrible scene. A very evil man has tied his mother to a stake and has imprisoned his father and is torturing them both. And the man calls to Naropa-hla, “You’re looking for Tilopa, right?”

And he says, “Yes, but I have to stop you. What you’re doing is terrible.”

He says, “What do you think I’m doing?”

“You’re torturing your own parents. What’s wrong with you?” [*cries*]

The man says, “You don’t understand.” And the whole scene disappears in a rainbow.

And Naropa is standing, he doesn’t understand. And finally it dawns on him that his guru, his lama has given him a vision of how he will overcome his tendency to see things in duality. Mother and father represent the tendency, our own tendency, to think that the irritating person in front of you is coming from their side.

Naropa wanders for months more. He meets many more terrible scenes, each one teaching him more about himself. He begins to realize, all of these are a mirror of his own state of mind. And then he begins to despair. He understands that his mind isn’t even pure enough to meet Tilopa.

He sits down near a tree. He takes a knife. He puts it up to his heart. He decides to kill himself. [*cries*]

Then a voice comes and says, “How can you meet the guru if you kill the Buddha?” [*cries*]

And then Tilopa appears.

Tilopa had been a monk, a very common position we call *shepten* in Tibetan. He had a very fat job working for a local king as his *bujari*, as his ritual master in the palace. He had lots to eat, he had all the comforts of the palace, and he just did little rituals for the king from time to time. Tilopa got fed up with that way of life and he snuck out of the palace one night and went to live again in a burial ground and to do his prayers there, and meditations. During the day he posed as a maker of sesame oil, which is called *tila*. He would sit for hours with a stone and crush tiny little sesame seeds into oil, and so people called him Tilopa, the sesame seed crusher, but he was meditating on emptiness every time he crushed a single seed. At night he worked as a pimp. And people took it like that. They didn’t understand what he was really doing.

So Naropa-hla meets Tilopa and begs him for instruction.

Tilopa-hla says, “I’ll teach you.”

He drags him to, we call *galpip chank kar*, which means a special kind of tower in Northern India designed from the Chinese pagodas. It could be six or seven, nine stories high. You can still see some like this around Sravasti. And it has a pagoda roof, triple pagoda roof on the top, and Tilopa drags Naropa up to the top of the roof, drags him out on the roof, to the edge of the roof. [*cries*]

He says, “If I had a sincere student they would jump now.”

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Naropa jumps, and he falls and he breaks many bones of his body, but he doesn't die.

Tilopa walks downstairs slowly, comes to this crumpled heap, and says, "What the hell's wrong with you?"

And Naropa-hla says something like, "I must have some bad karma." *[laughs]*

And Tilopa says, "Not to worry." And he puts his hand on him, and he heals all the bones.

And because of his trust in his teacher, Naropa, at that moment, was granted the preliminaries for secret practice. How to clean your bad karma by using the warrior of diamond practice, how to collect good karma by worshipping the angel who has appeared to you as your teacher, and granted him the special empowerments to begin his higher practices.

And like that, Tilopa tested Naropa twelve times.

The third test is dear to my heart. Tilopa was pretending to be a big, fat, lazy, old man. Naropa-hla was trying not to see him in an impure way.

So Tilopa said to Naropa, "You go get me some food, and you go beg food."

So Naropa would take a begging bowl and go to the nearest village and beg for food. Then they found out there was a wedding going on. Yogis love Indian weddings because they hand out food to anybody. And so he got in line at the buffet and he held out his bowl and they gave him this delicious food. And he hurried back to Tilopa in the forest and offered his lama this delicious food. And Tilopa ate it all.

And then he said, "Go get me another bowl."

You have to understand that it was illegal to get a second bowl. It was against all the customs to go back again and ask for another bowl. So Naropa-hla is put into a moral crisis. Should he ask for a second bowl, or should he refuse his teacher's request?

Tilopa senses his hesitation, he says, "Go back, get the second bowl full. If they refuse to give you a second bowl full, I want you to take this big jar of water and pour it over all the food and ruin it." *[laughter]*

Then he showed him a special *yantra*, a special diagram, that he could draw on the ground with the drips of water.

He said, "If they chase you and try to abuse you, then you simply draw this special diagram on the ground and a huge lake will appear and no one will be able to bother you."

Then he gave him a small dagger and he said, "If somehow, anybody gets over the water, you simply thrust this dagger into the sky and a beautiful armored home will appear around you. No one will be able to harm you."

So Naropa-hla goes back to the wedding feast. They refuse him a second bowl. He ruins all the food with the water. They take off after him. *[laughs]* He runs and runs and when they're about to catch up, he draws the *yantra* on the ground and a huge lake appears. And then he just keeps walking.

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And there's this old woman who keeps popping up in these stories. She tells everybody, "Dig a ditch like this and the water will just disappear." And they do and the water disappears.

And Naropa's not too worried. He's still got the dagger.

They're about to reach him and beat him up. He raises the dagger to the sky and suddenly a beautiful little iron hut forms around him. The old lady gets everyone to go to the forest and pick up firewood. They stack the firewood around the iron hut *[laughter]* and she lights it on fire. Pretty soon it feels like one of our yurts in the summer. *[laughter]* Naropa-hla runs out and everyone stones him and beats him with sticks. He's almost dead. He crawls back to Tilopa.

Tilopa says, "What the hell's the matter with you?" *[laughs]*

And he says, "Oh, I must have some kind of wrong view or something, I guess." *[laughs]*

And Tilopa hla heals him with his hands. And I think it very beautiful, he says, "Now you've earned the tantric vows."

And these are the root for all success in the higher teachings. They are a beautiful pure moral code, very much like the ones we spoke about today, but even more intense. And you should know that the foundation of all tantric practice is exactly the ten virtues, the ten moral codes that all Buddhists have to follow: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, and so on. You can't practice the higher teachings, and they will never work for you, if you don't have these *yamas* and *niyamahs* as the foundation of your whole life.

And it continues like that for twelve hard difficult tests.

In the biographies, Naropa passes every test with flying colors. He doesn't have a single doubt. I think that's just revisionism. I don't think there could be a test from your lama or your guru, if it wasn't a true test. I mean, a test should be something that is difficult for you. A test should be something that you almost fail, or maybe fail sometimes. I don't believe all these stories that were written hundred years later that Naropa didn't have a single doubt. That wouldn't be a test, would it?

There's a thing that happens when you enter into a relationship with your teacher. There's a holy miracle that occurs when you take *samaya*, when you make a commitment to a teacher. Something much bigger begins to happen. Swami Satchananda said, I read somewhere, he said, "The only people who have fairy-tale relationships with their guru are the ones whose guru has died."

The closer you get to a teacher, the more bond you create between yourself and a teacher, then the better chances you have to reach enlightenment and help all other suffering creatures. The closer you get, the closer you are willing to surrender and create a bond, a holy bond with that teacher, then the faster your progress goes. There's no doubt, there's never been a great spiritual practitioner in India or Tibet who didn't achieve their goals by bonding themselves tightly to their teacher. It doesn't ever happen any other way. And the closer you get, the harder it gets. The closer you bond yourself, the more trouble and pain you will have to go through, because they are pulling you faster and faster then.

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And there's a phenomenon which occurs that I like to call the boomerang accelerator. We all have bad karma. We have countless lifetimes of bad karma in our minds. We have countless mental problems, afflictions, and every time we have a bad thought, every time we think something wrong or do something wrong, it's like throwing a boomerang. And then the whole suffering of our life is boomerangs hitting us on the other side of the head that we threw earlier. The closer you get to this force field of a true lama, the closer your *samaya*, the closer the bond between you and the teacher, the boomerangs speed up until they are becoming almost like a karmic mirror for you. They are reflecting back to you, exactly, all of your own weaknesses and faults. And because of the miracle of the *samaya*, the bond, then you can confront your own weaknesses and faults almost instantly reflected from your teacher. It gives you a unique opportunity to destroy the negative parts of your own being. And it's extremely difficult and painful.

It's a magic that happens around your true lama if you bond to them, and you just stick there. It's almost like a heat-seeking missile. Every word, every action of a lama or guru to whom you have bonded yourself will be directed to your own negativities.

You have all, I think, had the experience of sitting in a teaching by holy Lama Khen Rinpoche or His Holiness the Dalai Lama and believe that they are criticizing you directly, of all the people sitting there. This is a sign that your *samaya* is succeeding. You should be happy. This is a miracle of a bond between a disciple and a lama. The more critical, the more criticism that flows out of them toward you, the stronger the bond is becoming, because you are seeing your own negative side reflected back to you. If you are a jealous person, if you are envious of other disciples, for example, the lama will force you into close relationships with those other disciples. This is a blessing. This is a miracle of the *samaya*.

I think Lama Zopa Rinpoche, holy being, is especially adept, I've heard, at this. He made a rule that each center should have two directors instead of one. And he invariably sends two disciples who are jealous of each other to be the directors of each center. He designs it so that you meet the one person in the world who would most annoy you as the other director. And what will you do now, as directors of a holy dharma center? Are you going to fight with each other? He's very good at that.

I think it's important to say that it's not intentional with a high lama. I mean, it can seem that way. I had the experience when I came to study with holy lama, I came in the door the first day and holy lama said, "This other student is going to help you." And he left the room.

So I said, "Well, when can I meet Rinpoche and speak to him directly?"

And the other student said, "I don't know. I don't think you can. He's busy."

So I said, "I play *sitar*. I can play beautiful music for Rinpoche. Do you think he'd like to hear it?"

He said, "I don't think so." [laughter]

And then Rinpoche forced me, for twenty years, to be in close contact with the only other person who could threaten my ego. And holy Lama Art, whose Tibetan is slightly better than mine, [laughter] whose Sanskrit is much better than mine, whose

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lama service is infinitely better than mine, and he forced me to be in close contact with him for twenty years.

So can you work on your jealousy, your envy? If you have envy, then the *samaya*, the blessing, the miracle of your relationship with your teacher will force you to face it and confront it and try to change. If you're an angry person, your lama will put you around irritating people. If you can't control how you eat, your lama will be shoving food towards you all the time. If you tend to manipulate other people, people of the opposite sex perhaps, your lama will give you plenty of opportunities to be manipulated yourself.

This is the blessing of *samaya*. It's not that the lamas are cruel. And I think it's important to understand, it's not intentional; it's a blessing. It's a miracle which happens from the *samaya*, and I say that because now in the last few years, or before retreat, I began to teach students and I saw the power of the *samaya*. The closer a student got to me, the more incidents would occur which put them into difficulty. It wasn't anything I ever intended. I like people around me to be happy and relaxed, but the power of the *samaya* was more powerful than anything I wanted to happen. If two disciples seem to be jealous of each other, events constantly through the day would thrust them into situations where they had to be right next to each other. It was strange. Sometimes I was embarrassed or sometimes I was in awe of the power of the *samaya*. It wasn't anything I intended.

It's the beauty of the relationship between a disciple and the teacher. It's the power of the disciple's determination which creates the tests. The tests are not designed consciously by the guru or the lama. Every single test, every single attack on your faith is being created by the beauty of your own determination and your own commitment to that teacher. You should take it as an honor.

I think last thing I'd like to say today is, I think it's important if you talk about gurus encouraging their students to jump off a roof, that you have to understand the rules for this kind of behavior. Something extremely important for modern times, I think, especially. The biggest tests of a lama are nothing like asking you to jump off a roof. Because it's infinitely more difficult if a lama poses a moral test to you. It's infinitely more difficult if a lama is requiring you to make your own decisions. It's lazy to just do everything a lama asks you to do. It doesn't work that way. The tests are more difficult. Every single test you ever get involves a moral decision on your part. If a lama asks you to steal something, or to do something else improper, the test is not, do you have the guts to go and steal something. The test is will you be able to figure out that the lama is testing your moral line. Will you have the courage to say to the lama, "I love you. I respect you. I can't steal for you."

This is a real test and it will come not in some easy way. It will come in gray areas. It will come in things that are difficult to figure out, difficult to decide what's the right thing to do.

Lord Buddha taught four great schools of philosophy. We studied that in ACI. And we found out that three of them are clearly false. Lord Buddha taught three schools of thought which are false. Lord Buddha taught emptiness and karma the wrong way

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much of his life. At the end he gave the real teaching, the true one, and after that he granted the higher teachings.

You can't just lazily sit there and accept whatever a lama says. Part of the miracle of the *samaya* is that you will be tested constantly. You can't assume that a single action or word is to be taken on its face value. You are cursed with having to decide, from moment to moment and minute to minute, what is moral, what is correct to do? What will benefit living beings? What will bring me most quickly to highest enlightenment? You can't act like an ox, a dumb animal, and just accept everything the teacher says. And so you must constantly judge against your understanding, what's the right thing to do?

There's a beautiful story in Tibet of a Buddha statue that was set up on a stone near a path. There was a poor person, who didn't own anything more than the cloth around his waist and his sandals, and he was walking along the path and it began to rain. And he saw the Buddha statue, the small statue on the stone and he said, "It's not right that the Buddha should get wet by the rain."

So he took off his only pair of sandals in his whole life that he owned and he carefully put them in a little roof shape over the Buddha's head. Then he continued down the path barefoot. Then the rain stopped and the sun came out and a second man walked down the path and he saw the Buddha that some idiot had put these filthy sandals over it. And he rushed over and picked up the sandals and threw them to the side.

So you see, the moral of the story is, it may be right to do either thing depending on your motivation. It may be right to refuse to do what the lama asks if it strikes you as being impure or incorrect. And it may equally be proper to believe that this being is a higher being and has a reason to ask you to do something unusual.

But, you see, there's one guideline. There's one line that you can never cross. After you have created *samaya*, after you have made your promise, devoted yourself to a teacher, from that instant you must always see them as a faultless angel. And they are. So whether you refuse to do what they ask or whether you follow their request, you can never lose your vision of them as a pure and faultless loving angel whose only intention is to bring you to enlightenment. It's not a question of should you refuse to do something or should you agree to do something. The main question is, how do you view this being? You can never break that *samaya*. It is never proper to believe anything less than this is an enlightened being.

You can say, "This enlightened being is testing me. I shouldn't do what they ask." Or you can say, "This enlightened being has told me to do something unusual. I must try to understand the goal they have in mind." But you can't refuse... you can't stop seeing them as an enlightened being. Only then can you fail. Only then do you break *samaya*. Only then do you lose all hope of becoming such a being yourself.

But the lamas of the universe, they want you to question. They want you to decide. They are forcing you to make decisions for yourself based on their teaching. It's much harder than just doing what they say, isn't it?

Last thing, the first great test Rinpoche gave me, you should know. I took him to the dentist in Freehold, Shank Road, I remember. They looked at his teeth. He was fifty-five years old. He had never been to a dentist. They described how it would cost two

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thousand dollars in 1975 currency to repair his mouth. And it would require extracting fifteen teeth. And after the appointment we walked to the Seven-Eleven behind the building [*cries*] and he said, “let’s get something to drink.”

I think it was the first few days I had served him. And we went to the cooler in the store and opened the door, and Khen Rinpoche points to a can of Coca-Cola and he says, “You drink that.”

And I had a moral crisis. I thought soft drinks were very destructive, bad things. I was a hippie, still am, and I can’t drink Coca-Cola. I need a juice or water. [*laughter*] But the holy lama is pointing to the Coke and he says, “You drink that.” So I’m standing... he turned around, he left, and I’m standing looking at the Coca-Cola [*laughter*] and I don’t know what to do. Should I follow what the lama said, or should I do what I truly feel in my heart might be right?

Later I took higher vows; one of the higher vows is you cannot damage this holy body. You have to take care of this holy body. So do I hurt my holy body, or do I follow what Khen Rinpoche asked me to do? Or does he want me to tell him, “I won’t drink it?” So I drank it. To tell you the truth, I think now-a-days I would respectfully tell the Buddha, “I believe you’d want me to say ‘I won’t drink it.’”

But, you see, it will always be this kind of decision for you to make. There are no easy answers with teachers. There are no easy ways out. But you will never ever fail – you will always keep your holy *samaya* – if you only believe that they are holy enlightened beings testing you.

I’ll see you tomorrow.

[*Prayers*]

Morning: Day Three ☸ April 19
John Stilwell

Good morning. First thing this morning we'll do a very brief meditation to just shift into neutral after the excitement and the buzz of the holy relics and yoga and our other activities. So please sit comfortably with your eyes closed, assuming the eight point posture of Vairochana, being aware of your breath. Be aware of the length of your breath, that the exhalation and inhalation are of the same duration. Be aware that it's very subtle passing through the nostrils. And follow the sensation of your breath passing through the tip of your nostrils. Begin with an exhalation and then an inhalation, which is one round, and we'll do twenty-one rounds, counting each round. If you lose single pointed concentration on awareness of the breath, go back to one and start over.

[Silence]

[Mandala offering]

[Refuge prayer]

So, first we have to thank the holy Vajra Dakinis, Victoria and Darcey for getting up extra early and setting up this beautiful display of holy relics and the holy statue and other holy physical objects. And thank you very much of course, thank you, thank you, especially to the holy manifestation of the Dharmakaya, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and everyone who has contributed. Talk about some amazing karma ripening. It's just kind of out of the blue, and there it is. *[Laughter]* It's funny how karma works... It's a great blessing to be sitting here with all of these amazing things, and you can really feel the vibe in the tent. So, thank you for that. And of course I have to say, hard act to follow last night. *[Laughter]* But you know, here I am. *[Laughter]* Someone here told me that I teach locker room dharma. *[Laughter]* So I have to be a little delicate, I think, to try to not, shall we say, tarnish the beauty of the teachings last night, or detract from them. But I do want to pick up on the point that Geshe Michael made last night at the end. Which is, don't be stupid and just believe in anyone you meet, any lama you meet. Check it out. Right? Don't just think anything anyone says is fine or holy, or self-existentially correct. Right? So the big danger here is self-existence, as it always is. Either seeing things as self-existentially bad or tainted or corrupted, or seeing things as self-existentially holy or pure or perfect from their own side. Either one is completely wrong. Totally a hundred per cent wrong. So I want to really go deeper into that and talk more about that. I think it's really important that we dig a little deeper and go deeper about all the things we were talking about yesterday throughout the day. Can I see a show of hands of people who are totally new, or fairly new, to Buddhism? ...maybe twenty-five per cent, something like that.

I think a good place to start would be to ask if anyone has any questions about emptiness as it was described thus far. Is everybody crystal clear? *[Laughter]* No questions. All right! You got it. Okay, movin' on. *[Laughter]*

[Student: What is it?] [Laughter]

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Does someone else have a more specific question? What isn't it? Yeah, that's another really good question. I'm going to fall back to the pen example. I used to joke with a friend, "If he mentions the pen again I'm going to scream." We'd sit in the back of the class going, "If he says pen I'm going to scream." [Laughter] But I'm going to do it. I don't usually like to do that, but I'm going to do it because most of you are familiar with it and it's very easy to go through. So — ultimate reality/emptiness — we talked about this in great detail last time. Ultimate reality, or emptiness, or suchness, or thusness, or isness, or whatever else you want to call it.

There are two levels of reality: conventional reality, and ultimate reality. Conventional reality is what a normal person sees with their eyes and all of their senses as the normal human world. Ultimate reality is how things really exist, which is very different from conventional reality. And simply put, conventionally, things exist in dependence upon you conceiving of them the way you do, or projecting them the way you do. Okay? The way we interpret our world — the way we perceive our world — is that we take information in through our senses; register it with our consciousness and mind; our mind interprets that sensory input data and conceptualizes something; and then projects that identity and concept out onto the object. Okay? That's how things work. That's how we perceive the world. We take stuff in, the mind processes it according to the unique capacity of each individual's mind, and then projects the resulting concepts and ideas and constructs onto the external world and ourselves. And onto all of the interactions between our self and the outer world. That's how we live; that's how we perceive conventional reality.

The way things ultimately exist is that they exist independent of any of those concepts and projections that we place on them. They exist without any of the concepts or projections we place on them. Ultimately things don't possess, from their own side, all the concepts and projections and identities and ideas that we place on them. Okay?

Blankness is a really easy way to think about it. You can use the movie analogy. Ultimate reality is like a blank screen that we're projecting our movie and our story onto. And we're projecting every level of our movie and our story. We're projecting the hard constructs, like I'm a human being with this body. And we're projecting the soft constructs like it's good, it's bad, I like it, I don't like it, it's painful, it's pleasurable. You can use the computer analogy of hardware and software to help. We're projecting the hard constructs — the hardware — and we're projecting the soft constructs — the feelings and interpretations. Everybody square? Yes, go ahead.

[Audience: inaudible]

So Carolyn is saying, "Well you're saying nothing's there, everything's blank. How can things exist if there's nothing there?" So there are two classic extremes: things are self-existent, or things don't exist. Carolyn's saying, well surely there's something there. Right? Well, blank is a concept too isn't it? If I say you're projecting onto the movie screen, the idea "movie screen" is something we've conjured up, isn't it? You've been to the movies, you've seen a movie screen — you know what it looks like. When I say "movie screen" you see the picture in your mind. Or you think about the picture in your mind. Right? That's not emptiness, that's a projection, that's a construct, that's a positive identification of something. There's this infinite endless regression that you can do to check what's behind a concept. You look for the concept behind the concept, you

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look for the concept behind that concept, you look for the con... and you go on, and on, and on. By doing that analysis and that meditation you can reach a direct perception of ultimate reality which is completely, one hundred per cent not conceptual. So when you say there's something there, yes, it's true there's something there. But you can't conceptualize it or describe it as a human being using our language and our terms. The nature of ultimate reality is such that, yes, there is something there, but you can never conceptualize it. Because ultimate reality is not conceptual. It's untrue that nothing is there, and it's untrue that a self-existent thing is there.

[Audience; inaudible]

It's actually a very good analogy. Isadora asked, is it like a hologram. I saw something written about holograms. I don't know that much about them, but it said that if you shatter a hologram into a thousand pieces, every single piece of the hologram contains the entire image of the full hologram. Very interesting. No matter how small you break a hologram, it contains the totality of the picture. A very, very useful analogy. Very, very nice analogy. So, please don't think there's nothing there. And please don't think there's something there from it's own side. When we say something exists from it's own side it means it is radiating it's nature, and it's radiating it's identity, and it's radiating it's way of being. It's radiating it's hardware and it's software, if you will. It's radiating it's body and it's radiating the interpretations, the feelings associated with it. So that's the idea of ultimate reality, emptiness, suchness.

I talked about the pen because it's very easy... you know, I didn't even talk about the pen. Sorry. *[Laughter]* Let's talk about the mike. *[Laughter]* I don't have a pen. Is it a mike from it's own side? Can we say from it's own side it's radiating it's "mikeness", it's mike identity, the hardness and the softness. I like it, I don't like it, it's useful, it's not useful. It's a mike because it's round, it has this thing on the top and it has electronics inside, and it moves sound. We don't have dogs, we have cows here... this would be a chew toy for a cow. So to a cow it's not a mike. They can't conceptualize it as a mike, they can't identify it as a mike, they can't think of it as a mike. It in no way exists for them as a mike, either at a hard level or on a soft level. Okay? And everything is like that. So that's the example of the cow pen.

To make it more real, you've got to say everyone perceives everything differently. No two people anywhere ever perceive anything exactly the same in conventional reality. It's impossible for any two people to have the exact same perception in conventional reality both on an interpretive feeling level, and on a hard level — what they perceive physically, the body, etc..

We have to make it a little more personal now. It's much easier to talk about in the abstract, when you talk about a mike, or a pen, or whatever. Let's talk about His Holiness. Is His Holiness holy? His name is His Holiness. *[Laughter]* So we've got "yes" and "to whom?" Both answers are correct. I think most of us, perhaps all of us in this room, perceive him as holy conventionally. Conventionally he's not holy from his own side. Some Chinese really dislike him, and maybe lot's of other people too. Right? So holiness is not coming from him. His Holiness' holiness is not coming from His Holiness. *[Laughs]* His Holiness is completely one hundred per cent a blank screen — empty. His physical form and the interpretation of his physical form, our likes and dislikes, have nothing to do with him. Zero. It all comes from the person doing the

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perceiving. Zero holiness is residing within His Holiness self-existently.

How about Lama Zopa Rinpoche, or Khen Rinpoche? Are they Holy? Definitely, you say. You guys aren't listening. *[Laughter]* The Chinese like him. Okay. *[Laughter]* Some people perceive Khen Rinpoche as this happy smiling jovial Tibetan. Other people get their butts kicked and he's wrathful. They perceive a wrathful older man, where it's like, you better not say the wrong thing or you're toast. And Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Some people see him as, of course, amazing and holy and phenomenal, and other people see him as this person who they can't understand who keeps them in teachings way too long and makes them really sore and stiff and they'd really rather leave. It's not coming from him at all is it? Zero. Zero percent is coming from the teacher. Okay? From any teacher, whether it's me, or Geshe Michael or His Holiness, or Lama Zopa, or Khen Rinpoche. Yes?

[Audience: inaudible]

Intention is an important component of collecting karma. When you think about collecting karma your intention or your motivation is the vast major component of a karmic seed. Something like eighty percent of a karma is motivation. So say you have the intention to help someone and you undertake something, and maybe you break their leg instead. Your intention was to help them, and you've mainly collected a virtue, but you've also got a bit of non-virtue mixed in there in that you broke their leg. You see? So intention is a very important element of collecting karma. Once you collect a karma you have that karma in your mind stream, and the karma will ripen into a result. And the nature of karma is such that you collect the karmic seed – it's planted. And physical seeds are a good analogy for karmic seeds. You plant the seed, it has to gestate, and it has to have conducive conditions applied to it to grow and ripen. Like with a physical seed you'd need water, and sun, and earth as conducive conditions for ripening. Conditions that are conducive for karmas to ripen are thinking similarly again, undertaking similar things again, having similar intention again. Those are the conditions that are conducive for karmic seeds to ripen, good or bad. So you collect the karmic seed, it gestates, it receives conducive conditions, and it eventually ripens as a result.

So, then of course the natural next question is, "Is Geshe Michael holy?"

[Audience: inaudible]

If you have the karma to perceive it that way. You know, I'm not self-existently a schmuck or a holy person. So all of you who think I'm a schmuck, get over it. Okay? And Geshe Michael isn't self-existently holy from his own side. He is holy to the extent that you have collected the karma to see him as being holy. Period. He exists in no other way. If you've collected the karma to see Geshe Michael as holy, will he always be holy? No. A karmic seed has a power to it, or a life to it, depending on the karma you've collected. Each karma collected has a certain strength, and when it ripens it has a duration that comes from how powerful the karma was that you collected. You collect a wimpy karma, maybe it lasts for a couple of seconds. I was going to give a specific example, but never mind. Think of something really pleasurable that lasts a few seconds. *[Laughs]* It's a weak karma, unfortunately. If you collect a powerful karma that's very strong, when it ripens it lasts for a long time. You collect a powerful karma, perhaps you collected a very powerful karma, and it ripens into a valid perception of a holy teacher.

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That holy teacher will be holy for you until that karma wears out. And when that karma wears out you may validly see him as a schmuck. That's the way it works. Don't be surprised. Your job as spiritual practitioners is to perpetuate this process of collecting karma to perceive the things that you want to be perceiving, like holy beings, like paradise, like everything good in your life. Right? You have a question?

[Audience: inaudible]

So the question was can you do something to maintain a karma that has flowered and is bringing it's result? And can you do something to maintain it and try to keep it from wearing out? You know, the laws of karma are pretty specific. They say that once a karma has flowered you're stuck with it. Otherwise, when a painful karma ripened we'd be able to get rid of it in the moment, you see. Once the karma flowers, you've got that result. It's there. Too late. Let's say you have a karma that ripens into a perception of holy beings, and holy stupas, and holy relics, which just popped up. Totally unexpected. Nice ripening of karmas... beautiful, holy ripening of karmas, totally unexpected, great! How do we perpetuate it? Can we cause this holy relic display that will be placed in the Maitreya statue to stay here forever? No. Probably not. But you can use this opportunity to collect karma to perpetuate the process. And that's what an effective spiritual practitioner does. You have a window of opportunity here as a spiritual practitioner. When good virtuous karmas ripen, you have time, leisure, health, good faculties and all the other conducive conditions of leisure. It's like, okay, I've got a lot of time on my hands now, don't have to worry about money, don't have to worry about being hungry, don't have to worry about being sick, don't have to worry about too many things to do, or not enough time. You have a window of opportunity to collect virtue. If you don't collect virtue, you missed your opportunity. If you do, then you are constantly bumping yourself up to the next level, to the next level, to the next level. And that's how you practice, that's what spiritual practice is. Every time you have an opportunity to do some virtue you do it, rather than letting the opportunity pass. And every time you do virtue, of course you collect karma which will ripen into it's result. So if you have collected virtuous karmas in the past they ripen into whatever good results, and if you just do neutral activities or negative activities then you're not bumping yourself up. In your future you're just like this, or your life becomes worse, or it stays mixed.

[Audience: inaudible]

That's another method of collecting good karma. Rejoicing is collecting karma.

[Audience: inaudible]

Kendall has two good points to add. One is: once you've collected a virtue, you don't want it to be damaged by negative actions that you undertake subsequently. The way to protect your goodness is to dedicate the positive karma that you've collected. You strongly feel the wish that all the positive karma that I've done be directed at achieving spiritual goals, or becoming enlightened, or attaining *shamata* — whatever your goals are. You pick a specific spiritual goal and you say, I want it all to go to that. That's why I did all these good things and that's the result I want to have come from doing all these good things. And then the other point she made is that rejoicing is a very easy way to collect virtuous karma. You know, all you gotta do is feel happy. And

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rejoicing doesn't mean saying, " I rejoice, I rejoice, I rejoice, I rejoice!" That's not rejoicing. Rejoicing is feeling happy in your heart. You feel happy in your heart about some goodness that you've seen others do, you yourself did, or in the world anywhere. That's real rejoicing in goodness. Something like that.

So anyway, ultimately Geshe Michael is the exact same status as this plant. I mean he is blank, just like this plant is blank. And you will see this plant as a glowing relic, or a plant, based on the karma you've collected in the past. If you hadn't collected the karma this wouldn't be here, you'd be seeing dirt, say. And the only reason you're seeing ultimate reality manifest as holy, beautiful things right here behind me is because we've all collected the karma in the past. Otherwise, we wouldn't have it. Ultimate reality would be manifesting as something else. Kevin?

[Kevin: inaudible]

There's raw data. I think what Kevin is saying is that you've got raw data, and then you're saying it's blank. Kevin is saying can you clarify that. You can use an atomic model, the way we think of atoms. When you talk about raw data we tend to think that there's some smallest particle. You can break it down to some smallest piece, right? That's the easiest way to think of it. And that's the raw data you're taking in through your senses. Whatever those smallest pieces are, whether they're photons, or whatever. Buddhist logic is very clear. It says there is no smallest particle because everything can always be divided into an inside and an outside, a top and a bottom, etc. So there is no ultimate particle, and that proves everything is empty of a fixed way of existing from it's own side — you can never find an end to the parts, and you can never find a smallest particle. And when you keep looking and keep looking and keep looking you come to ultimate reality, or emptiness. You come to the understanding that there is no smallest particle, there is no basic building block, but there is something there. And we can't directly experience it with our five senses, conceptually fathom it, or verbally describe it. You can only experience it directly to fully understand it. You have to experience it non-conceptually, not with words or thoughts, or labels or identities. So, like that.

Someone could walk in here and say, "all those holy relics behind you that they say are from the great lamas of the past – Lord Atish, Shakyamuni Buddha, and the rest, they're just little pieces of plastic behind glass." There is something there. But what's there? There is ultimate reality. Ultimate reality is right here, and it has manifest according to our karma. We are perceiving it according to our karma. This is what I was saying earlier. There is something here – ultimate reality is here – everything has ultimate reality. Ultimate reality is everywhere, and it manifests according to your karmic projections; you perceive it according to your karmic projections. So according to your karmic projections, you walk in and there is no golden Buddha statue, no ancient holy relics, which is what happened yesterday. Because of the karma that ripened yesterday, this wasn't here. For the karma that ripened today, I walked in and it was here. I didn't see anybody working. I didn't see anybody putting any tables or displays together. It's just here. That's my karma. The people who did the work had a different karma. *[Laughs]* So someone could walk in and say, "It looks like little pieces of plastic and enamel. What are you making a big deal about?" Other people spent the morning getting up early to prostrate and circumambulate. So it's like that. That's the nature of

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karmic projections and ultimate reality.

We've got to move on because this was just a little prep. The point I want to make is that we invest a lot in the things we hold dear. Our partners, close friends, and especially spiritual teachers. We invest a lot in our spiritual teachers. They mean a lot to us in our lives. And so it's very, very hard. It's much more difficult to see things according to correct view with the things that we're vested in. It's very hard to feel that our partner is empty. And that everything we perceive in association with them is coming from us and our past karma; that the annoyances we feel aren't their fault, and the problems we have with them taking out the trash aren't their fault, and the problems with them earning enough money aren't their fault. Etc., etc., etc., etc. It's much, much harder with the things we are vested in and that we're close to, to really viscerally and deeply feel and acknowledge that they are empty, that they're blank, and it's all coming from us.

Teachers are just the same as partners. It's very easy to forget that teachers are empty, that they're not self-existent from their own side. And it's very important to understand that. If a spiritual teacher yells at you, versus a stranger yells at you, you have a very different reaction. It's much easier to think about the emptiness of the stranger yelling at you, or the boss at work, than your spiritual teacher. But it's exactly the same process, exactly the same status, exactly the same thing going on in both cases. But because of how our minds are functioning it's much harder for us to apply the practice, to apply these understandings to our partners, and to people close to us; to things we're vested in. So please be aware of that. If you see a teacher as holy today, tomorrow you could see him as a complete idiot. And it's valid. Both are valid. It's only a function of your projections, and the karma you've collected.

By the way, Sharon Gannon was here last year and she said, "Wow, you know, you all treat your teachers so well. I wish our students treated us like this; they just really don't get it." And the reason, I hope, that we treat our teachers well is because we understand how karma works. Not because we see them as self-existently holy. We understand that by treating teachers and everyone else well, that we collect the karma to have holy beings in our lives. Right? That's the reason to treat teachers well. No other reason. Not because of self-existence. *WE* cause holy teachers.

The scriptures say it's very difficult to find a teacher. It's very difficult to find a holy teacher and it's very difficult to hold on to a holy teacher. They're very slippery. Why is that? Because we've got such weak virtuous karma. If you say you have a holy teacher, or multiple holy teachers in your life, it is a manifestation of the pure aspect of your life. You are projecting your purity onto an outer object. You're projecting your pure karma onto an outer object. So to the extent that you have purity in your mind, i.e. the correct karma, i.e. holiness in your mind, you're projecting it onto outer objects. And if you've got no purity in your mind, you got no holy beings in your life. And it's a shame, and most people don't. You see? So it's unfortunate, but once you understand that this is how it works and what karma is, then you have a basis to collect the right karma. So if you have a teacher in your life who is mixed, say, you're projecting that based on the karmas that are ripening in your mind. And if you want a different teacher in your life what do you do? Collect a different karma, right? And any seeds you collect will have a lag time, and after they gestate, they'll ripen into a different result.

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The way karma works is that it takes millions and trillions of karmic ripenings to create a perceptual event. It's very much like the movies. In the movies it takes sixty whatever, sixty-two (?) frames per second to get a moving picture on the screen.

[Audience: inaudible]

Twenty-four, thank you. The TV is sixty, isn't it? Is it?

[Audience: inaudible]

Satellite TV, I don't know how many images per second. Could be. Anyway, so you get the idea. The idea is that you've got to have a certain number of frames firing, or going by, or flashing on-screen to get a moment of live, moving perception. Karma is just the same as the movies and TV in all its different formats. But this perceptual event is a full sensory experience. You got all five senses going. And it takes a lot more instances of karma firing and ripening to get a full sensory experience like this. So literally, millions of karmas ripening to have this experience. It takes a tremendous amount of karma to experience anything, and of course we're collecting karma as it ripens and replacing it with new karma. It's a question of what karma are we collecting to replace what's ripening into this experience. So this is a very important key in your spiritual practice. The idea of karma is that the basic content of your mind — the karmas that are in your mind — are what you're experiencing as your reality, as your world, and every level of reality in your world. So to have purity in your world on any level, you have to have the appropriate karma ripening in your mind to project that and perceive that. Any perceptions you're having of any of your spiritual teachers are coming from you, from your karmas ripening.

So having said all that, as good students, now we have to do what Geshe Michael said last night. You got to check out your teachers. He said don't be stupid. Don't think that just because a teacher said something, you should do it. And don't be ignorant. Don't think that they're self-existently one way or another, you've got to check it out; you've got to evaluate them. How do you decide whether to listen to a teacher or not? How do you decide if a teacher is holy or not? Is it just some intuitive feeling you get that goes, "Yeah, I'm inspired – I'm there." Is that enough? It's a little dangerous. That's what the sutra teachings are for, and the sutra teachings are very specific in providing criteria to check out teachers. And they're also very specific in providing criteria to say what a student should be like. So we've got to talk about both sides, right?

There are three qualities of a qualified student, a good student, and Arya Deva enumerated them in his *Four Hundred Verses*. A student has to be impartial. Meaning what? You're not vested in an outcome. If you're vested in an outcome you're not impartial and you're not going to be able to evaluate it accurately. You're going to have some tainted perception. You have to be intelligent; you have to be able to evaluate it and analyze it. And you have to aspire to highest goals, otherwise you're not going to get anywhere. So those are the basic three qualities of a qualified student. Ruth asked, what kind of outcome are you talking about. So, I'll give you an example of an outcome. For example, I want Geshe Michael to be holy. That's an outcome. Geshe Michael will or will not be holy at any given moment, on any given day, on any given year, according to the karma I've collected. If I sit here going, "Look, Geshe Michael's holy, I know he is and I just have to see it that way." On the Sutra level you're totally off. On a sutra level,

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you're perceiving Geshe Michael according to the karma you've collected in your past. And if you really understand karma and emptiness, if you really believe in karma and emptiness, you won't hold on so tightly. You won't hold on to a teacher so tightly saying, "Oh, they have to be holy! If they're not holy I'm screwed! If they're not holy, I'm so in trouble. I'm really, really lost." It's not coming from them. *They're* coming from *you*. If you're vested in an outcome you're saying it can't be that way, or it has to be this way. Then you lose your impartiality, you lose your understanding of ultimate reality, you lose your awareness of karma. So this is what it means to me to be impartial; it's almost neutral in a way. It's what a good yogi does — whatever comes, good or bad, I've collected the karma, I'm experiencing it, I'll deal with it properly, I'll relate to it properly, and I'll collect the proper karma going forward. Whether I see John or Geshe Michael as a schmuck, or corrupt, or as holy, or whatever. Your valid perceptions are your valid perceptions, on a sutra level.

[Audience: inaudible]

Isadora is saying that you have expectations of wanting to have things a certain way. So like that. Let's go on to how you evaluate a teacher on a conventional level. In the *Sutra alamkara*, Master Asanga talks about ten ways to check out a teacher on a basic level. The first one is that they have to have tamed morality, which is the first of the three trainings. Meaning that if they don't keep their own morality and ethics under control, then they can't train someone else. You can't teach someone, really, what you can't do. We're going to talk about this one in more detail a little bit later. The teacher has to have mindfulness and concentrative awareness; they have to be able to keep their mind on what they are doing so that they're not all over the place, and violating morality because they can't be mindful. They have to have the training of wisdom, which means that they have to be able to meditate well enough to have attained *shamata* — single pointed concentration — to investigate reality more deeply. The key here is that they have to have attained full calm abiding, full *shamata*, or *shine*. They have to be rich in scriptural knowledge, meaning they're a master of the scriptures. They have to have the training of wisdom to a very high degree, meaning at the very least they should understand emptiness very well intellectually and via scriptures. Preferably they should have perceived it directly. They should have exceedingly good qualities, which are in excess of the students, because if they're not better than the students they can't bring them up to their level. They have to know the right order of the teaching for the student, and know the student's capacity for learning to be able to teach the student well. They should teach out of love and compassion, rather than some motivation for gain and fame and all of those other worldly dharmas. They should take deep joy in helping others; their motivation should be a deep joy in the action of helping others. And the last quality is that they shouldn't get tired of helping other people. Most of us are pretty thick, and you have to say the same thing over, and over, and over again. I remember when I started teaching. It's was like, man, I'm just saying the same thing over and over; how boring. But that's really what teaching is about. It's about repetition, and so they have to be willing to really happily repeat things a lot.

And then they go on to clearly say that it's very hard to find a teacher that has all ten of these qualities. We mostly don't meet people like this. Maybe the teacher hasn't seen emptiness directly, maybe they have some scriptural knowledge, maybe they have a few of these qualities. Then the scripture breaks it down further. Actually, Geshe

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Michael broke it down into just three basic things last night. Does anyone remember the three qualities of a teacher he mentioned yesterday?

[Audience: inaudible]

No, that's not what he said. What did he say? They see the suffering and they want to help other people.

[Audience: inaudible]

No, that's not what he said last night about the three qualities of a teacher. What did he describe as the three qualities of a teacher? He said a teacher should at least have kindness towards their students, both on a temporal and an ultimate level. To be looking out for the worldly needs of their students — wanting their students to have their worldly needs fulfilled — and also have ultimate kindness, which is wanting to free them from death and the cycle of suffering. *Samsara*.

[Audience: inaudible]

The airplane analogy; there you go. And the last point that he made was that you have to be able to do it. You have to have the knowledge how to stop suffering. You have to have the capacity. So those are an abbreviated description of a teacher. You have to understand suffering and see suffering, you have to really acknowledge that suffering exists everywhere in the world for humans, and you have to really have kindness towards everyone on ultimate and temporal levels, and you have to have the capacity to do something about it.

There's also a much simpler way of looking at a teacher, which is that in the division of things in this life, versus things of future lives, are they spending most of their time on things of this life or are they spending their time on things of future lives? Whenever you meet a teacher, and this includes Geshe Michael, you need to look at them in that context. You need to look at their actions, you need to look at their teachings, you need to look at the way they lead their lives, and you need to check it against those ten qualities, or those three qualities, or at the very least that one test. And you need to say alright, what are they doing? What are they like? What's their deal?

I want to read Geshe Michael's letter again, very briefly. Geshe Michael wrote this letter on his birthday in December and sent it to his lamas pro-actively in anticipation of coming out of retreat, I think because he wanted to come out of retreat with everything above board and presented in a very straight, open way to everyone. Khen Rinpoche had very good advice in regard to reading or listening to the letter. He said you have to really guard your mind. He said when you think about these kinds of things, and when you talk about these kinds of things, it's very easy to collect negative karma by thinking negatively. He said really guard your mind when you think about it, because otherwise the speaker is collecting negative karma and the listener is collecting negative karma. Alright, here we go. So guard your mind. I want to make sure everybody's clear on two of the main points in the letter.

“I was born in America and from the age of sixteen up to the present day have always been under the care of a divine angel, Vajrayogini.” Oh, one other thing I wanted to say is that you should think of this letter from the perspective of checking it out. What's literal? What's figurative? Course Fifteen: How to interpret literal and

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figurative. Is everything in here literal? Is some of it figurative? You have to be an intelligent, analytical, probing student.

[Audience: inaudible]

Sure, doubt is fine. No. Judging is negative. If you think about it, there's a difference between discrimination and judgment. Discrimination is this is red, this is blue. I like this, I don't like that. I'm not sure about this, I'm sure about that. That's discrimination. That's healthy, that's a standard mental function that you can't avoid and you can't escape. But to say "that's stupid." That's judgment, you see, and that's collecting negative karma. When you say anything along the lines where you're putting some negative label on something it is a form of judgment, this is collecting negative karma. You see? You should always evaluate things. You should always decide about things. The ultimate decision is: this works for me or this doesn't work for me, I believe this, I don't believe this, I accept this, I don't accept this. You see? That's discrimination, and that's how we should live our lives. We should go through our lives saying, "No, doesn't work for me. Yes, it does work for me. I accept it. I don't accept it. I believe it. I don't believe it." But it's not the same thing as saying, "They're totally whacked out!" You see? Or they're like, insanely corrupt. Because those are judgments. Discrimination should be applied to one's self, and one's own behaviors. I want this, I don't want that. I will do this, I won't do that. And that's healthy and necessary and totally appropriate. You have to do it. But when you start putting things on other people, that's judgment and that's negative karma. They're bad, they're stupid, they're corrupt. And it's not even coming from them anyway! You never know what the real motivation of another person is unless you can read their mind. The difference between discrimination and judgment is a very important distinction. Thank you.

[Audience: inaudible]

It's very important to have a balance between deceptive and ultimate reality.

[Audience: inaudible]

The question is, if you have the karma to see someone as holy should you take their advice all the time? There are two different approaches. One is the sutra approach, the other one is the approach in the secret teachings. The question was, if you don't have the karma to see someone as holy, or if you had the karma and it wore out and you no longer see them as holy and they ask you to do something or tell you to do something, should you listen to them? That's a choice, you see? And it goes back to the motivation issue. If your motivation is: I want to help him, I want to help the beings that they're asking me to help, then there's nothing wrong with that, that's great, why not do it? But if you look at it and say, that's not going to help me, or that's not beneficial to me and I don't want to do it, that's no problem. That's fine to respectfully decline. It's ok to respectfully decline any time. Just be aware that you may perhaps be missing an opportunity to collect some good virtue for yourself.

But do you see the person as self-existently holy or bad from their own side? That's the key, you see? That's what we started with. Whatever anyone says to you — whether it's your boss, your partner, your spiritual teacher — if you see them as self-existently holy or self-existently unholy, you're wrong. So either way; it goes both ways. Okay, back to the letter.

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“At the age of twenty I traveled to India, land of the Aryas, realized beings and first met the sages of Tibet. And then at the age of twenty-two, despite the fact that I myself have no good qualities at all, a seed inside of me suddenly awakened, a seed which was planted by the many efforts of the me of my past lives and by the infinite blessings of my lama, and so I saw ultimate reality directly. I achieved Bodhichitta, the wish for enlightenment, I entered the gate to the first level of the Bodhisattvas. In the hours after this experience I saw that the Four Arya Truths were, themselves, surely true and I perceived that the teachings of Lord Buddha in general and in particular those of Je Tsongkapa, were perfectly, absolutely correct. So then I became ordained and as a means to keep these teachings from ever being lost in our world and to spread them further still entered the diamond trade. But I did so because it would be a way to never forget what I had seen upon the path of seeing. Of all the objects in this reality there’s only one highest metaphor for the ultimate reality and that is the diamond. I labored thus for fifteen years, with the income I tried to preserve the physical dharma by printing books and storing it on computers, our sacred texts of the Kangyur and Tengyur, the writings of Tibetan masters. I also did as much as I could to help support Tibetan monks of the great monasteries relocated in India. During this time I continued my studies, in the end I was able to achieve a Geshe degree of minor rank. Then I tried to bring that task of the nectar of deathlessness, the five great books, to people in our foreign lands. I completed as well as I could many retreats in the tradition of the Diamond Queen and now for three years, in isolation, in a dessert, here in America, in a small Mongolian yurt, I have stayed together in a great retreat, in the proper way with a lady who is an emanation of the Angel of Diamond, a messenger, and I have undertaken the hardships needed to try to complete the two stages of the secret teachings. So too now a days to help to trigger the final transformation into the Diamond Queen herself I wear my hair as the angel herself does and her bracelet and other accouterments together with my robes. I know very well that what I described in these words is very difficult to believe and yet, I call upon the power of the truth of emptiness and the fact that things still work are in no way contradictory, upon the truth that the teachings of Lord Buddha are true, upon the truth that the angel, herself, is true, upon the truth oh, my lama, of your kindness. Highest lama, may your heart not be troubled. Highest lama, may this rather cause you to rejoice. Highest lama, may you never abandon this yogi monk, may you sustain me deep within your heart till the very day that I attain the union of the two. Written twenty-eight years later on my fiftieth birthday by the American Monk, Michael Roach.”

So, this is the letter. Now I’d like to try to talk a little more about a context for interpreting it, and evaluating it, and understanding it, because I think that’s important. I think it’s very important that everyone here think about it and analyze it and evaluate it and check it out from your own perspective and from your own side, and from where they are, to determine where they stand with it. I think there are two main points that are being made here, and they’re related to each other. One is Geshe Michael speaking of his attainments directly. He’s seen emptiness, he’s met tantric deities, and describing all of those things to the lineage lamas. And then the other is him clearly stating that he’s doing three year retreat with a lady who’s a messenger, and that messenger is a code word for a spiritual partner. And in the higher teachings, there’s a particular minimum qualification for a spiritual partner, which is that you have to have attained at least basic realizations of what’s called Generation Stage tantra.

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Personally, I think the reason Geshe Michael is talking about his spiritual realizations and attainments openly is to certify that he has reached a level where it's appropriate for him to be working with a spiritual partner. So, the two points in the letter are really related. Saying these are the levels of realizations I've reached, this is an appropriate practice for me, and I'm doing this practice. And because I'm doing this practice I have to tell you about my realizations to let you know that the practice is acceptable, and that there's not anything funny going on.

Some people have interpreted this letter as an amazing, beautiful thing. Some people have interpreted the letter as very horrible and terrible. And some people have interpreted it as mixed. Why is that? Because everyone has a unique perception based upon the karma they collected in the past. It's not coming from Geshe Michael, or anyone else. It's coming from the karma they've collected in the past. The hard interpretation and the soft interpretation. Okay? If we had collected better karma, right now we would be seeing Geshe Michael and Christie as Chakasamvara and, and Vajrayogini. But we've collected mixed karmas, and so now some people see them as a spiritual couple doing advanced spiritual practices, some people see them as something less than that. We need to talk about that more.

I thought to talk about what a person's spiritual career is, and the evolution through one's spiritual path and career, to try and help give a context to fit this in. Basically you start your spiritual career where ever you are, right? And the idea is that you progress towards enlightenment. There are a lot of steps along the way. There are a lot of practices you do along the way, and you really need to do them in the proper order, at the proper time, when you are ready. Basically, the beginning of a Buddhist career starts with Refuge. You understand that there are tremendous sufferings in the normal worlds of humans and other beings, and you get some strong feeling that there are holy beings that can teach you how to overcome that, how to surpass that, and how to get out of that. How to reach something better for yourself. You practice the three trainings, which are ethics, concentration and wisdom. The first, ethics, is about becoming pure in your body, speech, and mind. We'll talk about this one more later. After you've practiced ethics, or as you're practicing ethics, you then have to begin to develop meditative focus. You have to gain meditative realizations. And along with that you have to study wisdom extensively — ultimate reality. You have to perfect your wisdom by experiencing ultimate reality directly. It's not enough to stop there. You have to continue on to the higher teachings of Buddhism, the secret teachings of Buddhism, which enable you to reach enlightenment very quickly, in this lifetime. It's not possible to reach enlightenment in one lifetime without undertaking the higher teachings. As I said, you have to engage in the practices of the path in the proper order, moving on to the next after you master the previous level. It's also important to note that there is some overlap between the levels and stages of the path, where one is working on more than one thing at the same time. So, the first level of practice is ethics, and you basically start with the ten non-virtues, right? Which are?

[Audience: inaudible]

Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh words, idle talk, we said divisive talk, we said idle talk, coveting others things, ill will, wrong view. Thank you.

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So you work to master these ten as the first level of practice, the first steps of your basic Buddhist career. After you have mastered those and you embody those, or somewhere along the way in that practice, then ethically you start to practice the Bodhisattva vows. I'm not going to ask you what they are. (Laughs) It would take too long. There are eighteen root vows, forty-six secondary vows, and there are ancillary Bodhisattva vows as well. You have to practice your Bodhisattva vows for years. And you have to learn to manifest and embody your Bodhisattva vows over a period of years. It takes years. How do you master them?

[Audience: silent]

Come on... How do you do it every day...? Keep your book! The six times a day book. If you don't know what that is, I hope there are copies in the back, you can get one for free. You have to stop six times a day and check specific vows to see if you're keeping them. If you're not doing your book six times a day, stopping and saying, "Did I violate any Bodhisattva vows in the last four hours?", you're not keeping them. You're not mastering them, you're not embodying them. Okay? So, you have to master your Bodhisattva vows by keeping your book. Then at some point in that Bodhisattva career you move on. You take the higher secret vows, tantric vows. There are fourteen root tantric vows, ten gross transgressions, three categories of secondary pledges, eight unique vows, nineteen other pledges. They're very refined, they're very subtle, they're very difficult to keep. You have to practice them, you have to master them, you have to embody them. If you're ordained, you have how many ordination vows? Hundreds. All of these things constitute keeping ethics. In a simpler way, you can say that these are guidelines and rules to help others and to avoid harming others and yourself. If you're highly practiced in ethics, you are very refined in helping others and not harming them in your behavior on many, many levels. And yourself. And it's important to note that, because you have hundreds of these vows, there's a progression of lower vows, middle vows and higher vows, and higher vows take precedence and supercede lower vows. And when there's a conflict between higher vows and lower vows, which there often is, you follow the higher vows instead of the lower vows.

For example, I think as an ordained person you're not supposed to handle money. Well, if you're going to help someone, often you have to pay for things for them. So do you not handle the money, and not help someone? Or do you handle the money? You handle the money. There's a lot of that that goes on in terms of keeping vows and following vows. It takes many years to master ethics, obviously, as you can imagine if you've tried. And along the way, you've got to also be working on your concentration and your meditation.

You have to learn about the different types of meditation. Then you need to begin to meditate daily. You gradually build your capacity up to, hopefully, an hour or two of meditation each day. After you've learned about and gotten reasonably good at meditation, you need to start to do retreats. Perhaps shorter retreats, then a week or two, then you move on to month long retreats, deeper retreats, and then long-term retreat. And in the beginning you meditate on sutra topics, things like *Lam Rim*, *Tong Len*, death, *Mahamudra*. And then after you've gotten good at those, and you've gained some realization of those, you move on to higher meditations, to secret meditations and tantric meditations. When you enter your tantric career, which requires permission from a

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tantric master, then you have to go through the different tantric levels and paths, in conjunction with becoming a master of all the sutra teachings, stages, paths and realizations. And again, one is working on different practices and levels of the path simultaneously.

To move through the tantric stages and paths requires years of study and effort. You have the eleven practices, or yogas, of the generation stage to go through — what's called generation stage tantra. These yogas/meditations requires a lot of practice over a period of a number of years to master and gain the realizations associated with them. After you've succeeded in completing and gaining the realizations of the eleven yogas of the generation stage of tantra — that's the coarse generation stage — then you move on to what's called subtle generation stage, which requires very precise concentration over many hours to be able to obtain the goals and realizations associated with that practice. After you've mastered that, then you are granted permission to receive teachings in what's called completion stage tantra. And very few people reach this level, as you might imagine. It requires many years, much study, much dedication, much meditative capacity, and someone who's a qualified teacher that has learned and mastered these practices themselves to be able to grant you the permission to get the teachings and then subsequently give you all the teachings. If you reach that level, which I think very few people do, then your tantric master will teach you these things. They're not taught in large groups; they're only taught to one or two people at a time. If you gain this level and collect the karma to have a qualified teacher, then there are five paths and eleven levels that you have to go through in completion stage, or so I've heard. Again, progressing one after the other through the various levels and paths, gaining the various realizations. They're very subtle, difficult meditations which involve meditating inside your energetic channels. They require you to be able to abide in precise single pointed concentration for hours at a time, without your mind wavering and with your coarse minds inactive for extended periods of time.

So that's basically the progression through one's spiritual path and practice, through all the different levels. After a person has gone through all the foundational practices of sutra, the various levels of the coarse and subtle generation stages of tantra, and has achieved those results and realizations and manifest and embodied them in their life, then they are qualified to enter into completion stage practices and to move through all those levels and paths. There are, I think (though I could be wrong), eleven levels of completion stage, which take years to practice and master. When you finish the eleven levels of completion stage you are a fully enlightened Buddha. Enlightenment in this life is the culmination of the final completion stage of tantra.

When your practice approaches near to the end of completion stage, one of the practices that you can do to help get enlightened more quickly is a practice with a spiritual partner, which is what Geshe Michael has presented here and is talking about here. And it seems to me he's basically saying, I've gone through all these levels and paths, I've gained the realizations, and now I'm doing this, which is one of the final practices that you can do to help you accelerate becoming enlightened, which is to practice with a spiritual partner to work with your channels and your energetic system. Hopefully it's clear at this point that you have to be very advanced to do this practice. And it's very inappropriate to do if you aren't very advanced. I think very few people ever make it this far, and it's very improper to do this practice otherwise.

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I'd like to read a paragraph from Khen Rinpoche's *Sublime Path to Paradise* which is a teaching and commentary on the eleven yogas of the coarse generation stage of tantra. I think it's okay to read out loud, because it doesn't really tell you anything you're not supposed to hear. Which, everything I've just told you falls in that category. I've just told you what I'm not normally supposed to talk openly about, but as I'm following Geshe Michael's lead I think it's okay.

So, in one small section of the commentary, Khen Rinpoche is talking about a verse and he's talking about Drilbupa. He says "Acharya Ghantapada, who's also called Drilbupa, was a great master of the Chakrasamvara tantra, and originated one of the three major lineages of that practice. He was instructed by his root guru Darikapa to meditate in the forest in Bengal. Later he went to Odiyana where he was blessed by a dakini and told to go to south India. Vajra Ghantapada, Lord of Spiritual Practice, had reached a high level of the completion stage and was ready to practice with a tantric partner. He found her through the skillful means of angering the king of that region. After meditating together for twelve years he achieved the state of ultimate union, which is tantric enlightenment. Later he appeared before the king and the townspeople to tame them spiritually. First he and his partner transformed themselves into Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini. Then they flew up into the sky and went to paradise."

The relevant point here is that when you reach the end of your tantric completion stage practice you have great capacity and you're very close to enlightenment. And that these practices take a long time. The thing that I want to highlight here is that they practiced together for twelve years, and then they became fully enlightened. And then they manifest as tantric beings and flew off into the sky to paradise. So these practices are not short term practices, these are long term practices, all of them. And any of us who have tried to meditate on anything probably have some experience of that.

One other thing that I think is very important to understand here is that in writing his letters to the major teachers of Sera Mey Monastery the responses that Geshe Michael received were basically from all of the leaders of the monastery: the abbots, the vice abbots, ex-abbots, the Vinaya master, the debate master, the discipline master, the abbot of the tantric college and basically they all seem very supportive and happy. I think it's very appropriate to see it as a very joyous and holy thing. Obviously everyone is going to interpret it according to the workings of their mind, and there are many possible interpretations. But I think it's very appropriate and very important to try to see, if you're not already seeing it, from the perspective of being a very profound thing and a very joyous thing and a very holy thing. Try to analyze it, and evaluate it, and see if you can see it in that light. As Lama Yeshe said in his book on completion stage which is called *Bliss Of Inner Fire*, I haven't read it but I was told the other day that Lama Yeshe also states in there, that the only way to reach enlightenment in this life is with a spiritual partner and to do the practices that Geshe Michael is doing. I'm told that it's also stated very clearly in all of the higher scriptures that the only way to become enlightened in this life, before you die, is to practice with a spiritual partner. I think it's very appropriate to try to describe it as very positive thing, and as a very joyous thing, and a very holy thing.

We have collected the karma to see a ... I have anyway, I don't know what you see, but I've collected the karma to see a spiritual practitioner who's progressed over thirty years through all of the stages of sutra and mastered them, someone who's

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progressed through all of the stages of coarse and subtle generation stage tantra and mastered them, and has now progressed, it seems, through the various levels of completion stage and is near the end of completion stage practice. That seems to be the karma that I've collected to see this now, and it's a very positive thing and a very fortunate thing that now we have a spiritual teacher who's saying, look there's only one way to get enlightened in this life and it's almost never taught and it's virtually never openly endorsed and I'm gonna do it. I'm going to openly endorse it, I'm going to openly teach it, and if you want to study it, prepare yourself and I'll teach it to you. So it's incredibly fortunate that the only practice that can lead you to full enlightenment in this life is now sort of available and being talked about and being presented openly. So I think it's really quite an incredible thing.

One other thing I want to say about this is that very often practitioners think that they're ready to practice this. Like you know, I've practiced for a few years now, I'm an advanced meditator, I'm ready to do practice with a spiritual partner. They're usually fooling themselves. If you haven't spent many, many years in deep meditation and serious practice, you're not ready. You don't have any capacity — unless you've done it in past lives and boom, it's all ripened. But it would ripen as behavior, realizations, meditative capacity, etc, I think. It's traditional that teachers have often tended to say don't even try to do these kinds of practices while you're a human being. If you're a human being and you're trying to do these practices you're probably not ready. Wait until you're in another realm. Do these practices in another realm as another kind of being. It's that delicate, you see, it's that difficult. Most human beings never get to the level where they're qualified to legitimately do this kind of practice, it seems.

One other thing I want to talk about is what Geshe Michael was speaking to last night, which is testing a lama. Geshe Michael was talking last night about Naropa, and jumping off the roof, and things like that. I was saying to someone as we were driving home, I couldn't help but think after the teaching that if the student had said to Naropa, "You know, dear, holy Naropa, I love you so much and you know you're my holy, great lama and you know I can't damage my precious human body and therefore I don't think you really want me to jump." Naropa would just have said, "Yeah, okay, that's cool. *[Laughs]* Never mind, let's go back down stairs, you passed." *[Laughs]* I don't know of course, but one wonders. There are two things going on. You have to test the lama, and the lama is testing you, and they're related. I mean, it's not a one way street. You're checking them out, they're checking you out. Again, both of which are very appropriate.

Just to relate to Geshe Michael, who is the Lama that I've studied with the most over the last ten years, I've seen Geshe Michael doing stuff that I've thought was inappropriate. It's like, excuse me, but why do you keep blowing people off and not showing up for appointments on time? Why don't you return your phone calls? Why do you over commit and tell people you will do things that you have no time to do? Why do you book three people for the same time slot when you know you're not going to be able to do them all? It's appropriate to address these things with the lama in the proper way. And what's the proper way? Not, "I know and you don't." Not, "I'm right and you're wrong." Not, "I know better than you." But, "this is conventionally what is appropriate behavior, this is conventionally what's bodhisattva behavior, this is conventionally what the vows say. And I don't understand, what are you doing?" If you're not approaching a lama in that way, then maybe you're failing some tests.

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Because as Geshe Michael said, sometimes the tests are not that obvious. Sometimes it's just about drinking the coke. You see?

We think that the test is going to be jumping off the roof every time. It isn't. The test can be that Geshe Michael is walking down the road and he's done something off, and you see it. Did you say, "Excuse me, can we talk?" And if you're not doing that, chances are you may be failing a very important test. You should be checking out the lama. If you don't have the courage, or the strength, or the wherewithal, or the presence, or the self-confidence to say to a lama, "I really don't understand why you did that and can you please explain it to me because it's important to me, and you know I respect you and honor you I really want to understand what you're doing and would you please explain it to me. I'd really appreciate that." You've got to have the strength to do that. You've got to have the wherewithal all to do that. You can't just go around saying, "You're holy, and I'm a piece of shit. You know everything, and I don't know anything." That's stupid. That's spiritual ignorance. Don't be like that, okay? Please. It's a very big mistake to think, to just assume, that the teacher's correct and that everything they say is literally true. Big, big mistake. You have to look for different ways of interpreting what they say and you have to be willing to question them.

I was having a conversation with Geshe Michael when we were doing our director's meetings the other day, and after one of the director's meetings, he said something to me along the lines of what a shame it was that so few people relate to the spiritual teacher properly. Not because they don't bow, and grovel, and give good presents. That's not correct view, you see? But because so many people have expectations of self-existent holiness. So please try to relate properly. Please try to relate in a way that understands ultimate reality. Which, if you're on the sutra level, says you're an empty object, I'm an empty object. I'm perceiving you as holy, or I'm perceiving you as something funny. Let's talk about it because that's normal, and I want to have a good relationship with you and collect virtue together. Or if you're on the tantric level, if you're on the level of secret teachings to say, "Look, I understand that you're an empty object and you're a holy being and I'm trying to perceive it, and I'm a holy being and I'm trying to perceive it, and everyone else is a holy being and I'm trying to perceive it. Or I am perceiving it, and let's have a good debate as holy beings." So you see, if you're approaching a spiritual teacher and you're just rolling over and saying, "Ooooh, aahhhh, you're so self-existent wonderful and wise... kiss, kiss, kiss" It's not gratifying to the teacher. And it doesn't help you. It really doesn't. It doesn't help either party. It really doesn't. Okay, so please don't do that. Relate to them properly, and serve them properly, by putting their teachings into practice in your life.

Our job is to understand higher reality and to relate properly to everyone, and that includes the lama. The teacher is the exact same status as everyone else. The teacher is the exact same status as you and I. They're blank, they're empty. We're seeing them according to our karma, and be very happy that we're projecting purity on to something and someone. Doesn't matter who, or where, or what. You project purity on an inanimate object. Be happy about it. It's beautiful, it's wonderful. You projected purity onto a holy teacher, be happy about it. But you're stupid if you think it comes from them. You're spiritually ignorant if you think it comes from them. Sorry, I shouldn't have said stupid. My apology. *[Laughs]* Locker room coming out, you see? Well, okay, having said all this... *[Laughs]* It's very hard to do these things. It's much easier

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to sit up here and talk about this than to do it. As I say this, am I seeing any of you as holy? No! It's great that we understand it, it's great that we can talk about it. Doing it is vastly harder. And that's what practice is. That's what the path is.

Okay, now having said all this, I have something for you from Geshe Michael. Having said all this, here's a test. Geshe Michael wrote this letter, and he asked me to read it to you. So turn on your critical mind, not your judgmental mind, your discriminating mind, your wisdom mind...

[Audience: inaudible]

It was written not long ago, last week... a couple of days ago? Somewhat recently. I don't know exactly. I got it a few days ago. Okay, so this is from Geshe Michael, it's an open letter for anyone who already has had a good dose of teachings in the past, and you all now qualify.

“Now suppose you hear some strange talk about an old Buddhist monk who has been staying for awhile around some wonderful ladies and you're curious about what's been going on. And suppose you hear that that what the old monk says has been happening is that for all these years, holy angels have been coming to him and showing him the path to reach a true heaven in this one body, even before he dies.”

I'm going to help you out a little bit, I can't resist. So here in our first paragraph are there any self-existent holy ladies? Appearing as angels? No. Is it possible that he's perceiving humans as angels? Yes. Are they one way or another? Are they human or angels, one or the other only? No. They could be either, depending upon who's perceiving them according to their karma. They're a blank screen. Okay? I'm not helping anymore. Okay.

“Suppose that you, yourself, have been thinking about the fact that everyone close to you, and everyone you have ever met have nothing to look forward to in life except growing older, losing everything we have and dying with nothing. Suppose you feel pity deep within you that things must go on this way. So suppose you thought that, although this old monk is certainly a bit odd, he is unquestionably determined and well trained in his Buddhist practice and so what he says about his experiences just might be true. Certainly if there was even a small chance that it was true then it would be worth checking out for yourself, although you might feel a little unsure or silly about it. I mean so much to gain for yourself and all those I love, so little to lose if it's not true. And so you decide you'd like to try to meet one of these angels yourself. For this you are going to need these little instructions.

Instructions on Angel Catching:

Step one: Go up to one of these so called angels that the old monk has been talking about. Circle around them three times to the left with pure thoughts of faith and reverence, then kneel down on one knee in front of them.

Step two: Fold your hands at your breast, close your eyes and say the following: I beg you from my heart to bless me and teach me how to see all of those around me, my husband or wife, my companion, my friends and even my children as a true angel who can teach me all I need to know to take myself and all I love to a true heaven even before

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we die. If you're not feeling too nervous or shy it's helpful to repeat this three times, although just once is fine if you really mean it.

Step three: Now there's something you need to know about this angel business, they never admit to it right off. They never admit who they really are. So it's very likely that you'll just get a blank look and they'll say something like, "I have no idea what you're talking about. I'm no angel, I'm just an ordinary person."

Step four: Be persistent. Maybe grab her feet, press your forehead down on them and repeat your request with unshakable, or nearly unshakable, faith.

Step five: You need to know in advance at this point, they usually look at you very exasperated, and they repeat that they're just an ordinary person. Very often they'll even say terrible things to you, or about you, to see if you'll get discouraged. Even if you do get discouraged, try to act like you're not.

Step six: If they can get away from you they might even go away from you someplace else, and refuse to talk to you. Hang in there. Go find them and insist on the teaching.

Step seven: In special cases you might get hit on the head at this point, just like in the old stories of people like Naropa, or even in *The Garden* book. It hurts a bit but don't despair, you're getting really close.

Step eight: Now it's time to pull out the heavy guns. Refold your palms again and present this irritated looking lady with an unavoidable act of truth as follows: Oh, enlightened lady, if it is true that I have sincerely if not perfectly kept up my book of vows for (state a time), like the last three years. If it is true that I have sincerely, if not perfectly kept up my daily prayers and meditations for (state a time). If it is true that I have sincerely, if not perfectly tried to live and care for others as I do myself, then by this truth will you teach me what I ask of you?

Step nine: Now, of course, an act of truth like this can never fail and so things should really start to happen in a steady but often bumpy way. Of course, if you don't really have at least a few serious good deeds like the above to bargain with, you're going to need to get back to work on your own practice until you've got something ready to bargain with. At this point you can't really blame the angel or the old monk if you see something less than infinite loving compassion for every living creature.

Please know that even though these instructions are written in a funny way, they are dead serious and come directly from holy scripture. This virtue is dedicated to every person who has any doubts about the magic of our life together.

With love,

The American Buddhist monk

Lobsang Chunzin

Geshe Michael

Easter 2003"

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So, same message right? There are many ways to collect virtue, and this is one very good way to collect virtue. If you see someone that you even suspect is holy, you go up to them and you treat them as perfectly holy. You're collecting incredibly powerful karma. Of course you have to have a certain quantity of virtue to start to see them as holy. Right? And the virtue that you collect by approaching them and treating them as an angel is massively powerful and your intention is incredibly important, and can ripen very quickly, like right away. And this is the key to the secret teachings. The key to the secret teachings is the very strong intention to see complete total purity in everyone. And if you do that, the karma is massively powerful and ripens almost instantly. And people start to turn into angels for you. Someone you may suspect of being holy may start to actually appear that way validly to your eyes, and to your senses, and to your perception. Welcome to the secret teachings. He's actually describing a secret teaching which is fairly advanced in the generation stage practice. So think about it.

[Audience: inaudible]

Are there copies available? Yes there are. Where are they? She has copies for anyone that wants them.

[Audience: inaudible]

Let's finish going through the teachings, and then we'll do questions at the end about other things. This is actually one reason why we're having the extra open session tonight because people are going to have a lot of specific questions about details, and it's going to take time. So we'll see how the time goes here, and then we may need to answer questions later tonight based on how time goes. I'd like to answer general questions first to try to get all of the generalities out of the way, and in terms of getting into specifics and more minutia then we can talk about that as time permits today or tonight.

So where were we? We're talking about evaluating your teachers. *[Laughs]* You've got to do it, and not just once. Is it the case that you're going to evaluate your teacher once, and then it's the end of the story? No. You've got to evaluate your teacher, and they're going to be evaluating you, on an ongoing basis. As needed, whenever needed. And that's how it is; that's how it works. But as you're evaluating them, do not judge them. It is very bad to judge anyone, especially someone you previously perceived, or sometimes perceived, as holy. Very heavy karma. What does Shakymuni Buddha say about judging? He said unless you're someone like me, do not judge anyone or you will surely fall...to lower realms. Someone like me, meaning, someone who can read another person's mind and knows what their actual motivation is. We have no idea what anyone's motivation is, or why they're doing what they're doing, if we can't read their mind. Someone who may appear to be doing something really nasty may be caring for their future well being by doing some short term harm for long term benefit. No way to know if you can't read their mind.

I think at this point it would be really good to go through our check list. We've got a check list. Do we have a check list? So let's go through the check list. I know that everyone has a different degree of exposure to Geshe Michael. Everyone has a different level of experience of Geshe Michael; some people have spent a lot of time with him, some people have not met him at all, and have only seen him here at these teachings.

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So the first question would be, if you think about his past and what you know of it, is Geshe Michael spending the majority of his time and energy on things of this life or things to benefit others for future lives and to benefit himself for future lives and enlightenment? You should think about that, and decide which way it is. Yes or no. You should check and see whether Geshe Michael is a master of sutra, especially on manifesting the various levels of the vows in his own behavior. Does he manifest bodhisattva activity in his behavior? Is he a master of the vows, in knowledge and deed? And also all the sutra levels and the levels of the Lam Rim, and I'm not going to go through them all now. You should try to investigate and check if Geshe Michael has received appropriate instruction in generation stage secret teaching practices, and has he practiced for a long time, and has he done retreats. Has he done an appropriate number of retreats in those practices? Has he received permission to enter into completion stage practices by a qualified tantric master? Has he mastered all the levels of completion stage practice, including the Six Yogas of Naropa which are part of completion stage practice? Is there some way to check to see if he appears to be close to enlightenment? And check as well the ten qualities of a teacher that we talked about. You have to check all those things. You have to check your experience of him and his behavior against all these things. And check it out and decide that yes, it seems that all of that's in place or no, it doesn't seem like all of that's in place. If all that's not in place, maybe he shouldn't be doing this spiritual partner practice? Maybe he's not ready for that practice? Maybe that practice isn't appropriate? And if he does have all those things, then you have to say well, maybe it is appropriate that he's doing that. And of course, he made it very easy on us getting the endorsement of the leaders of Sera Mey Monastery. So that's a nice endorsement even if we don't know anything about him personally.

[Audience: inaudible]

The question was, "How about Khen Rinpoche?" There wasn't a letter from Khen Rinpoche. Khen Rinpoche is a very traditional lama. I've done some *lerungs* and I've been inclined to go up to Khen Rinpoche and say, "Rinpoche, can you tell me about this next thing that's a little down the road that I haven't gotten to yet?" Or, "Can you tell me about something I'm not quite ready to hear?" Forget it. He'll blow you right out of the water. He's just "That's not appropriate."

[Audience: inaudible]

You can say that. The fact that Khen Rinpoche did not send a letter doesn't mean he doesn't approve; it just means he didn't send a letter. And I think it's important to understand that Geshe Michael and Christy will be going to Khen Rinpoche's initiation in August, and they're going to be there, and they're going to be spending time there, and they would all be spending a lot of time together. So this is a piece of information to factor in, along with some knowledge of Khen Rinpoche, and what ever other information you can get your hands on. You have to look at it and you have to think about it. Does the fact that Khen Rinpoche didn't send a letter mean that he doesn't approve? Maybe, but not necessarily. It may just mean that he is highly secret and won't talk about anything secret unless the person is in front of him and he knows they are qualified. That's my experience of Khen Rinpoche personally; you're not going to get one piece of information unless you're fully qualified. Khen Rinpoche does not send out mail about classes even, it's only word of mouth. No e-mail. Khen Rinpoche works

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through word of mouth, in person. So you have to factor all of that in. Where was I?

We were talking about the appropriateness of Geshe Michael's qualifications, and if he might be on a level where it's appropriate for him to do this practice, according to your perception. You have to look at it and decide yourself. After you've looked at it, you've got to decide if you're okay with it. Even if you look at this long list and you say, he's got that, got that, got that, got that, got that. You're going to have to decide if it works for you. Are you comfortable with that? Are you okay with that? Is it appropriate for you, for your life, for who you are. We're never really going to completely know if Geshe Michael is qualified unless we can read his mind or otherwise collect the karma to see it directly. We have some indications, we have some signs, we have some history, we have some things we can look at and put together and come to a conclusion, but short of reading his mind we're never going to know if he's fully qualified. We have to decide as best we can. And ultimately, we are experiencing what we are projecting. Is Geshe Michael correct in doing this? Or is Geshe Michael incorrect in doing this? Is it right, or is it wrong? Which is it? There's no right answer. Thank you Isadora, it's empty. There is no right answer. If you're looking for one right answer, you're not going to find it, because there isn't one. There is no one right answer. There is no self-existently right Geshe Michael, or self-existently wrong Geshe Michael. Let's take a break at this point.

[break]

So which is it? I think you're asking for suffering, as they say. If you're setting yourself up to see things as self-existent, to think things are coming from Geshe Michael, it's a source of suffering to see anything as self-existent; to not see things as a manifestation of your karma. You've got to be clear about what Geshe Michael is and isn't. He's holy, or he's not? He's not either, from his own side.

Then we've got to ask, what does this mean for figuring things out. We don't mean that understanding emptiness and applying karma implies that you shouldn't decide. You have to decide. To say that something is a manifestation of karma and emptiness is not, I repeat not, the same as saying it's impossible to figure out – that there's no decision possible, or you can't decide anything. That there's no definitive answer; you know, I can't ever decide anything. This is not what it means. Okay? You experience the manifestation of your karma, and based on that you decide something, and you do something. With this knowledge you say, okay, I collected the karma to see a person who I am suspect of. Maybe it's okay, maybe it's not, seems a little weird, seems like pushing the envelope, seems maybe a little past the edge of the envelope, seems way past the edge of the envelope. That's for you to decide. It's for you to evaluate, and for you to decide with the understanding that it's a manifestation of your karma and your perception, and don't beat yourself up whatever you decide. It is your valid reality. And if you like it, or if you don't like it, that's fine. No worries.

You've created everything in your world, including your teachers — whether it's Geshe Michael or Khen Rinpoche or Lama Zopa or whomever. Some people go to Khen Rinpoche's teachings, it's like, god, I can't understand. They're falling asleep, they can't understand. It's like “why doesn't he cut to the chase? Why is he using all these Tibetan words mixed in that I don't understand? It's like every fourth word is Tibetan. I don't want to know Tibetan.” I mean, is it his fault? People try to make it his fault sometimes. But it's not; it's their issue. If I had collected better karma, I would see a glowing

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Vajrayogini in a rainbow of light sitting in front of me speaking perfect sounds, at the perfect decibel level, at the perfect tone, with fragrant air and everything else. And so it's my responsibility. My teachers are my responsibility. If your teacher is slightly different than what you would like, or what you want, fix it. You should fix it. They can't fix it. They can't fix anything for us. They can't change their behavior to be the way we want them to be, can they? You're creating them; you're causing their behavior. So if you want your lama to speak English, or not use Tibetan, or have shorter teaching sessions, or have more comfortable cushions, create the causes. Manifest it karmically. You can have whatever holy teacher you want, with whatever qualities you want, as soon as you collect that karma. And that's the only way you're ever going to have it, and that's the only place it's ever going to come from.

Don't hold onto your teacher too tightly, because it shows ignorance. If you are holding on to a spiritual teacher tightly it shows that you see them as self-existent, and that you're manifesting ignorance along with him. As Geshe Michael has said, seeing things as self-existent is a subtle negative karma. As long as you are seeing anything, including a spiritual teacher, as self-existent you are collecting negative karma. Period. So you can say, "wow, I'm doing all this wonderful stuff, I'm in front of Khen Rinpoche, and I'm prostrating nicely and I'm paying attention and da, da, da, da da. And there he is, thirty years in the monastery in New Jersey teaching, and he's 82 years old, and powerful, and da, da, da. And wow isn't he great? He's the best." And it's all self-existence, pervaded with ignorance, and collecting subtle negative karma all along the way.

That's why we're stuck in this realm, not because we punch people in the face too often, but because we see everything as self-existent continuously on all levels, all the time, as normal human beings. And the only way to get out of this realm and the suffering of this realm, really, is to see everything as holy, like, perhaps angels. And it's a higher teaching, and it's a higher training, and it's very difficult, but also very essential.

[Audience: inaudible]

As long as we see something as self-existent, self-existently annoying, self-existently wacky, self-existently anything, we're collecting subtle negative karma. So this is very important to understand. One of my personal pet peeves is the spiritual teacher syndrome. People get in the mode of thinking of a spiritual teacher as a public figure, like they're a rock star or something. And people feel like they should monitor the teacher's behavior, and they should like everything the teacher does — it should meet my approval, and I should know where they go, and I should know who they're with, and I should approve of it all, and they should only do the things I think they should be doing. It's the National Enquirer syndrome. Here's Johnny Carson on his back deck getting out of the swimming pool. It's very unhealthy. We should respect the privacy of the teacher, and their wishes, and their space in an appropriate way. Disrespecting the privacy and the space of the teacher because of what we need or want from them is no virtue — quite the opposite, it seems to me.

We're very fortunate to have holy teachers, and I think it's very important not to try to make them into what we want them to be in a Robo-claws way, in some self-existent way. They'll be whatever we've collected the karma for them to be, and if you're self-existently holding on to them tightly, as someone you're afraid to lose in

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your life, it's ignorance. If you're not seeing them as a manifestation of your karma, it's ignorance. And you are collecting negative karma by being around what you see as a self-existent teacher. Sorry to say it. So stop doing it, please.

Okay, there are no self-existent teachers, there are no self-existent great lamas, there are no self-existent holy people. There's the manifestation of your karma onto an empty object and it's beautiful to see it as holy, and you should want to see it as holy. And if you can see it as a manifestation of karma and emptiness then you're on an upward spiral to start seeing angels, as described here.

I think that's all I want to say... What's the time? We have five minutes. I'm going to skip a few other things and I'll just briefly answer your question, and then any other questions we can do later tonight. I want to do a little meditation before we end.

[Audience: inaudible]

In the modern Gelukpa tradition as I understand it, as you reach levels very close to enlightenment, there are a couple of different choices you can make, a couple of different practices that you can choose. One choice is to not get enlightened in this life and to get enlightened at death, during the death process, or in the intermediate state. That approach has been described as having some real disadvantages. So that's one choice, and that's the Gelukpa preferred choice. Another Gelukpa preferred choice is to manifest your spiritual partner through the power of your meditation. Gelukpas tend to say it's fine to be a spiritual couple, it's fine to have a spiritual partner, but you've got to create them through the power of your meditation. And as I alluded to before, there are several different classes and levels of spiritual partners, and the minimum qualification to be a spiritual partner is to have achieved realizations of what's called generation stage practice, the eleven yogas of the generation stage practices. To meet the minimum qualification to be a spiritual partner, you have to have gained realizations of at least the eleven yogas of the generation stage. I don't know much about these final practices, but this is what I understand.

[Audience: inaudible]

That applies to both people involved. As I said before, one of the people would need to be close to enlightenment in their completion stage practices.

Let's meditate. I have to stop soon, so let's meditate. It's going to be a quick meditation, but not too quick. And for any other questions you have, come tonight after the teachings and I'll be available, along with a number of other senior teachers, to answer as many questions as you have, whatever questions you have, and at whatever level of detail you want, after the teachings tonight. I'd like to do a *Tong Len* meditation. On war. So now for something completely different... Take a minute and stretch out if you want to, maybe stand up, stretch, get comfy.

[Quiet]

Get comfy, close your eyes, count seven breaths... This could get a little heavy. If it gets too heavy for you, just drop back to whatever level you're comfortable with. If I get too heavy, and it's too much suffering for you to take on, just go back to one of the more comfortable levels.

First, bring your awareness to your heart, to the level of your heart just in front of

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your backbone. Try to see a red rose there as clearly as possible with a brilliant shiny crystal diamond in the middle of it. Smell the fragrance of the rose... And now think of yourself, the you of the not too distant past. All the worries and concerns you've had about all the goings on of the war. Clearly see that you of the past, sitting in front of you now... If you can't see them clearly, feel that they're there clearly... And be aware of all of the anxieties, and worries and concerns and problems of the you of the past around this... See all of those negativities concentrating into the old you's heart in the form of a smoky black orb of light, very dark... And now think very strongly that you want to remove all of the sufferings of the past you, all of the sufferings and concerns and anxieties and worries, and resolve strongly that you're going to remove all of those sufferings... And then bring your awareness to your heart again. See the rose with a diamond sparkling brilliantly in it's center... And now through a series of inhalations begin to draw the blackness up along the spine of the old you, and out the nostrils and watch it concentrate as a black ball in front of the old you... And now through a series of inhalations, you draw it to the front of your nostrils... Inhale the blackness into your nostrils and down to just above your heart... It doesn't affect you at all, it comes to rest as a black ball, just above the diamond... And now it touches the diamond, and there's a brilliant flash and it all just disappears... You feel great joy and happiness to have removed all that suffering.

And now think of the people in the war zone. You can think of one person or a collection of people. Think of all the innocent people who have been burned or blown up, or shot. An arm blown off perhaps. Get very clear on what your object is... See their sufferings very clearly... See all of their sufferings concentrate at their heart, into a black orb of light there... And again, as you inhale you draw the suffering up along their spine and out their nostrils, to form another black ball in front of them... All their suffering has left them... You inhale the black ball into your nostrils and down along the front of your spine to your heart. It's very clear that you don't feel any of the suffering... As soon as this black ball of light reaches your heart above the diamond, it touches the diamond, and a brilliant flash appears and all that suffering is destroyed... Strongly feel that you've removed all that suffering and destroyed it, and that they're very happy. That they're made whole.

Now think of the soldiers, American and Iraqi. Pick one, or a group. See all of the heat, the fatigue, the grief, the fear, the trauma of shooting others and being shot. Also think of all the karma they've collected for their future suffering. The lives of future suffering they're creating for themselves. And again see all that suffering concentrate at their heart as a black ball... And again, through a series of inhalations draw the blackness up their spine out their nostrils... It forms a black ball in front of your nostrils... And then in one large inhalation you draw in the black ball through your nostrils down to the diamond in your heart... There's a brilliant flash and it's completely destroyed, completely gone... You and all the others feel complete happiness and joy.

Now think of the leaders — Saddam Hussein, George Bush — who've killed many people. Saddam Hussein, killing more than a million and a half people and torturing them. The vast, vast karma he's collected, the infinite suffering he will experience in the future. George Bush, the karma of sending so many people to kill others, and killing so many others. Having personally collected the karma of all the killing of the entire war. The vast, vast future suffering he's collected the karma to experience. See all of that massive

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negative karma. You can pick either of them, or both. See it at their heart, concentrating into a black ball at their heart... And again through a series of inhalations draw it up along their spine, out their nostrils in the form of a black smoke, which reconstitutes in front of your nostrils as a black ball of great negativity... And again whenever you are ready, inhale quickly, and it goes to your heart and in a flash is destroyed, with you feeling no pain... All of the negativity is destroyed, all the suffering is eliminated. Feel a very firm conviction that you've destroyed negativity... Feel very happy.

Feel very happy to have collected this very powerful virtue to not see war in the future, to not see suffering in the future. Thank you.

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One of the caretakers will lead us in a meditation.

Venerable Chukyi: Sit comfortably. Straighten your back but lower your shoulders and relax and begin by following your breath. It's as though you're your attention is standing in the front of your nostril, like in the mouth of a sea cave and the breath is like the ocean coming in and out. Just quiet your mind for a moment and follow your breath.

[silence]

And now imagine that you're looking in front of you about four or five feet away at the level of your eyebrows and make a beautiful seat there in your mind, maybe a large red rose, fragrant and soft, and the cushion is like a diamond only a soft one, radiating light. And invite the one who you see as a holy one. It doesn't matter who it is. It doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman. What matters is that your heart says, "This being is holy for me," and invite them to come and sit with you, and then watch them come.

[silence]

See them smiling at you with great joy. All they want is for your suffering to end. Open your heart to them. The way karma works is that every single thing in our world is created by our past — our past actions of body, speech, and mind. But it's hard for us to see that. So we choose one being who our karma forces us to see as the holy one, and we ask them to please be our mirror. So ask that in your heart now to whatever being you've chosen, ask them to please be your mirror.

[silence]

And we know that this is not easy because it means that everything this being does, says, or thinks, we accept as a reflection of ourselves. We know that they are displaying our past in this present moment so that we can create our future. And so in order to be able to do this we have to go down into our own hearts. So now concentrate for a moment on the spot between your eyebrows. And then let that concentration flow down, up to the crown of your head, and then down along a slender tube — invisible to all but your mind — that runs along the front of your spine and when your focus arrives at your heart, pause for a moment.

[silence]

In your heart, see a beautiful red rose in this tube behind your heart. Its petals are soft and very fragrant. That rose represents all the love that you could ever have for every being that ever existed, exists, or will exist. And its fragrance permeates your body.

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[silence]

It's the love of a mother for her only child. It's the love that would make one do anything that they can to reach the highest state to help all other beings. It's the love that Petra-hla shared with us. In the center of the rose is a diamond. See it there; clear, pure, sparkling. That rose and that diamond represent your wisdom, your understanding of how the world really works. Think about that understanding now and let its light pour through you.

[silence]

That wisdom is hard like a diamond. That wisdom is pure. That wisdom means that we have to accept every thing that comes to us as our own creation. And that's hard, and that's why you need the rose. So know — as you look at that holy one before you, whomever he or she is — that when it gets too hard to see to see what's reflected there in that mirror, you can remember the love, the fragrance that permeates your body and use your love for others to give you the courage you need.

[silence]

Feel the light from the diamond and the fragrance of the rose, and carry it with you. And ask your lama who is sitting in front of you, your holy one, to rise to the top of your head and please join with the diamond and rose in your heart, and help you when it gets too hard. And see them melt into you. By this act of goodness that we've all done together may every obstacle in the way of any spiritual practitioner, anyone following this path, be immediately dissolved. May all suffering be stopped. May the kindness of the retreaters that are sitting in front of us be magnified. And may all of our holy lama's visions be fulfilled.



Geshe Michael: I'd like to request Lama Ruth to do a chant please.

Ruth Lauer *[chanted in call and response]*:

Om. Om. Om.

Rama rama

Rama rama

Rama rama ram

Rama rama ram

Rama rama ram

Rama rama ram

Buddha Buddha

Buddha Buddha

Buddha Buddha Buddha

Buddha Buddha Buddha

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Buddha Buddha Buddha
Buddha Buddha Buddha

Mama mama
Mama mama
Mama mama ma
Mama mama ma
Mama mama ma
Mama mama ma

Papa papa
Papa papa
Papa papa papa
Papa papa papa
Papa papa papa
Papa papa papa

Krishna Krishna
Krishna Krishna
Krishna Krishna Krishna
Krishna Krishna Krishna
Krishna Krishna Krishna
Krishna Krishna Krishna

God is one.
God is one.
God is one. God is one.
God is one. God is one.
God is one. God is one.
God is one. God is one.

God is love.
God is love.
God is love. God is love.
God is love. God is love.
God is love. God is love.
God is love. God is love.

God is here.
God is here.
God is here, here and now.
God is here, here and now.
God is here, here and now.
God is here, here and now.

Om.

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[laughs] I'd like to thank Lama Ruth and Venerable Chukyi-la. I think we'll jump straight into the Yoga Sutra today. So the next verse please.

Doug and Kimberley Veenhof: The torment of change is caused by these same seeds of suffering. *Parinama tapa sanskara dukkhair guna virtti virodhach cha dukkham eva sarvam vivekinah.* (II.15A)

Thank you. I think the first key word is *parinama*. Okay. [laughs] *Pari* means “all around.” We talked about it before with words like “paradise,” which meant “a wall around a garden.” And *nama* comes from a root *nam*, which means “to bow down” or “to change one’s shape from straight up to bent over.” When we say “*Namo Buddhaya, Namu Dharmaya,*” it means “I bow down.” When you do a yoga exercise called *suryanamaskara*, you are bowing to the sun. The Indo-European word is interesting, it’s *nomn*, “n-o-m-n,” and it means “name” or “to be called,” and in fact the word “name” comes directly from the Sanskrit root *nam* or *namus*.

So what does bowing down have to do with name? In ancient times, bowing down to someone was honoring their name and so the two words became mixed together. When you greet someone in ancient India, the bowing down is an act of recognizing their identity and themselves and their very name. The word *nomn*, “n-o-m-n,” of course comes into our language as the word “name” or “nomenclature.” The Tibetan is *gyurwa* and *gyurwa* means “a complete change” or “a changing transformation.” When you exchange currency in the airport in modern Tibetan they would say “*modecurway*,” so you get a sense of what it means to change. Something switching, something switching in the way that the body changes from straight up to bent over.

Tapa comes from a Sanskrit root *tap*, “t-a-p,” which means “to heat something,” “make something hot.” The Indo-European root is *tep*, “t-e-p,” and we see this in two words. One is “tepid,” which means “water which has been heated,” and the other is from Ireland, of course, holy island, the “beltain” fire, the ancient Celtic holiday ritual to have a huge bonfire. *Bel* was an ancient Celtic god and *tane* comes from the old Irish word *tena*, which means “fire” and came from *tap*, the old Sanskrit root.

Here *tapa* means “suffering,” “the heat of suffering,” “the suffering of change.” It’s very important. This line comes right after, in the second chapter, right after Master Patanjali has explained to us that all of our suffering comes from doing harm to others and all happiness comes from doing good to others. And then he says, “*Parinama.*” He’s starting to talk about the suffering of change.

It’s important to understand how karma and karmic seeds are at the bottom of change in our lives. I think especially certain kinds of change. All of us sitting here, if you are not already enlightened beings, are going through the suffering of the change of our bodies. We are born with a certain amount of energy, seeds to see a healthy body, and then as each hour of life goes by that body begins to disintegrate until finally all of

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the sense powers begin to weaken. We can't hear as well or see as well, we can't walk as well; we begin to have various physical problems.

But I think the ever greater suffering of change for me, and I think for all of us, is the change of relationships. So often throughout the length of a long human life we find someone that we love — someone that we like to be around, or even a teacher, or a fellow student, or a child — and we are at first attracted and we begin to form a relationship with them. And then I think you notice certainly over time, most of those relationships begin to fall apart. People drift away from each other, they might lose interest in each other, they might perceive the other person changing from what they used to be. And I think in many cases the relationship between people can become very bad, the people that you're closest to or love the most become the people that you dislike the most or who annoy you the most. This is very common in human relationships and even international relationships. And in this verse what Lama Patanjali is saying is that you have to understand why these relationships are falling apart. Why do relationships change?

And it's only that your own perceptions are changing. It's not that the other person in the two years you've been married has become suddenly somebody else and it's not really that you didn't recognize how bad they were the day of your wedding. It's that the seeds in your own mind to enjoy and love this person are wearing out. Left to themselves these seeds will always run out. Either you will begin to lose interest or even dislike the person you love, or one of you will die because the seeds have changed that much to see your body as different.

So it's important I think, Master Patanjali is saying, even the change, suffering of change, in our lives is due to the degeneration and using up of seeds that we created by being good to other people.

So we have to be like gardeners, we have to continue to put fresh soil, fresh nutrients into a relationship, we have to continue to be kind and helpful to other people. That's the only way to make a relationship continue happily. And eventually to avoid even the final loss of those we love, if the seeds are responsible for our own bodies, that means we can create a body which will not die. And we can be with the people we love and the people we love who have died. We can be with them forever in a very beautiful way, which will never change. Next verse please.

Oh, *sanskara*, I'm sorry. *Sanskara*, we said yesterday, is also a kind of karmic seed. And usually it refers more to the karmic seed as it is planted. *San* is *sam* and goes back to *com*, "c-o-m" in English, meaning "to come together" like "committee," "convention," words like that. *Skar* is a form of *kir*, the "k" gets an "s" in certain places like in the word "Sanskrit." And that's the *kir* that we saw in "karma," I think it was yesterday, which means "to make something" or "to grow something." So *sanskara* means "to put together." The Tibetan is *duje* and it also means "to put things together." It's the word in Tibetan for "a factor" or "a cause." *Duje-pa* means "to bring together causes and conditions and then create a result."

So this again is reference to the seeds in our mind which are creating the people we love. And if we leave them alone, if we are not like gardeners, if we don't know how

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to keep feeding them and making them grow, they will naturally die and we will lose the people we love.

Is that all the key words?

Duhkha. [laughs] We did *duhkha* last Thanksgiving but we'll go over it again. It's composed of two different words, *duh* and *kha*. *Duh* comes from a Sanskrit word *dus*, which means "to degenerate," or "to get worse," or "to be bad," and it comes into western languages as *dis*, "d-i-s" or "d-y-s," like "dysentery" or "disqualify," meaning "bad," "something going wrong." *Kha* means "a hole," "some kind of aperture," and we said last Thanksgiving you see this word in *Kechari*, the practice of Vajra Yogini or diamond angel which Naropa taught was called *kechhari*. *Kha* means "space" or "hole in the sky." *Ay* which mixes with "a" to "e-k," means "in the sky" and then *chary* means "to move in the sky." In Tibetan, it's called *kondro* or *kacha*, and it means "to move in the sky." So *kha* can mean "sky" or "any opening." This comes into our languages in words like... there's some unusual words from a root *ghe*, "g-h-e." We see it in the word "grotto," which means "a place with a hole in it." We see it in the word "gape," we see it in the word "chasm," and we see it in the word "yawn," all of which come from the same root "k-a," "k-h-a," meaning to make a hole out of your mouth. [laughs]

So what does "bad hole" have to do with the word "suffering;" *duhkha* means "suffering." Most people think it came from an old word that described a bad wagon wheel that had a bad hole in the middle of the hub of the wheel, so it meant suffering or things not going right. The Tibetan word is *dug-ngel* and it also means "suffering." And the suffering of change is perhaps the worst suffering we have. It's obvious that bad things are suffering. What's not so obvious is all the good things in our life will change to something bad unless we understand karmic seeds, unless we are able to replenish and perpetuate the seeds to make them good and pure by being good to others. Next line please.

Kat Ehrhorn: Use the eye of wisdom, which comes from mastering those three.
Taj jayat prajnya-alokah. (III.5)

That's nice. I think the first key word is *prajnya*. *Pra* we had before, it means "to come ahead" or "in front" or "to be best," and we saw it in words like "proud," or the "prow" of a boat, or the word "proceed." *Jnya* means "to know," and it shows up in the Indo-European root "g-n-o," *gno*. And that's why the word "knowledge" is spelled with a "k" in front of it, "k-nnowledge." And also, for example, the word "Gnostic" comes from, with a "g" in front of it. All meaning "to know." I think the Tibetan here is *sherab* or *yeshe*? *Sherab*. *She* means "to know," and *rab* means "best," like *rirab* is "the highest mountain." So *sherab* means "wisdom."

This is from the third chapter of the Yoga Sutra. Master Patanjali in the third chapter begins by treating the last three of the eight limbs or branches of yoga, which refer to three stages of developing a deep meditation and wisdom. Wisdom is almost always defined as understood as being simply the understanding that when we meet a person, they are only blank, they are an empty screen, they are colors and shapes and sounds. And then how they appear to us depends on how our mind fills in those blanks,

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how our mind interprets these shapes and colors and sounds. The only thing out there is shapes and sounds and colors, and then how each of us experiences another person depends on the seeds within our own minds.

We don't have a choice, it's not something voluntary. The whole process takes place in a few microseconds. Colors are presented to your mind, shapes are presented to your mind, and your karmic seeds suddenly burst open and force your mind to interpret these colors and shapes in a certain way. If you've been kind to others, you will experience others as beautiful, helpful. If you've been unkind, selfish to others, you'll experience the same colors and shapes as something unpleasant. This is wisdom. To realize where things are really coming from and then to take responsibility yourself to change it, is wisdom.

Aloka means "the eye." I think the Tibetan is *chen* here? *A* means "at" or "towards." We see it in the English "a-t," "at." *Loka* comes from an old Sanskrit root, *ruch*, "r-u-c-h," which changes to *roch*, and then becomes *lok*, meaning "something shining," "something bright." The Indo-European root is *leuk*, "l-e-u-k." And we see it in words like "light," "lucid," and in the word "luna," which means "a shining moon," and in the word "enlightenment."

It's very beautiful that as the ancient, ancient Sanskrit developed directly from the *chakras* and *nadis*, directly from the inner centers and inner channels that certain words reveal the truth of *prajnya*, of wisdom. "*Aloka*," the Sanskrit word for an "eye," "e-y-e," actually means "to shine out" or "to shine upon" and in ancient times the eye was not seen as picking up an object which is out there. The eye was seen like a movie projector. Even the word for "eye" means "I am sending out the light which is creating the objects around me."

It's a very incredible insight which is buried within the ancient Sanskrit words. It's not that objects exist around us and then they somehow are detected by our eye. It's that our eye faculty and our consciousness is actually sending out light and creating those objects; it's a whole different way of viewing the world. Things are not happening to you. You are projecting the world.

In Tibetan, I think you know, the name for a person who hasn't seen emptiness yet is called *cheba* or "a child," "an infant," someone who has not matured even into an adult yet. But there's another word for a person who hasn't seen emptiness and that's *sortong*. *Sortong* means "someone who sees everything coming this way, towards me." Where as a person with *prajna*, wisdom, they understand that the eye, *aloka*, is a *lok*, is sending out the light and creating the objects around you.

So this is a very powerful verse where even the single words used tell us that when we see a person we don't like, when something happens to us that we don't like, our own mind is sending out this object. And we can change it. It's not just to make everyone feel guilty about their life. Once you understand that you are producing things, you can consciously follow the *yama* and *niyamah*. You can purposely lead a good and ethical, moral life. You can take control of what you see. You can take control of the world that happens to you. You can change it into something – a never-ending paradise. Next verse please.

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Brian Pearson: Use joy. *Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha duhkha punya-apunya vishayanam bhavanatash chitta prasadnam.* (I.33C)

[laughs] You may notice that the Sanskrit is slightly longer. [laughter] I want to remind you that I cut out sections from the Sanskrit so some verses have maybe four or five different pages here.

The key word here is *mudita*, I think. I like this word. The Sanskrit root is *mud*, “m-u-d,” which means “to be happy to the point of intoxication.” [laughs] The Indo-European root is *medhu*, “m-e-d-h-u,” which is actually the ancient word for “honey.” Those of you who know Russian, the word is “*meud*.” And the word “mead,” “m-e-a-d,” comes from this root because that alcoholic drink was originally made from honey. The word “methyl alcohol,” the “m-e-t-h,” also comes from *medhu*. And I like, as an old gem dealer, the word “amethyst.” The Greeks believed that if you held a small piece of this purple stone under your tongue, you could go to a drinking party and not get drunk. *A* means “not” and *methy* means “drunk.” “Amethyst” means “the stone that will keep you from getting drunk.” I think the Spanish word for honey is what? *Mead*. Yeah, same.

So the idea is to be happy to the point of intoxication, which in Tibetan we call *gawa*. *Gawa* is an important word for *tantrikas*. It describes four or sixteen degrees of bliss that you can experience if you are able to open the central channel of your body. But in the description here, which is actually a description of the four immeasurable forms of emotion, what we call *tseme she*, Master Patanjali is describing four holy emotions which can overcome all spiritual obstacles.

We had some of them last Thanksgiving, actually three. *Maitre*, which means “a kind of love for others,” “wishing that they could be happy.” *Garuna*, which means “the desire to take away their pain.” And we had *upeksha*, which means “equanimity;” “I don’t want to do this just for my friends. I want to do it for everybody.”

But those three emotions, wanting to give people what makes them happy, wanting to take away what makes them suffer, and being willing to do it for everyone, are nothing without number four... without the fourth emotion, which is joy, *gawa*.

You should know that in the ancient books, joy here doesn’t mean some kind of happy emotion or something like that. It’s a very specific state of mind. In the prayers we say *semchen tamche*... Those are the first three immeasurables. Number four, or joy, means, “may all beings possess highest happiness.”

It’s not enough to feed people. They will die anyway. They will lose all the people they love anyway. It’s not enough to give a person a home. It’s not enough to make people comfortable or happy in the short term. It’s simply not enough. The airplane is falling down. You are feeding them peanuts and orange juice. That’s okay. That’s a good thing. But once you understand about suffering, once you can truly see the death of countless beings, you won’t want to concentrate so much on those. You want to try to struggle to become a being who can serve every creature in the whole universe in one moment. This is *gawa*. This is joy. This is the meaning of joy. Next verse please.

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Andrea Lemon: The third form of self-control is never to steal from another. *Ahinsa satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah.* (II.30C)

All yoga, all spiritual practice, all of the higher practices, tantra, are all based on — and by the way tantra and yoga are synonyms, I would say — they are all based on doing good towards others, taking care of others. And at the most basic level, we must try not to hurt others. And Master Patanjali outlines five forms of self control.

Asteya comes from an ancient Sanskrit root *staya*, which means “to steal.” The Indo-European root is *ster*, “s-t-e-r.” The “r” often changes to “l,” and we get English words like “steal,” “stealth,” and “stalk,” meaning “to stalk somebody;” all meaning “to move in a sneaky way.” *A* is the negative in Sanskrit, so *asteya* means “not stealing.” “Not being sneaky with others.”

All wealth in the world comes from giving to others, generosity to others and not taking what others own. Not harming the property of others. Our culture, American culture, Western Culture — you can say modern culture of the first world, the industrialized nations — I think we have made great progress, although sometimes it’s hard to notice. In that, I think throughout our culture of the world today, we recognize that stealing is wrong. We recognize that taking what belongs to others is something wrong. There’s no culture, almost, in this world which would condone people taking things from each other. This is a great advance. We are on a holy planet in that respect. There are planets where this is not even understood. And so I think there’s no one in this room who would commonly walk up to someone, steal their wallet, steal what money they had, try to take away their home or their possessions. We have advanced beyond that.

But there are more subtle forms of stealing, which people like you and I often commit. And if you want to be taken care of in the future, if you want to have security, if you want to be prosperous, we have to stop even subtle forms of stealing. I can think of three right off hand.

I was asked to speak at the Diamond Dealers Club of New York once about ethics in the diamond business. I was required to submit my speech in advance, in case I might embarrass anyone. And I was feeling very strongly about paying your taxes. I worked in a diamond factory. We had a jewelry factory nearby. One day a man was caught stealing the dust, the gold dust which comes off the jewelry when you shine it, when you polish it. And he was submitted to criminal prosecution; his life was ruined. Shortly afterwards I met with some diamond dealers, who owned this same company. They were describing how cleverly they had moved their profits to Switzerland without being taxed.

The same man who prosecuted the poor person who was caught stealing gold, justified it to me saying “He’s hurting every one else in the company. This person is stealing really from the combined efforts of everyone else in the company.”

So I asked this man, “So when you send your profits to Switzerland, via the mafia, and you don’t pay taxes on them, in a way you are stealing from every single other person in the United States who pays taxes, aren’t you? Isn’t it the same?”

When we don’t pay our taxes, we are stealing from every other person who is working. Do you think the United States government is going to lower their budget or

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increase their taxes to the other people? You are taking the money from other people around you. And the karma is tremendous. It doesn't have anything to do with the fact that the government is using the money for bad reasons often. If you don't agree with the way the government uses the money, for example if you don't agree that we should bomb and kill innocent people, then you should have the courage to stand up and refuse to pay that tax, and you should go to jail if that's what the law says. And if enough of us did that, then this country wouldn't be bombing innocent people. So if you don't want to pay you taxes for moral reasons, you should stand up and be willing like Gandhiji to go to jail for it. But to sneakily stop, refuse, or not pay your part of the things that we use together, roads, communications, defense, proper defense, non-violent defense, then... these things we should pay for equally, happily.

The other kind of stealing I see oftentimes, I think we are stealing from future generations. We are living like pigs. We are living like selfish animals. We don't have the sense to realize that we are stripping our world of its resources far beyond what we need. And we are stealing from our children and our grandchildren. People like Theodore Roosevelt had the foresight to create national parks like the Dragoon Mountains behind us, fifty thousand acres set aside for the use of future generations. I don't think any politician would do that nowadays. They don't have the courage or the guts or the foresight because the people who elect them, which is you and me, don't have the courage or the foresight to set aside resources for our children and the people who come after them. We don't need to eat too much. We don't need to package things in containers which ruin the earth. We don't need to suck all the oil out of our planet, selfishly, leaving nothing for the future generations. I think they will look back upon us and curse us for the way we lived. I think it's a form of stealing. And I think as spiritual people, we should stand up and do things we can do to contribute to that preservation.

One of the goals of Diamond Mountain, the idea of having a community there, is to try to learn again to live simply. We found out in the yurts that you can live without electricity. You can live on two gallons of water a day. You don't have to strip the earth of its resources to live. You can live simply, quietly, happily. It's even more happy that you have fewer things.

Rafael Cervantes: If you keep up this practice of never stealing from anyone, then there will come a time when people just come to you and offer you all the money you need. *Asteya pratishthayam sarva ratnopasthanam.* (II.37)

The way Master Patanjali designed the second chapter is that first he tells you the five forms of self-control and then he tells you what you get if you follow them. So this is a separate line.

Asteya pratishthayam means “if you can keep up this kind of self-control where you don't steal from other people long enough, then *sarva ratnopasthanam*, people will just end up giving you everything you need.”

The first key word is *ratna*. All the Buddhists here know this from three *ratna*, the Three Jewels. It comes from a Sanskrit root *ra*, “r-a.” Those of you who know Sanskrit notice I'm skipping long and short vowels, just to make things simple. If you

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want the full thing, you can come to Diamond Mountain University. *Ra* means “to give” or “bestow something of value on someone.” The old Indo-European root is *re*, “r-e.” And it’s found in the Latin *reis*, which means “a thing of value,” “something of value.” And from there comes the English word “wheel,” meaning “something substantial.” You also find the word *ratna* in “*Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami*,” which means “my lama is like a jewel.” “I offer this mandala to my lama who is like a jewel.” The Tibetan is *rinpoche*. *Rinpo* means “value.” *Che* means “big.” So *rinpoche* means “precious,” “very precious,” and has come to be the word for “a precious jewel,” also.

I think *upasthana* is the next one. *Upa* means “up,” “above.” And it shows up in those two words in English. *Sthana* means “to stand.” It shows up in the word... the Sanskrit word is *stha*, “s-t-h-a,” and the Indo-European word is the same... I’m sorry it’s *sta*. And you see it in “station,” “standing,” “stationary,” lots of words with “s-t-a” in them, meaning “to stand.” *Upasthana* means “something you place forward,” meaning “a gift” or “an offering.” *Chupa* in the Tibetan means “a gift” or “an offering on an altar.”

These are hard economic times I’m beginning to hear from... I didn’t know, we didn’t have any idea. But I see little pieces of notes and letters referring to difficult financial times. Times when there is economic doubt, economic instability. The economic condition of this country, the economic condition of the entire globe is emanating from a space inside your heart much smaller than the tip of a needle. I’ll say it again. The economy of the world, the economic condition of this country, is emanating from a place near your heart called *mi shepe tige*, which is much tinier than the tip of a needle. It’s important to grasp this.

When times get hard, when things are difficult, people tend to do exactly the wrong thing. They tend to contract. They tend to shrink. They tend to become afraid to give to others. “Oh, I’m not sure if my job is stable. I may not have enough. I shouldn’t give to others right now. I can wait.” Then the karmic seeds within that tiny drop, the *bindu tige*, within your heart, the incredibly tiny billions of seeds within that drop, the seeds to see money, the seeds to see yourself prosper, the seeds to see money coming into you are shut down by selfishness. And then the whole world starts down on a terrible downwards cycle.

It’s up to spiritual people like you, like us, to make people understand wealth comes from giving, wealth comes from generosity. Every single cent in the world economy has been produced from a tiny drop of consciousness in the hearts of every person on the planet. The only way to create more wealth is to give as much as you can. And it’s important to do it with joy, happily. And then it will come to you, it will create wealth.

Marx and Lenin said that wealth comes from the ground; ultimately all production can be traced to the nutrients in the earth itself; mining, farming. A Buddhist or a Hindu would say that’s not the ultimate ground, there’s a deeper ground below there. All wealth is being produced from infinitely tiny seeds within the heart of every single living creature, which are placed there by giving to others happily everything you can. Next verse please.

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Andreana Karabotsios: When the images start to hurt you, sit down and work on the antidote. *Vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam.* (II.33)

Thank you. I think the first key word is *vitarka*, which in Tibetan is *tokpa*. Again it's important to know how karma works. Your mind is presented with shapes, colors, sounds, smells, then the karmic seed of *sanskara*, or *vasana* now, ripens within your mind. Actually within the space of one finger snap... was it sixty-four or sixty-five? [Student: sixty-five.]... discrete karmic seeds are bursting open. And they burst open in a series and it looks like time is passing. The karmic seeds throw a tiny picture up to your mind which is overlaid on the information it's receiving. So a tiny picture is thrown out before your mind of an irritating person, between your mind and the sense data, and it's imposed on the sense data by your mind. This is how karma actually operates. It's important to know, if you want to eliminate the pain in your world.

It's a strange place in the Yoga Sutra where Master Patanjali begins to talk about this. He has just been talking about *yama* and *niyamah*, the various ways that we can collect good karma. And then he starts talking about images. *Vitarka*, in this case, means "that tiny picture which is thrown up by the mind." The last irritating person you met was only a tiny picture within your own mind. And that's *vitarka*. It comes from a root *tark*, "t-a-r-k" in Sanskrit. The corresponding Indo-European root is *del*, "d-e-l," and it comes in to the English word "to tell" or "to talk." What it means is, your mind is making an expression; it's an expression of the mind, a picture of the mind.

Pratipaksha is next. *Prati* means "up against," "up against something." For example, "protagonist," "prosthesis" where the limb is put up against the body, "proselytize," which means "to go up against somebody," "prosody," which means "to sing forth," "sing up against." I like the word *paksha*. The Indo-European root is *peku*, "p-e-k-u." *Peku* means "my side," or "the things that I own," or "the things that you own." So you have your *peku*, I have my *peku*. It's the root of the word "pecuniary," meaning "the money that you have," or "peculiar," which used to mean "special" in the sense of "wealthy." And *peku*, the wealth of ancient times, especially in India and among the Indo-Europeans, was cattle. Your wealth was judged in how many cattle you had.

When I first met Tibetan refugees, oftentimes aristocracy coming out of Tibet, they would tell me, "I used to have five thousand, three hundred and forty-eight sheep you know." And that was *peku*, you see, that's "my side," the "things I own." That in itself comes from a root *pa*, "p-a," which means "to protect." And you see it in the word "*dharmapala*," which means "protecting your own interests." It's also found in the word "pastor," meaning "a servant" or "a protector of the people." These all come from an older root *kwo*, "k-w-o," which means "cow." That's the ancient root for "cow." And the word "cow" comes from that and the name *Gautama*, the Lord Buddha's name *Gautama* means "the great cow," meaning "the head bull of a herd of cows." And "bovine" and other words like that come from the same root, "k" dropping off. The Tibetan word is *nyenpo*. We know *nyenpo tok she* the four antidote powers.

And what Master Patanjali is about to step into, and we're going to spend the rest of today's Yoga Sutra on this, is the question: "You know, you said that the world is created by seeds going off in our own minds. It's obvious that we can avoid future pain,

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if we can control how we collect new seeds. But what do we do about the old seeds? We have millions, billions of seeds in our mind from the time before we learned about all this stuff. What are we supposed to do with those seeds? Can we destroy them? Can we prevent them from growing?”

And Master Patanjali says, “*Vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam*. You have to use the antidote. You have to apply the antidotes.” Those of you who studied the ACI courses, there’s a separate course on the ancient presentation of the four great antidotes; how to stop your old bad karmic seeds that were collected before you understood these things. And I think all of us have incidents in our earlier life. When I was in college I was a normal liberal college student. I was taught that abortion, for example, was not a bad thing, it was alright. The child is not alive. And then studying later among the Tibetan and Indian wise people, I’ve learned that that was a great error. That was a horrible mistake. And I know I have that seed in my mind. And I think many of us have similar seeds from when we knew less. So it’s important to know how to go back and destroy old bad karmic seeds.

And Master Patanjali is saying, we have to use the antidote. *Pratipaksha* means “against the other side.” You see? Stopping that power coming towards us. *Bhavana* comes from the same root as *bhumi*, *bhu*, which means “to be.” The Indo-European is “b-h-e-u,” *bheu*. And it all just means “to be.” The word “become,” the word “to be,” come from that. And we mentioned last teaching that in Greek, the “b-h” changes to “p-h,” the “u” changes to “y,” and this is root for the word “physics.”

I like *bhavana* because *bhava* means “to become.” *Na* means “to make it happen.” The word for “meditation” in Sanskrit is “to make something come into being.” I think it’s very powerful. I forget who was mentioning it but... it was James perhaps, James-hla, but *tong-len* for example, he was very wise, James-hla when he mentioned that the best way to raise money for a retreat center would be *tong-len*. To work in the area in causation itself, to go down to the actual ground beneath all of existence, down into what’s called the causal body, the realm of causation. It’s your mind... if it’s your mind throwing up images that would create a retreat center, then if we work within the mind, we can create objects. We can create a retreat center, simply by the strong intention to serve others and that’s *bhavana*. That’s the word for “meditation.” In Tibetan *gompa*. Here *bhavana* means “sit down and work out the antidote.” Sit down; think carefully how to stop our old bad karmic seeds. And now Master Patanjali will go on to the actual details of how to stop our old seeds, so next verse please.

Earle Birney: The images — people who hurt me or the like — come from what I did myself, or got others to do for me, or what I was glad to hear others had done. *Vitarka hinsa-adayah kirita karita-anumodita lobha krodha moha purvaka mirdu madhya-adhimatra dukkha-ajnyana-ananta phala iti pratipaksha bhavanam*. (II.34A)

Thank you. Obviously the whole Sanskrit is not in this English. It will spread now over the next few pages. The end though is clear. *Pratipaksha bhavanam* means, “I’m going to tell you how to apply the antidote.” “I’m going to describe to you how to stop your old bad karmic seeds in your own mind.”

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This particular verse in the... what are the key words? *Vitarka* we finished right? It means “that little tiny picture thrown up when a karmic seed breaks open.” *Hinsa* we had already in *ahinsa*, meaning “non-violence.” And it’s easy to remember, that’s why I’m going over these stupid roots with you. Connecting it to your own language because you’ll remember that *hin* comes from “gun,” *hun* which comes from... and then “gun” comes from that. So it’s easy to remember what *ahinsa* means if you remember that *hin* is connected with “gun,” the word “gun” in English. Those were the two key words? Okay.

This *hinsa* means “the karmic images will start to hurt you.” They will come up in your mind. What’s an example? You could say an irritating person next to you, in this very teaching, or you could say the death of your own body. The coming death of your own body is an image thrown up by your past karma. The whole purpose of yoga — you know, twenty million people exercising — is actually to get down to the causal level of karmic seeds and manipulate them, change them. Then the seed that would create an image in your mind of dying, could create an image of becoming an angel who could serve countless beings on countless planets.

I think the key ideas are *kirta karita-anumodita*. *Kirta* means “things I have done myself.” And by the way, those of you who are ordained, those of you who do the monk or nun *sojongs* twice a month, you know this expression in Tibetan. When we do our purification of karmic seeds among the monks and nuns twice a month, we specifically say these same words. So it’s obvious that these words have been drawn from the ancient sutras of Lord Buddha. “I regret those things which I have done. I regret those things which I have inspired others to do wrong. And I regret even being happy when I heard someone had done something wrong.”

The point here is that we don’t only collect karma when we do something ourselves. In the *Abhidharmakosha*, in the fourth chapter when they discuss karma, they point out that it’s not just that if you kill someone you collect the karma of killing. I don’t think there’s anyone here who would take a knife and go to a child and thrust it into their chest. But you and I would pay taxes and we would quietly support violence against people of a country that had offended us or done some harm to us, knowing perfectly well that a certain number of children will die. *Karita* means we must understand that we collect karma of killing that child with an American airplane’s bomb in the same way as if we had thrust a knife in the child’s chest ourselves. There’s karmically no distinction. If you are supporting an effort, even by paying taxes and not complaining, and not informing them that it’s not your wish that it be used for violence, then there’s no karmic distinction. The pilot who drops the bomb collects the karma of stabbing that child in the chest. The people who built the airplane collect the same karma. The people who paid the taxes for the airplane and the pilot’s salary collect exactly the same karma. If an American war plane has killed a child, each one of us has the karma of thrusting a dagger, a knife into a child’s chest. There’s no difference. It’s the same karma. It gets very serious.

You see why we have to act. We have to express our beliefs. We have to communicate our commitment to nonviolence to the people who speak for us, because the karma is collected exactly the same. In the *Abhidharma* it says those who pay for it, are in a way even collecting worse karma than the pilot who drops the bomb because he’s

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doing so because we are paying him. We collect the bad karma of killing the child and we collect the bad karma of causing another human being to kill a child.

Anumodita means “even just a slight feeling of satisfaction that someone else has been harmed, also creates the same karma.” It’s very common, I think; I know I have this. Someone gives me trouble, someone does something to harm me, I’m not likely to go and hurt that person back physically, but if I hear that that person has had some trouble afterwards, I’m likely to feel a little contentment. That’s what *anumodita* means. It means “to feel some kind of satisfaction that people who have hurt you have had some trouble and it’s the very similar karma to causing the trouble to them yourself.” If you hear that someone you hate has gotten sick, the karma is the same as if you had made them sick. So when we’re in the process of destroying our old karmic seeds, we have to try to avoid not only violence to others but paying for or supporting violence to others or even dimly approving of it by not saying anything, some kind of dim satisfaction that our country has asserted itself against its enemies. All of these amount to the same karma. If we hope to destroy old karmic seeds, we have to avoid even these thoughts. Next verse.

Kevin and Miriam Thornton: (read first in Gaelic) [*applause*] And what came before them was either craving, or hating, or dark ignorance.

Oh, thank you.

Kevin and Miriam Thornton: *Vitarka hinsa-adayah kirta karita-anumodita lobha krodha moha purvaka mirdu madhya-adhimatra duhkha-ajnyana-ananta phala iti pratipaksha bhavanam.* (II.34B)

Oh thank you. It’s good to hear the mother tongue. If we have extra lifetimes we should learn it, I think.

I think many of you may have taken, there’s a small ACI course, a side course called “The Wheel of Life.” It’s a teaching that Lord Buddha gave and he painted a special painting that describes how all of your trouble starts. It’s very complicated. It would take a few weeks to teach. Holy Lama Khen Rinpoche gave us this teaching for over a year, which is why I can teach it to you, and which is why I can teach you anything. So anytime you meet holy Lama you have to do three prostrations from me too.

The key words are *lobha*, *krodha*, *moha*. They are the three animals at the center of the wheel of life. *Lobha*, meaning “desire,” is sometimes drawn as a pigeon, sometimes as a rooster. But either way a creature which has a lot of desire for reproduction. *Krodha* means “anger” or “hatred,” and is drawn in the wheel of life as a snake. And then *moha* means “ignorance” or “not understanding where this world comes from,” and appears in the wheel of life as a pig.

Sometimes the mouth of each animal is holding the tail of the next animal in a circle meaning that these three terrible inner tendencies tend to support each other and perpetuate each other. Sometimes the pig has the snake and rooster coming out of its

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mouth, which means that the basis of all of this trouble is ignorance. Even Master Patanjali has a line earlier in the second chapter saying that ignorance is the root of all of the others. What is that? [gives quote from Yoga sutra] It means that ignorance is the root or the field from which the others grow. Let's talk about these three words, and then we'll talk about what they mean.

The first is *lobha*. The Sanskrit word is "l-u-b-h," *lubh*, which means "to love" or "to be attached to." The Indo-European is *leub*, "l-e-u-b," and from this word comes the word "love" and from this word comes "belief," which means "a strong holding on" or "grasping to something." Also the word "furlow," which means "to go through someone's leave or permission." And the word "leave" itself as a verb, meaning "to permit something" or "to give someone permission," like shore leave in the Navy means that the officer has agreed or wishes that thing to happen. The Tibetan is *duchak* or *chakpa* which means "to have attachment" or "desire." So *lobha* means "desire."

Krodha comes from a Sanskrit word *krudh*, "k-r-u-d-h." The Indo-European word is *kreuh*, "k-r-e-u-h," and from this root come words like "raw," "crude," and "cruel." And you can see how it has meanings of "anger," "redness;" it also means "to beat someone." And so it means "hatred."

Moha means "ignorance." The Sanskrit root is *muh*, "m-u-h," and the root in the ancient Indo-European is *mei*, "m-e-i." The root in Sanskrit and Indo-European means "to be silent in a crazy way." It means "to be almost insane and incapable of speaking." It comes into the English words "mute," not speaking, and also the Greek root for "mystic." Why a mystic? Because the word in Greek for closing your lips was applied to a person who closes their eyes and goes into mystic state. So the whole root means to be silent with the implication of being ignorant, not knowing anything.

These three are the root of all of our bad karmas. If we can understand how these three work, we can destroy our old karmic seeds and not repeat our mistakes. Those of you who have taken the ACI courses, you're very familiar with my spiel on these three. But we'll go over it one time.

Lobha means "to like things." Is it wrong to like things? I mean often you go to a Buddhist presentation and they say you shouldn't desire anything. You shouldn't want anything. You should give up your attachments, then you'll be happy. If somehow you could sit in a corner like a vegetable. I mean, what's the implication? What's the implication? I can not love my children? I can watch a car strike one of my children, kill them, and I still feel equanimity? Is this what it means not to be attached? Is this what it means not to have desire? I can't go to a movie? I can't eat a pizza when I get out? [laughs] And my answer is always, I was there in Washington D.C. when Ritchie Havens did "Freedom" for the benefit. And His Holiness was sitting in the row in front of me and I watched his foot and it was bam, bam, bam. [tapping foot] [laughter] And afterwards there was a reception, and His Holiness was obviously enjoying the hors d'oeuvres. [laughter] Khen Rinpoche loves a good baseball game.

Are these beings... do they have attachment? Do they have desire? Are they liking things in the wrong way? Obviously not. There's a place for enjoyment. We should enjoy things. You think Buddha's in their paradises are sitting there bored to death trying to have equanimity? Not enjoying their paradise? Are you crazy? Did you

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see all the pictures of Tara? And those great, lovely angels? Do they look like they're having a medium time? *[laughter]* So it's not the point. It's obviously not the point. If a sentient being struggles their way through all of these stupid retreats, and meditation, and practices, and reach the path of seeing, and they reach ultimate happiness, are we supposed to not be happy? Are we supposed to not enjoy that? I mean obviously they're not talking about that kind of desire or enjoying yourself. They're talking about any kind of wrong desire.

How do you define "wrong desire?" Wrong desire is just stupid desire. How do you define "stupid desire?" It's not understanding emptiness. It's not understanding karma. It's the kind of stupid desire that would hurt someone else to get what you want. Again you don't get money by competing with other people. You don't get money by saving, and scrounging, and protecting your interests. You get money by giving it away. And it's the same with everything else. So, intelligent desire, what His Holiness calls enlightened self-interest, is to serve others, give everything to others. Take care of others. This is the right kind of desire.

Obviously, here in the verse on purification, Master Patanjali is saying, you have to regret all the mistakes you've made in the past trying to get the things you want by fighting or competing with others and not serving them.

Krodha is the same. Do you think the Buddhas never feel hatred or dislike for anything? Do you think Buddhas are not upset when they see beings go to the hell realms? Do you think Buddhas don't feel dislike towards our ignorance, our mistakes, towards the negative energy flowing through this very world? Of course they don't like it. Of course they feel a sense of sadness or dislike. This is an intelligent dislike. We should dislike all the negative things in the world. But not in any way that would make us collect bad karma. We can't stop the bad things in the world by hurting other people. You can't stop violence in the world by doing violence to other people. It's an ignorant, stupid way to act. Violence is created by violence. If you don't like violence you have to stop it personally by not committing violence towards others. We'll speak more about that later.

And these are all rooted in *moha*, ignorance about the way the world really works. The good things come from being good to others. The bad things come from being bad to others. Only if you don't understand that can you hate other people. Only if you don't understand that can you hurt others to get the things you want. If you realize this, it's the best kind of confession. A Buddhist's confession wouldn't be to go to a priest and apologize for things you've done wrong. It would be to go to your meditation cushion, sit down, and realize that you've just done something that will hurt yourself. It's to understand where the world really comes from that is the ultimate confession. Then you won't want to do harmful things to others. And the world would stop harming each other. Next verse please.

Susan Stumpf: They are of lesser, or medium, or greater power. *Vitarka hinsa-
adayah kirta karita-anumodita lobha krodha moha purvaka mirdu madhya-adhimatra
dukh ajnyana-ananta phala iti pratipaksha bhavanam.* (II.34C)

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Good thank you. When you go to destroy your old karmic seeds, you have to go after the biggest ones first. We don't have much time in the modern world. We don't have a lot of time to do karmic seed destruction. So we need an understanding of what karmic seeds are most powerful. What did I do in my life which was most destructive? I have ten minutes this morning to try to work on that karmic seed, to try to stop it before it flowers. And here you'll see the concept of *shi saba jorwa tarjuk*. We have to... *mirdu madhya-adhimatra* in Sanskrit means "bad karma comes in low level, medium level, and very powerful bad karma." Obviously when you go back into your past to destroy your old karmas you have to go after the biggest ones first. And that's the point of this part of the verse. How to decide what was the worst one.

First was *shi*. *Shi* means pick the ones that were committed towards the most powerful objects. If there was only a single doctor in a town and you killed that doctor, you'd be killing all of his patients, or harming all of his or her patients as well. So obviously any bad deed done towards a very virtuous or beneficial object is very, very serious. This is why if we have done some kind of a negative deed towards a high spiritual teacher like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, or Lama Zopa Rinpoche, or Khen Rinpoche... They help so many other people. They have the capacity to help so many other people, that if we do something negative towards them, it's a very serious karma.

This also applies to your parents, your father and mother, regardless of how you feel about them now. Regardless of how you remember them. They have granted you the most precious gift you can have: a human body and mind. By that simple act, they have done you greater kindness than almost anyone in the world could do. They have given you the equipment to live a whole lifetime and strive to reach high goals. So your parents are very serious karmic objects. Any good or bad done towards them, you have to be aware it's very powerful. If you have any problem, or have had any misunderstandings with your parents, you have to go back and purify that karma.

Saba, the next element, is your motivation. How strongly were you motivated when you did a bad thing? Were you very angry? Or were you just a little irritated? If you have done something in a terrible fit of violence, if you have done something with premeditation, thinking about it for weeks ahead of time, you have to go after those kinds of karmic seeds first.

Jorwa means the actual commission of a bad deed. It means it's a serious thing to think about harming someone else, but to actually commit it brings the karma to whole new level. It's one thing to think about trying to hurt someone at work who is competing with you for a position; it's another thing to actually say something, or do something, which would hurt their position. So once you cross the line into *jorwa*, into actually doing something, the karma is more powerful. We have to go after those seeds also.

The final element, *tarjuk*, means have you succeeded in the bad deed you intended to do? And have you owned it? "Owned it" means, for example, if you hurt someone else at your work, if you said or did something which meant that they didn't get a new position that you were trying to get. Then just the act of being happy about the bad deeds you've done, if you don't feel any regret at all, if instead you feel some kind of satisfaction, then the karma becomes much more powerful. The implications here are very obvious. If you sincerely regret a past bad karma — let's say in my case being involved with an abortion when I was in college — if you truly regret it then

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automatically you will never want to get even near that kind of activity again. You will automatically want to avoid even getting close to being in that position again. That's the ultimate confession. That's the ultimate purification.

Pratipaksha bhavanam. If you want to meditate on the antidote for your past mistakes, the best way is to avoid them again. It's the single most powerful karma destroyer and it will destroy your past karma. If you intelligently say I will never even get close to that kind of behavior again because now I understand it, that actually destroys much of the old karma. It's the most powerful kind of antidote you can apply. So just as friend to friend, if you have something in your past that you regret strongly, the best way to destroy that seed, is simply to decide very powerfully that you won't do those kinds of things again. Next verse. Next line.

Angela Bleackley: Say to yourself then, "Who knows what pain I have planted for myself? The results could be countless." Sit and work out the antidote. *Vitarka hinsa-adayah kirita karita-anumodita lobha krodha moha purvaka mirdu madhya-adhimatra duhkh ajnyana-ananta phala iti pratipaksha bhavanam.* (11.34D)

This is the end of the purification process presented by Master Patanjali. And I think all of you who have studied deeply the scriptures in the past are very familiar with this step. This is simply regretting what you've done. We call it intelligent regret. It's much different from guilt. The Tibetan scriptures, Sanskrit scriptures, have no word for guilt. There doesn't even exist a word for that kind of self punishment. It doesn't exist in those languages and in that philosophy. It's just an intelligent kind of regret. I did something, I was involved in an abortion, and it will definitely, it has planted karmic seeds, if I can't remove them from my mind stream, then I will be involved in some terrible accident, some kind of terrible suffering in the future.

Karmic seeds are exactly the same as seeds in nature. They grow the same as the seeds for trees or other plants. In between the time you plant a karmic seed and the time it comes back to you, it has expanded infinitely. *Duhkha-ajnyana-ananta.* *Ananata* means "infinitely." You can't even imagine, it's not a question of killing one fetus and then being killed yourself once. It's a question of killing a fetus and then being killed many times yourself. Suffering countless times, yourself. The nature of all growth in the universe is for things to expand. So it's very serious. Even small things done to other people, even a small harsh word, even a small annoyance towards someone, plants a seed which grows infinitely larger. So it's essential to avoid even small negative deeds and it's essential to go back and destroy old bad karmic seeds. And again the best way to destroy an old mistake, the best way to shut off a karmic seed from ever growing again and ever coming back to you, is simply to decide "I won't do that kind of thing anymore." That has a powerful effect on destroying the old karmas.



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I think we'll stop there for the Yoga Sutra at this moment and I would like to request that one of the holy retreatants speak about, the single impossible task, the single most important realization during her retreat. But I thought that it's sort of improper to request a teaching without a mandala. So I'm going to ask Venerable Jigme Palmo to lead us in a sacred mandala... Brian...

[Brian sings:

Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Elizabeth/Trisangma!
Happy birthday to you!]

[applause]

I'm sorry it was Venerable Brian. *[laughs]* Almost Venerable Brian. Okay. *[laughter]*

Trisangma: Is this thing on? Oh boy. *[laughs]* Thanks for making it so easy for me to maintain a calm mind while I have to do this impossible thing. *[laughs]* You guys are so sweet, thank you, that's really sweet. My new name. Okay. Now that I've got the microphone in my hand, holding it up close, okay. *[laughs]* Well, since everybody here knows that it's my birthday, I just want to take this opportunity, since I have a microphone in my hand and an audience, to thank my mom for giving me this precious body and this precious opportunity and this amazing life to do this holy retreat. And she's just been... since the minute the egg and sperm met, she's just been totally supportive. *[laughs]* So thank you to her. She's the perfect yogini mom. She understands everything perfectly, completely.

And all of you people who have been sending these amazingly huge quantities of flowers and gifts to my yurt, thank you. You're out of control! And thank you. It kind of freaks me out, but it's kind of fun.

So, this impossible thing... you know, I decided to have a theme I was going to try to talk around. And that way I don't have to stick to a single... I don't have to stick to the instructions, right? *[laughs]*

For me, I'd have to say that a major theme that has come up for me out of three year retreat has been the theme of refuge and what refuge means to me. And it seems like this really basic thing, Buddhist refuge, or just refuge. You're scared of something, you think something can help you, you run toward it. And in Buddhist refuge you run toward a reliable object, an infallible object. And before retreat that seemed pretty straightforward and pretty clear, and I really felt before retreat that I was taking refuge because... I'll just give you a little background, because I just want to kind of talk about my retreat experiences through that, and through the increasing kind of subtleties that for me that taking refuge has taken on. And I also wanted to say that before I started writing all these notes down, I was really trying to think of a way to apply my experiences to

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your life and your experiences. And then I sat down and I started writing, and I just started talking to you, all of you. I don't know how else to do this so please forgive me for being so self-absorbed about it. But this is just how it came out, and maybe you'll get something out of it. I hope that the point isn't too subtle that even I fail to make it. So I'll just read a little bit and improv I guess, in-between.

So before retreat, I really thought I understood refuge. I had given up everything to, first of all, to look for a lama. Then once the holy lama appeared to me, then I followed him and I dedicated my entire life to him. Everything that I was doing in my life was completely centered around the lama's instruction. And I was doing everything I could to study and to meditate. I really seemed to be a dharma practitioner for all intents and purposes. I seemed to be a dharma practitioner, and I seemed to be taking refuge. I seemed to be leaving the worldly life and taking refuge in the dharma. And my mind was on my practices a lot, and I did do purification practices, and I did refrain from doing negative deeds because of my understanding of karma as best I could. And I have to say now that I really don't feel that I was even practicing, really. And I really don't feel that I was taking refuge. And maybe just some ways... I feel now... I don't know, maybe it's just gotten more subtle.

So three year retreat happened. And on the gross level all of the objects that I was using for refuge, like my relationships with people, and my job – which was really fulfilling because every time I walked into the room my boss would start praising me and she couldn't stop praising me all of the time – and that was really fulfilling. I was leading discussion groups at ACI, and that was really fulfilling. I could call my mom all the time, and she totally loves me and supports me. I had all these objects of refuge that felt safe, and they felt secure. And I didn't realize I was taking refuge in them. They were just my job, and my family, and my friends. When three year retreat happened, those things were all taken away from me forcibly by my decision to enter into three year retreat.

So on the most immediate level I was robbed of these kinds of food, which were the relationships from other people, and the level of my taking refuge had to go up. It had to increase a little bit. And I had to start taking refuge in my faith in the practice, and I had to start taking refuge in the belief that this three year retreat, and this kind of drastic thing that I was doing was going to force this kind of deep fundamental change in reality, and was going to save people in the way that I wanted to save them. And I took refuge in that. That was a level of refuge for me.

And then for a long time, even while doing the practices and doing four sessions and doing deep retreats, doing *lerung*, the mind didn't want to go deeply into the practice. The mind was looking for distractions, and sometimes I felt like something was going to break. Like the mind was going to break if it didn't get a distraction, so then I would give it to it. And I would make all these projects — really important ones like that I had to sew something, a new shirt; I needed it. It was really important. And these were kind of my way of taking refuge in things that I thought were... it was just distraction. It was trying to take refuge away from the practice, like trying to get rescued by distraction instead of going more deeply into practice, because the mind wouldn't go more deeply into the practice.

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And then something happened last summer when it was the worst drought in... first it was the worst drought in twenty years, and then later it was the worst drought in fifty years, and then later it was the worst drought in a hundred years and I don't know how many years it got up to by the time it rained but... it was, I don't have a thermometer, but it was a hundred and fifty degrees. *[laughs]* We were... I don't know what anyone else was going through. I can't say "we," but I was being baked on almost every level. Just on the most fundamental level I felt like my body was being baked, literally being baked. And it was so dry, and it was so hot, and it was so kind of harsh and inhospitable in every way physically, that the mind was forced to go to a different level. The mind was forced to stop taking refuge in any physical comfort at all.

The old toys weren't working anymore, the sewing wasn't working anymore. Reading a novel, it wasn't working anymore because the mind was just caught. The mind had become so alert and so on edge, and so alert to itself, that distractions weren't working anymore. It couldn't be distracted from itself anymore, and so those refuges weren't working. Those kind of fallible refuges, they weren't working anymore, and the heat was just such a *tapas*; it was just like living in an oven all of the time. And emotionally it was like living in an oven, and psychologically it was like living in an oven. And just the intensity of it forced the mind to become more subtle somehow, and I don't know how to explain that. But what seems to have been a real catalyst was the extremity of the weather, and the deepening, timed with the deepening of the retreat.

And then I came out of a *lerung*, and usually when I come out of a *lerung* my mother and my boyfriend will have written to me. And these are my two main life plugs to the world; these are my two people who keep me going; these are the two reasons I stay in retreat when I want to leave. And so they're my emotional support. They're pretty much it – they're the bottom line. I have a lot of emotional support, but they're the bottom line; when everything else fails they keep me in retreat because I know... had the illusion that they need me.

So I get out of this *lerung* and it's been four months since I've heard from either of them, and I ask the care ladies for my mail and there isn't any. And in over three months no one had felt the need to communicate with me, like I was not important enough for them to have written a letter to me. And it really felt like being wiped off of the face of the earth. It was the final blow to my identity as I was holding onto it. Because I realized at that point that so much of what I was doing was maintaining myself, maintaining my identity through my relationships with these other people. And that even though I wasn't really having much contact with them I was thinking about them enough, and knowing that they were thinking about me enough, so that I could be maintained — so that the old identity could be maintained through the contact with them. And they cut me off!

And I just realized that that identity was no longer needed and it was no longer even existing. I guess I realized that because I didn't have anyone to contact. And I didn't have any people to interface with. So being totally isolated and being totally cut off even on the kind of psychic level, I guess you could say, or more subtle level of thinking that people need you, I was really forced to see who I was without that. I was forced to try to examine what kind of being I was without those relationships. Who is that anyway? Who is left after the person who has to relate to the mother, and the person

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who has to relate to the boyfriend, and the person who has to relate to the other retreaters? If you get rid of all of those things, what's left?

And at that point there really wasn't much left. At this time my practice started taking on a life of its own. I don't want to, like, get spooky, but *[laughs]* I really started to feel like I was having a relationship with my practice because all of the other relationships had dissolved and there was nothing else to relate to. I couldn't even relate to my own fantasies anymore because the mind was just so sick of it that it wouldn't even allow myself to have ideas about the future or memories about the past. For the first two years the mind exhausted itself on those things and that was finished now, and the mind was tired of it, and the mind was ready to have a relationship with the practice because there wasn't anything else to engage with. So I went to the practice.

And I feel like for the first time in my life when I was cut off from all relationships, I went and I took myself to my meditation box and I sat down and I reached out. I reached out with my mind to the only relationship that I could think of that was never, ever going to fail. Because it had been just so obvious to me. Even my close, close friendships – like I have close friendships with amazing people who you know, and even these wise, brilliant, amazing people are fallible and suffering and are driven by karma. It just became impossible for me to take refuge in those things anymore. And it was really scary because I just... I don't know how much this happens to other people, but I really rely upon my friendships and my family. I really rely on those things for comfort, for emotional comfort on some level, and I just realized that all of those things are so fallible, failing. They were all failing and there was nothing left to hold onto.

So I was forced to taking refuge in my practice. It was totally there for me, and it rose to the occasion in a major way. It just started giving things to me. I would feel afraid, so I would go to my meditation cushion and I would sit down and I would engage with the practice, and the practice would give me this kind of stillness. If I would sit down agitated, I would come away very still and very quiet and very satisfied and very joyful. It started happening that the old identity would try to assert itself. And to me, that's a way of taking refuge in something that isn't ultimate, and it's going to fail you and it's not true. The old identity isn't true anymore. And so I would take myself to the practice and the practice would — I don't know what to say — I just began to take refuge in a kind of more raw awareness, than the kind of small things that were passing through. And it was really rewarding.

And then I was speaking to our lama Mr. Stilwell the other night, and we were talking about an even more subtle level of taking refuge. Something we do which is not taking refuge is that we engage with objects on the conventional level, the way that we're perceiving them. We engage with objects in the ordinary way. We engage with a cup of tea as a nice, tasty cup of tea. When we engage with it in that way, we're not taking refuge in our practice, because we're not engaging with it as the manifestation of bliss and emptiness. We're not engaging with it's more ultimate, more subtle nature. So even more subtle levels of taking refuge is just being able to go to that place, just slipping into more of a meditative state when you're engaging with objects of desire, and when you're engaging with objects that you dislike. Taking refuge more in their... I don't know if you'd say in their emptiness, but in their not having to be the way that they're appearing to you. And retreat has really given me that.

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And I'm really grateful to the retreat for that, for giving me that new level of refuge of being able to go to my practice and being able to have the practice give something back immediately, visibly, tangibly. To give the practice that's giving back this more subtle way of looking at things, this more spacious way of being able to relate to the objects and to the people in my world.

I don't really know what to say. I want to apply this to your life, but I just want you to... Petra and I were talking about what we were going to talk about and so we said what we were going to talk about and at the end, kind of the main thing that we want to convey to you is that if this is something that... if a retreat is something that you wanted to do, or if you wanted to transform your mind, or if you wanted to enter a different level of reality, or if you wanted to be able to relate to people in a really pure way, and in a really wise way, you can totally do it and it's in you. It's completely in you. Every one of you.

I've been meeting some people this past week, and what I'm realizing is that every single person I've met has been able to meet me in that place. And what that means is that everyone has that level of subtlety in them where they're able to relate on a less conventional level. And I think it's really important just to suggest to each person here that maybe it's possible to not have to relate to things in the way that maybe you are now, or that maybe you feel that you're forced to relate to things in a really kind of conventional or afflicted way. And I just want to urge you to consider the possibility that you don't have to relate to the world in the way that you're relating to it. And that it can really change for you, and that the practice will do it for you.

You don't have to be some kind of superhero, or special person, or anything. You just have to do the practice, and put your mind on the practice, and the practice will just give you everything. Everything you ever wanted, and it will change you for you. You don't have to worry, or you don't have to feel inadequate, or you don't have to feel limited, because you're not. Every single being in this room has got infinite capacity and has got a wisdom being within them. I'm just telling you that because that's what I'm experiencing this week, that every single being has got a seed of deep wisdom in them.

People just tend to sell themselves short, and I'm just urging you not to do that. And I'm urging you to just consider that there's deep longings that you feel within yourself, and those deep intuitions that you have are real, and they are the real way that you could be living. You could be living that way all the time. You could be living by that inner deep wisdom and that inner deep being that you feel deep inside of you, and that you don't have to live in a limited way. You don't have to live according to some small identity that's just lying to you about who you are.

Okay. So, I think that's all. *[laughs] [applause]*



Next verse. We'll only do three more verses. I know it's getting late. Then we'll have story time and you can relax after that.

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Michael Brannan: Contemplation on this point destroys the storehouse of seeds.
Tatra dhyanañjam anashayam. (IV.6)

I think the key word is *dhyana*. *Dhya* in Sanskrit is from the root *dhi*. *Dhyana* is from a root *dhya*, which means “to think” or “contemplate,” ultimately from another root *dhi*. And those of you who know about Manjushri’s mantra or root syllable is *dhi*. This is where it comes from: *dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi*. In the monastery, young kids chant this *vidya* mantra, root mantra, over and over again to gain wisdom. They go “*dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dhi, dh...*” until you run out of breath. You see kids all over the monastery chanting this.

The only cognates in English come through Chinese and Japanese. When the first Chinese pilgrims came to India to learn Buddhism and they heard the word “*dhyana*” they heard *chan*, and by the time it got to Japan it was called “zen.” So *chan* is “zen,” and it means “deep meditation” or “contemplation.” Tibetan here is *samten*. *Samten* just means the same thing. *Sam* means “to think.” *Ten* means “to be firm in your thinking” and it means “to contemplate deeply.”

Anashaya, next word. This *an* is negative. *Shi mepa*, in Tibetan. *Ashaya*, we’ve had before, but it comes from a root *shi* in Sanskrit, meaning “to lie down” and for example the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* when you get to *shavasana*, the last *asana*, where you lie down, it says “*Shavavad shieno shyana.*” “You should lie down like a corpse.” And the Indo-European root again is *kwei*, “k-w-e-i.” And it comes into our words for “quiet,” and “calm,” and “requiem.”

But the point here is, if you can keep your mind on where things are coming from — in other words, the next time someone is unpleasant to you, the next time something you don’t want to happen, happens — if you can keep your mind firmly on what’s really happening, that everything you don’t like is being created from seeds in your own mind which you planted there, then you can arrive at *anashaya*. You can destroy the storehouse of karmic seeds because you won’t repeat your mistakes.

So really the ultimate weapon against our old bad karma is simply to maintain this awareness. This constant awareness all day that we can’t respond to negative things with negativity because it will plant the same seeds over again. Unfortunately, the response to all negative things for people in our realm — and that’s why we are in this realm, this broken realm — is that we respond to negative things with negative things, and then we start the cycle going again. That’s what *samsara* means. That’s what the cycle... the word “cycle,” it just keeps going over and over again. The only way to stop it is to break in with wisdom that says “I don’t want to plant more seeds. I’ll be kind to the people who are unkind to me.” Unilateral disarmament. Next verse.

Fran Dayan: You will never have to pay those old debts back; not a single one.
Prasankhyanepyakusidasya sarvatha viveka khyater dharma meghah samadhih.
(IV.29A)

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[laughter] There's a very un-self assuming lady who came to the very first classes of ACI and then went through the whole original course, all eighteen courses and became one of the first *marok geshes* of ACI. She came to me and said "Can I help you with anything?" And I said "We need someone to do the accounting; it has to be creative." [laughter] I think she's done it ever since, quietly, very modestly, never telling anyone really what she's doing but doing it all herself with no fanfare.

But the reason I bring it up goes back to the practice time, and service time. Shortly after she took over the accounting, I went to her and tried to give her a second job on top of the first job. And she said, "Geshe-la I can only do the one job because I have my practice to do." She's like one of the only people who ever had the courage to say that to my face. But she's kept that line ever since. And no matter how hard I try to dump another duty on her she will say, very respectfully, very kindly, "This is what I can do and keep my practice." So I think it's a great wisdom for all of us to learn.

What was the verse? [laughs] Oh... speaking of accounting. *Prasankhyane* means "accounting." You recognize the word in there, *sankhya*, for numbers. It means "to give an accounting." *Epyakusidasya* means "if you keep up this practice, if you continue to keep your mind firmly on the fact of where unpleasant things are really coming from and if you refuse to respond anymore with stupidity, ignorance, then the whole accounting, the whole debt that we owe karmically everywhere will be destroyed completely." "*Sarvatha*," says the verse. Completely; you don't have to doubt it. Master Patanjali says it. Many other scriptures say it.

And then you've reached *dharmamega samadhi*; the ultimate level. This is the name of the tenth bodhisattva level, the great cloud of dharma, the highest of the bodhisattva levels. We can reach that by using our knowledge and not responding to negative things negatively. There's no reason technically to not respond to negative things with just joy, happiness; and that actually destroys the old karmas and doesn't cause new karmas. It's easy to talk about; it's extremely difficult when someone's in your face. But we have to try. This is the whole Buddhist practice in a nutshell. Next verse please.

Reader: Sexual purity is the fourth form of self-control. *Ahinsa satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah*. (II.30D)

Master Patanjali gives the five *yama*, the five forms of moral self-control, and then five *niyamah*, the five commitments which are more like social self-control. Here he comes to *brachmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* means "sexual purity." In Tibetan it's called *tsangchu*. Brahma you know from the word, people call it "*Brahmin*." It comes from a root *brah*, "b-r-a-h," and that word means "to get bigger" or "to swell." And it's the name of the priestly caste, the caste of priests in ancient India of people whose spirits had swollen from the inside. And the idea is of their spiritual life growing stronger and stronger, and growing larger and larger. The Indo-European root is *grwes*, "g-r-w-e-s," and it has a meaning of "growing bigger" or "growing stronger." The word "gross" comes from this. And I think what's interesting is ultimately the word "grass," the word "green," and the word "graze" all come from this same root, meaning "when nature

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decides to grow and spring forth in greenness and growth.” So the word “*brachma*” brahma comes directly from the words “green” and “grass” and things of beauty growing larger. Brahma is also the name of a deity in the Hindu tradition. And that is translated by the Tibetans as *sangba*. *Sangba* means “the pure one.” And in Tibetan translation *brachma* brahma refers to “purity.”

Charya means “to act” or “to move.” You see it in the word “*acharya*.” And you see it in the name of Master Shantideva’s great book *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, getting into the deeds of the bodhisattvas, acting like a bodhisattva. The Indo-European root is *kel*. We had it before with *kala*, like in Kalachakra, meaning “to drive” or “move something.” And we see it in the words “accelerator” and “car.”

Yamah, you know, I think it’s here also.

So we have to talk about what does Master Patanjali describe when he says sexual purity? First of all you have to know that it comes forth in the list of *yama*. And that gives us a clue of what he’s talking about. He has said that we should practice *ahinsa*, not harming other beings, not taking the life of other beings. And then he says we should practice *ahinsa satya*, not lying. And then he says, what’s the third one? *Asteya*, not stealing. And then he comes to no sexual misconduct. These four are called *sawa shi* in Buddhist morality. They are the four roots of all moral behavior; all ethical codes come from these four.

When you take lifetime vows in Buddhism as a lay person, you commit mainly to these four. I think those of you who have taken lifetime vows remember the most serious type of each of the four. In other words, when you swear yourself to *ahinsa* in the lifetime vows as a layperson, you are swearing that you will never kill a human being or a fetus of a human being. When you commit yourself never to steal anything, you are saying you will never steal anything of very great value, a very noticeable value. In other words, you don’t break your lifetime vows if you steal a pencil from work. But if you steal somebody’s sweater or something of that nature, then you have broken your vow, your lifetime vow. And of course the form of lying which we are not allowed to break when we have taken laymen’s lifetime vows is never to lie about our spiritual life. The examples are saying that you’ve seen emptiness when you haven’t seen it, or saying that you’ve seen angels or met angels when you have not met them. So if you have not reached these goals and you claim that you have, then you have broken the lifetime vow against lying.

In that context, *brahmacharya*, here sexual purity in your life, would refer to the most serious form of breaking your sexual purity, which is adultery with another person’s sworn wife or husband.

People in America are very interested about sexual matters. And many people have come to Khen Rinpoche to ask for clarifications, and I was there many times. So I think it’s important that you know that the grossest form of breaking *brahmacharya* means to have any kind of sexual relations with another person’s wife or husband. People would ask Khen Rinpoche, “What if they’re divorced?” and he would say “If both partners have agreed mutually to a divorce then you’re not breaking this vow if you have sexual relations with one of them.”

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Somebody asked, “What if they’re just estranged but it’s not formal yet and one person doesn’t agree to it yet?” I think it’s good to be clear. Then he said, “That would be breaking the vows because there’s no mutual agreement yet to dissolve that marriage.” Somebody asked “What about boyfriends and girlfriends who aren’t married yet?” He said, “You don’t formally break your vows but you’re obviously getting very close.”

But I think it’s also important to say that in the scriptures, brahmacharya has a very specific meaning. *Tsangchu* in almost every context in Tibetan — I can say every context, actually — refers to total celibacy. It refers to not having any sexual relations at all. And this is obviously the vow that fully ordained monks and nuns take, and also novice monks and nuns, to maintain total celibacy. People have asked, “Does that include masturbation?” And the answer is, “Yes.” It means all kinds of celibacy from any kind of sexual activity.

People ask “Why would that be listed in the Yoga Sutra?” Given the context here, I think you have to say Master Patanjali is referring to the four great codes of conduct and it would imply that you’re keeping his vows here, his *yama* here, if you avoid gross forms of sexual misconduct like adultery.

But I would like to speak a little bit about the power of celibacy, *tsangchu*, formal *tsangchu*. I think many people have come to me and said “I would like to try to be celibate for a while. I would like to see what happens to me. I would like to see if it changes my life.” Oftentimes people come to me right after a break up with someone. *[laughs]* It’s not a wise way to undertake your celibacy. Celibacy should be understood, and then you should undertake it in a joyful way, a happy way. It’s very common to meet people who have tried to keep physical celibacy but don’t have mental celibacy yet. In other words, the decision to undertake celibacy, whether it’s for your whole life or for just a shorter period, should be done in a very happy way. It shouldn’t be a reaction to some unhappy marriage or unhappy relationship. You should see it as a method of gathering intense spiritual power for your virtuous activities. I think anyone who has been celibate for a very long time can tell you how it frees your mind.

When I was young, when I was in college, even walking into a classroom, there was this automatic American brainwashed thing of checking out all of the girls in the classroom and then calculating the odds of getting a date, or more, with each one. And this is something which is drilled into us since childhood in our country. If you decide happily to become celibate, that whole part of your mind is freed for other activities. Mentally you can devote your entire mind. You never are in a room with, you never meet, a person of the opposite sex with any kind of ulterior motives. Your mind is freed to undertake higher activities.

Physically, if you can maintain celibacy for long periods of time it begins to affect your physical health as well. If we speak about what’s happening on the level of your channels and *chakras*, which we’ll talk more about later today, you can store tremendous amounts of inner energy, what we call *prana*, or *lung*, in Tibetan. If you don’t engage in sexual activity, all this intense energy can be redirected to higher goals. That’s why I think you see among monks or nuns who are truly celibate, mentally celibate as well, this tremendous energy, and drive, and ability to do extraordinary work for others, virtuous work.

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So I would encourage you, if you ever have a chance, and not as a reaction to some problem you've had with another person of the opposite sex, but if you ever feel any kind of attraction towards the idea of celibacy, I urge you to take it. It doesn't have to be your whole life; you could say for six months or three months. And it shouldn't be a matter of spending nights up struggling with yourself. It should be a matter of joyfully sending and devoting that intense energy to higher goals. So try it sometime in your life if you can.

And Master Patanjali here has chosen a word *brahmacharya*, which means, technically it means "celibacy." There are other words which mean avoiding sexual misconduct. But, it's interesting, given his choice of words. I think he's encouraging each of us to try to channel that energy to something higher.



Which leads us naturally to the Naropa topic tonight. So relax, sit back.

I wanted to tell you the story of Niguma. I wanted to talk about Naropa's spiritual partner, spiritual wife, Niguma. We know that Niguma must have been a very special woman. Many people know about *narochudruk*, the six yogas, or six practices, of Naropa. The reason we're speaking about Naropa-hla during this weekend is that the Tibetan practices of yoga — both the physical practices and the spiritual practices — have all come down to us through the six teachings of Naropa, the six practices of Naropa — they're called *narochudruk*.

I don't know how many of you are aware that there is a parallel set of six practices called *niguchudruk*. These are the six yogas of Niguma, who was Naropa's spiritual wife. These six practices of the man, and six practices of the woman, have been very powerful and influential in Tibetan Buddhism.

I don't know if you're aware, but Naropa wrote fifteen different secret books and they are all in the *Tengyur*. We have them due to the kindness of John Brady, along with the other four and a half thousand texts of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. Master Naropa wrote on many subjects; I think for us the most interesting are his six teachings, which have led to the yoga practices of heart yoga, what we're calling heart yoga — which were described to you by Ani Chukyi and Ani Jigme Pelma, I think it was yesterday morning — and will be the main emphasis of all the yoga which we are teaching people on the tour, for example. But I think it's exciting that Naropa's spiritual partner, wife, Niguma also wrote six practices. They are very, very similar to Naropa-hla's, and I think they have a special power unto themselves having been taught and spread by a woman.

Her text on the six practices is also found in the *Tengyur*. And I have to say with a kind of shame, that it is one of the only books by a woman in the entire *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. I don't think there are more than ten out of almost five thousand works. I think it's very auspicious in this gathering to speak about this powerful woman. I think we see with the powerful women who have completed the three year retreat and who have spoken to us, and also the powerful women who have made the retreat happen, that there is some kind of, in my mind, a turning point coming. And we have seen incredible

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women practitioners, like Venerable Tenzin Palmo who spent twelve years in very difficult retreats in the Himalayas, and Pema Chodron-hla, and other great women lamas. So I think it's a turning point in the history of Buddhism. I think as Buddhism enters this country, and also we see among the sister lineages of yoga, we see powerful ladies coming as great teachers and lamas. And it's my privilege to have been their student.

So let's talk about how did Niguma get to be so great. You remember that at the age of seventeen Naropa-hla had come back from Kashmir. You remember he had actually completed most of the ACI courses by the age of seventeen. It's probably a root "a-k-i" in Sanskrit. *[laughs]* Not really. He was seventeen years old, he was back from Kashmir; his mother was happy that he had even returned. Remember, his parents were king and queen and they started to put pressure on him: "Naropa-hla, time to get married." And actually his name at that time was Gunganagarba, but anyway, "Time to get married."

He was a very respectful young man. He didn't want to openly refuse his parents so he said, "I'm very happy to get married. I'll definitely get married if you can find the girl of my dreams. So first of all her name has to be Chemama Vimala, the girl without any hint of stain, the girl of purity. She should be exactly sixteen years old. She has to come from a Brahman family, high caste priestly family, and her mind has to be one hundred percent Mahayana," which was practically impossible to find all of those things combined a thousand years ago in India.

So Naropa-hla was feeling pretty clever. *[laughs]* The king was upset but he said, "I'll try." He chose two of his ministers and he said, "Go find this girl."

They went through the whole countryside, through village after village. They couldn't find any of this impossible combination. And then one day they were sitting exhausted at a well, and a young girl comes up to draw water from the well and they say, "You look nice."

And she says "Okay..." *[laughs]*

And they say "What's your name?"

"Oh, my name's Vimala."

"Oh, really? But how old are you?"

"Oh, I'm only sixteen"

"Oh, what is your parentage? Are you parents... what caste?"

"Oh, they're Brahmans."

"And do you have some urgings toward becoming a tantric angel who can go on every planet and..." *[laughs]*

And she said "Exactly so," *[laughs]* which means her state of mind.

So the ministers were overjoyed and they followed her home. They went to her father, a high Brahman, and they said, "The prince of our little country wishes to marry your daughter."

And the father said, "Out of the question." There was too much of a gap between the prince that they had described and his daughter.

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So the ministers did an interesting thing, they sat down on the front lawn of the house and said, “We will stay here until we starve to death.” *[laughs]*

And they were getting skinner and skinnier, and people from the village started to ask why they were sitting there starving. And they said, “Oh, it’s all the fault of the Brahman. He won’t release his daughter.”

And there was such a public outcry that the Brahman finally relented and Niguma went to be married to Naropa-hla.

There’s a question about why her name is Niguma. Some sources, ancient books — and I have used about five or six ancient books for these talks — say that her mother’s name was Negu and her brother’s name was Nagu, so she was named Niguma. But I think those of you who know some Sanskrit, the word “nirguna” means “emptiness,” “that which is beyond all attributes.” And I sort of have a suspicion that her name was Nirguna.

So she came home and they got married. Naropa-hla was a little disappointed. And they spent eight years in married life. But it seems that all during that time, Naropa-hla was training Niguma in the sutras and tantras which he had already learned. You remember he had already studied Kalachakra tantra, and Chakrasamvara tantra, and Vajra Yogini therefore. So for eight years they had a very sweet relationship, a sweet marriage. But Naropa-hla was dissatisfied, he wanted to go deeper into his own studies, and as we said he decided he would like to become a monk. So he and Niguma, who was excited and enthusiastic that Naropa-hla should go deeper into his studies, were plotting how to get out of the marriage.

Naropa-hla didn’t want to upset his parents. He was very devoted to his parents. So Niguma-la made a great sacrifice. She told Naropa-hla, “You should tell your parents that I have been unfaithful to you. You should lie and tell everyone that I am a soiled woman.”

In India, this is a very serious matter. It was giving up everyone’s opinion of her. She would be treated like an animal after that. She was insistent, and so the word was spread to the king and queen. Naropa-hla was allowed to leave for the monastery. Niguma-la followed him secretly, they continued their dharma relationship.

You know the story after that. Naropa-hla spent years studying, reaching a high pinnacle in the monastery. And then made the great decision to leave and seek the higher practices because of the vision of the old hag who had come to him. We also spoke about the twelve visions and the twelve tests that Naropa-hla’s guru Tilopa put him through.

There’s sort of a funny test that I think shows the advancement of Naropa-hla’s relationship with the opposite sex. About half way through his trials, Tilopa calls Naropa-hla into the room and says, “You know, you’ve got to get a girlfriend.”

Naropa-hla says, “I still have monk’s vows. I can’t go get a girlfriend.”

Tilopa says, “I told you to get a girlfriend.” *[laughs]*

So he goes and he chooses a young woman. They start to have a relationship. Tilopa encourages him to get a job. He starts to work as a blacksmith. He’s miserable. They say that the relationship started with great ardor and then deteriorated to the point

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where, like many marriages or relationships, Naropa-hla and the young lady wouldn't even speak to each other. But they had to stay together.

Then one day Tilopa — these crazy gurus, right? — shows up and bangs open the door, breaks in, and says, “Naropa-hla what are you doing?”

He says, “I'm doing what you told me to do.”

“You can't stay with a girl, you're a *gelong!* You're a monk. Are you crazy?” He drags him out of the house.

He says, “Now I think you should undertake some kind of penance. You should do something to punish yourself.”

I don't like to speak with inappropriate language in a teaching, but Naropa-hla went to the side. He got a big rock. He pulled out his penis and he smashed it.

You know what happens next.

Tilopa-la comes back and says, “What the hell are you doing?” *[laughs]*

Naropa-hla says, “You told me I should do something to make up.”

Tilopa heals him, the text says, “to the point where he could urinate.” *[laughs]* Then he says, “I think now you're ready to learn some important practices about the inner channels and *chakras*, and they require that you have a partner.” And the whole thing changes around as usual.

He taught Naropa-hla the great practices of opening the central channel. I think this is where Naropa-hla learned many of the yoga *asanas* and other physical ways of opening the inner channels.

I think it's interesting, I'm not sure why we can speculate, but this is the moment at which Tilopa chose to give him the name “Naropa.” This is where his name changes to Naropa. I've done a lot of checking to try to find out about the name Naropa. There's a very weird ancient Tibetan text which says that Naropa means “*nara utakpa*,” meaning “a high person.” A person of high caste, usually; a high kind of Brahman. But it could be that now Tilopa is telling Naropa, “You've become a real man. Now you know what it is to really become a man.”

And we see the word “Naropa” spelled as “Narotapa.” Often, I think those of you who do the *dakkye*, there are places where he's called “Narotapa” as well as “Naropa.” But there are even more important sources in the *Tengyur* where he is called “Nadapada.” He's not called “Naropa” at all. I think this is a very significant. *Nada* refers to the inner sound, and the inner channels are called *nadi* because they flow with the inner sound. *Pada* means “*shok*” in Tibetan, means “the great one.” Meaning someone you could touch your head to their feet. *Pada* means “feet,” but it's always attached to the end of a great lama's name. His Holiness the sweet Dalai Lama is also called Tenzin Gyatso Shok, meaning Tenzin Gyatso Pada. So *pada* is also often connected to the name of a high lama. So Naropa's true name appears to have been Nadapada. And in paintings of *Narokachu*, the version of Vajra Yogini which we follow, which we were taught by Khen Rinpoche, which came from Naropa, he is actually called Narocachu or Narocondur is called Nadi Dakini. Nadi Dakini. So Naropa was given his name — actually the master

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of the inner channels, Nadapada — when he began his new kind of relationship and his new kind of study into the deeper channels and winds.

I'd like to say a little more about that. It's not appropriate to teach tantra to a large group. Tantra, the secret teachings, are meant to be taught in groups of two or three people. But as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has done, or holy Lama Khen Rinpoche, we can speak generally about general principles of the inner channels.

We saw in the Yoga Sutra last Thanksgiving a description of the two channels on the side of the body running down either side of the backbone. One called *surya*, one called *chandra*. *Chandra*, meaning “the moon,” is the small channel running down from between the eyebrows of the skull and then down following the path of the backbone, on the left side. It is called the moon because it has a cool energy and a feminine energy. Then *surya*, the sun channel, runs down — as Master Patanjali was describing — the right side of the backbone and it carries the male energy which is more hot.

Both of these channels also carry an extremely powerful negative energy. That's why Master Patanjali was talking about the two channels as containing either objects or consciousness. The left-hand channel, the feminine channel, carries our misperception about ourselves. The right-hand channel carries our misperception about our world. When you come across an irritating person and you feel hatred for them because you don't realize they are only a mirror of your own karma, then you have strong terrible energies running through your right channel at that moment. When you think about your own body or your own mind and you fail to understand that it also is a projection of your own karma, you don't even know how to make yourself happy. This negative energy, tremendous powerful negative energy, is running in your left-hand channel.

The goal of the physical yoga exercises is to slightly ease the pain and the blockage caused by these negative energies — trying to force tiny bits of energy into the central channel, the middle channel. This channel is shut down in most people. This channel is like a... you can think of it like a hose, a garden hose, which has been flattened and can't carry anything through it, no water can come through it. It's flattened and crushed, and it's not running properly.

If you can ever get your thoughts and the energy of your mind out of the two side channels, and drive it into the central channel, you perceive emptiness directly. If you can perceive emptiness directly, then within seven lifetimes, typically, you can become a being who can guide countless beings on countless planets. You yourself will become such a being. You have the potential, as Trisangma said. All of us have the potential. It's extraordinary to think that after billions of lifetimes, if you could grasp the teaching being given in the Yoga Sutra that you could completely change into a being of light. Go to countless planets. Serve countless people. You have this capacity. We will all achieve this shortly.

But the energies have to be brought into the central channel. The two side channels must become... in the text it says *shavavat*, like a corpse. We have to try to shut them down and open the middle one. And then naturally all the feminine energy and masculine energy would also be joined into the central channel.

Our body takes on the shape of the energy in the channels; that's why the backbone forms as a child, that's why those bones form. They are forming around the

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central channel like ice around a tree twig. And depending on which channel is running more strongly at your birth you will become male or female, and your body will take on the sexual organs and sexual characteristics of a male or a female. If the energy is running more in the left channel, your body will come out of your mother's womb as a female body and it will become a male's body if your energy is running more in the right channel. We all have female and male energies, but whichever one predominates at the time of birth determines even the kind of body you have, man or woman.

Some people have over the course of their lifetimes developed a more equal energy, but still in the wrong channels, and these people become homosexuals. They are attracted... they have both energies flowing equally or strongly. Some of that energy sometimes can enter the central channel and some of the most talented people in history, I'm thinking of Leonardo DiVinci and Michelangelo, had both energies driving through their body but still in the side channels, still a kind of very strong negative energy. Still linked to misunderstanding your world.

And so there are special practices, when we do *asanas* we are trying to loosen *granthis*, or knots, where the side channels cross and tie around the central channel like a vine. Sometimes they are even given the word "vines." They choke our central channel. If you can't open your central channel before you die, you will have to die. If you can open your central channel, open clear in this lifetime, you don't have to die.

Does a normal person ever experience the opening of the central channel? Only on two occasions normally, in a normal person's life. One is at death. You and I have died countless times; you know what I'm talking about. Deep down inside you, way down inside, you know what I'm talking about. You've done it countless times. You have felt it countless times. As you die, there's a capsule at the heart which bursts open like the water of a woman in labor and there's a rush of energy, briefly, through the central channel. It feels like a grape being crushed and bursting open with its water. And then there's a flush of energy through the central channel, and then everything shuts down again and you enter the *bardo*. And you begin to take a new birth of suffering.

Also, when people engage in sexual activity, when a man and a woman have sex, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama described at the Kalachakra, I remember, before we went into retreat in Bloomington, only during the height of orgasm of a man and a woman does the central channel, briefly, a tiny bit of energy passes through the central channel and there's this sensation of the water, the fluid bursting forth, very similar to death itself. And so for a tiny few seconds, there's an experience of the central channel opening.

If you can perceive emptiness directly, for those few minutes the central channel is wide open. The negative thoughts of left and right channels are stopped. The power, energy, all thrust down to the area of the navel and the sexual organs, and then drives back up through the central channel and you perceive emptiness directly. And then seven lifetimes later, or faster if you use the higher teachings. You can, if you bring all of that energy into the middle, into the center, and if the two side channels collapse completely, then your body bursts one more time but this time into a body of light and you achieve enlightened angel's body. You become a Buddha. You become Tara. You become Vajra Yogini. Yourself.

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You must, you must understand that at that moment you can go to countless beings, countless creatures — no matter human or animal — and you can go to them directly, each one, and you can serve them, help them, protect them, keep them from dying, teach them these things. It's not some kind of funny practice, or it's not some kind of silly exercises. These are holy, powerful methods of achieving what we all seek to be. You want so very much to serve countless other beings. It's the only reason we live. Deep down inside, each of us wants to serve countless other beings. You will become that. It can happen. You will achieve that. It's everything you ever wanted. It's the only reason we live.

And so teachings like Naropa's six yogas and especially Niguma, her six yogas, they are all only meant to achieve this goal. And as you get closer to that goal, the power of more energy entering the central channel changes your karmic seeds completely. You meet people, people come to you. They look like normal people to other people, but they are angels. They are enlightened beings. They come to you. They begin to come to you, one after another. They begin to teach you. The energy is entering the central channel. They come to you in many forms and teach you how to move the energies, how to bring everything into the central channel. They come to you, angels come to you. Other people see them as normal people because their minds are, frankly, very dirty and filthy. They can't see what you can see if you have practiced sincerely for your life. And then holy practices are taught.

Why do you think men and women are so attracted to each other? People are shy to talk about it. Why? There's a power on this planet: the entire population of males are attracted to the entire population of females. People throughout their lives, in this realm, have a strong, almost irresistible attraction to people of the opposite sex. It's all founded in the channels. The channels of a man are deficient in the feminine energy. The channels of a woman are deficient in the male energy. The two energies coming together create a whole. Each person achieves a balance, a total union of the two energies when the energy's thrust into your central channel, male and female, when your body changes, you are totally balanced, you are one hundred percent woman and you are one hundred percent man. And Buddhas, angels, they don't have sexual organs. They don't have male or female identity, because they are one hundred percent male and one hundred percent female. And they can choose to show themselves as Tara or they can choose to show themselves as a Dalai Lama. But they are pure, and they are total, they are unified.

And the reason for the attraction between men and women is a deep, deep urge to become a holy angel. Is an indomitable urge to become complete and to become an angel who can go to help all living beings.

We said at the beginning that Naropa-hla's life is meant to be an example for all of us. And we can see how his relationship with his spiritual wife has changed through his lifetime. It begins as the normal worldly relationship that you discover at age sixteen, something physical. It's an expression of the inner urge to become an angel. Later this becomes an emotional attachment, men and women support each other emotionally. Later it becomes a wish for companionship. Later it can become a financial arrangement, one is working one is not. They are pooling their finances. It can become a family relationship with the birth of children. There is an urge for reproduction. But behind all of these urges is a higher urge: to complete one's inner being and become a tantric angel,

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become like a Christ or a Buddha who can help billions of people at one time. And then the relationship shifts to something higher.

At the end of his trials, Naropa-hla is sent out by Tilopa, “Now you go. You wander the world. You do good things.”

Naropa-hla takes his bowl. The bowl for a yogi is normally a part of a human skull so we can always remember our own death. And you see on the cover of your notebook, Naropa-hla is taking his meal or his drink with a bowl made of a human skull. It’s not some strange, dark, evil, corrupt practice. It’s not some dirty thing. It’s totally beautiful, shining, extraordinary realizations. “I will hold my food inside the head of a person who died and my own head will be used by another yogi later.” And then you don’t waste your time.

Naropa-hla goes begging with his bowl just wearing the cloth that you see on him. He still has total monk vows. How could you become enlightened without pure vows? And he is chanting a mantra called *vidurya*. It’s a special mantra which allows you to eat whatever people throw in your bowl. *[laughs]* People ask why Tibetan monks eat meat. It comes from the ancient custom of eating whatever someone throws in your bowl. I think nowadays that people have control over what they eat. Great lamas, like Khen Rinpoche, have stopped eating meat. So it’s sort of a challenge for mischievous people to throw something in his bowl which he won’t be able to digest. *Vidurya* is a mantra of digestion to be able to eat whatever junk they throw in your bowl.

So a mischievous kid throws a razor blade in his bowl. Naropa takes it on his tongue, it turns to butter, to ghee, and he enjoys the taste of the razor blade. The kid runs to the local town, starts spreading this story that there’s this yogi who can eat knives and razor blades. The king hears the story and to make fun of the yogi, he orders his elephant brought out. He fixes steel swords on the front of the elephants tusks, tells him to go get this yogi, “Let’s see if he can turn these swords to butter also.”

The elephant runs to attack Naropa. He gives it a stare in the eye and it drops dead.

The king is faced with several thousand pounds of elephant rotting in the middle of the street in front of his palace. It’s pretty bad. If you’ve ever been in India, Nepal... we were there, a large cow died next to teaching hall and no one will touch it, and it’s incredibly difficult. So everyone’s wondering how to pull this huge carcass out of the street.

Naropa-hla says, “No problem. I’ll do *trung juk*.” *Trung juk* is where a great yogi can put their mind into the body of a dead person or animal. Marpa was a great practitioner of that, Naropa’s student. And so he puts his mind into the elephant’s body. He walks it out of town.

He runs into his student Mitripa and says, “Hi.”

Mitripa turns around, “You sound just like Naropa.” *[laughs]*

“Actually I am. I’m just taking this body out of town for people.”

Then he walks out of town and leaves the body, and comes back to his own body.

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The king is amazed and he says, “If you’re such a great yogi, I would like to offer you my daughter to be your spiritual partner. Her name is “Jnyanadipi,” which means light of wisdom, and he begs Naropa to teach his daughter the higher teachings.

It’s a beautiful story. Naropa instructs her. She becomes a great yogini. Some of the clergy of the town are upset at this arrangement. They arrange some monkey business, and within a short time, people go into his room, they capture him, they tie him up, they beat him with sticks and stones, they take him to a post in the village square. They tie him there. They start a fire around him and they burn him to death.

The next day the king sends two servants to take the ashes to the river. When they get close to the ashes there’s a naked man and woman dancing there. It’s Naropa and his spiritual partner celebrating. And from then on Naropa begins to teach.

It’s a long story, we’ll talk about it later. But people come from Tibet and Nepal to study with Naropa-hla. Naropa-hla trains many people. Later in his life, Naropa realizes that the three ladies who came to him: first Niguma, as his wife, secondly the unnamed girl with whom he was trained with Tilopa, and then finally the princess of the king who was also burned with him and came back to life. He begins to realize, as we’ll see tomorrow, that all of these three ladies who came to him during his life were one angel. They were all the same angel, Vajra Yogini. From the very time that he was sixteen years old... seventeen years old, Naropa-hla has been trained, has been guided by one angel, by one sweet, holy, sacred angel. And he only recognizes it later in his life. All three of these ladies were a single angel.

I think if you look back in your own life as you learn more and more about world view, as you learn more and more about emptiness, I think you will begin to see that many people in your life have been angels guiding you. I’m not talking some new age, sweetie, metaphor thing; I’m talking real enlightened beings have been coming to you since your first high school boyfriend or girlfriend. They have been training you, guiding you. The energy of their channels has been affecting the energy of your channels. It has all been purposely done. Every relationship you’ve ever had is something very specific and special meant to change your inner channels.

And so, I think now, in our world, in our country, especially among people like yourselves who have been trained, who have understood where things are really coming from. Who understand that if your karmic seeds are strong and pure enough you will meet these angels directly and be trained by them. It’s time for you, if you are in a relationship with a man or a woman, you must turn this into your practice. It must become your practice. Your wife or your husband, your boyfriend or your girlfriend, they are not a normal person. It’s not an accident they have come to you. A being, a sacred, holy being has come to you, to guide you. You have to stop looking at them as a normal person. You have to realize there are forces infinitely greater than what you thought at work in your own life. You have to struggle to find the lama and the guru in your own wife or husband or your own partner. They are there. You have to find them. You have to use this powerful energy between a man and a woman to bring yourself to enlightenment.

And if you have a child, you must realize, these are not normal beings. You must realize that the same angel is coming to you as your child. Those of you who now have

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heard the Yoga Sutra, it's a kind of empowerment I'm giving to you now, at this moment. You stop looking at your children as normal beings; they are not. You stop looking at your partner or wife as a normal being; they are not. They have come to you, as they came to Naropa-hla, to bring you to a higher place. Every moment of the day now that you relate to them you have to struggle to see the truth of what I'm telling you.

Those of you who are ordained, you have the same relationship. Christian nuns wear a ring on the third finger of their left hand, which is sacred to Vajra Yogini also — I guess it's a coincidence — because they are married to Jesus and God. Many priests, Christian, have a deep devotion to Mary, the Mother, the Virgin. And it's appropriate and it's even a requirement for the ordained people here, those of us, you must enter into the same relationship mentally. And then that being will come to you and train you, either in their form of light, or in maybe in some other form. But it's the same for all of us.

[Prayers]

Morning: Day Four ☼ April 20
Salim Lee

Good morning. It's so good to see so many happy faces and very supple bodies! I played truant again this morning. When I found out that Lama Ruth-hla was going to teach yoga, I chickened out! I have my toast in the little lounge in the motel, together with the usual friends, but this time I was there first. Nobody was there. On the television was a very nice young rapper just singing his songs. And, then, somebody else came and asked if he could change the channel. Which he did. He kept flicking around channels until he came to the NBC channel. Right there, in big writing: "Texas-sized welcome for the seven POWs." Now, I thought that sizes only come in small, medium, large, and maybe, triple-X large! I didn't know there was a "Texas-size." I think we should ask Alison if they have Texas-size T-shirts. Oh, she has it, she says. I don't know why, but seeing that I just felt happy. To see that the prisoners of war had actually come home; to see their relatives there being interviewed. It's really so good to see.

But, somehow, my mind — this deluded mind — just drifted and for some strange reason I thought about that movie, "Gladiator." You know, I still remember the opening scene of this movie. Have any of you seen "Gladiator"? Yeah? Great. Well, in the opening scene, if I remember correctly, they are just going to have the final battle to conquer the last tribe or little country that would mean, as far as the Romans are concerned, that they'd conquered the world. Then the entire conquest would be complete. So, the scene shows the emperor after the battle was fought and won. Finally, his lifelong ambition to conquer the world, and make the greatest empire was fulfilled, yet this old emperor, looking despondent calls his general. Having got all that he wanted, he realized that it was not really what he wanted. What he's seeking was apparently something else. He kept thinking that what he wanted was this big empire, the Roman Empire, the mighty Roman Empire. He noticed that he's a lot older, a lot weaker, and with the intrigues going on he realized that he felt a lot more vulnerable after having won all that. He tries to find a solution. He's realized now that it's so easy to lose everything he's got, right? He tries to find something he could depend on, that he could count on, that he could use to protect him. So that, at least, whatever he has he could try to preserve.

He turned to his general at that time, who happened to be an Australian, [laughter], very famous Australian general. The emperor said, "Look. I know you are not related by blood to me, but I always look upon you as my son. Now I'm calling on you, calling upon you, to actually protect and preserve whatever we have gained." The general said, "Oh no. You know, I do it because I really love you. I work for you anyway, you know." The emperor kept insisting. Finally, the general understands. The emperor then says, "Look, please take this job to protect all that we have got with so much blood and after so much suffering. I'm old. I know my children are not up to it, and there are so many intrigues going on in the palace in Rome." So he says, "Look, I'll give the entire kingdom to you. The entire kingdom, not just a province or a state." The emperor says, "Look, take everything. Preserve this so that I can be peaceful." He

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mentions that word. Now he realizes that's actually what he wanted. It's just a simple thing, like the peaceful mind that you and I can get easily just watching the sunset, without conquering an empire. You see? And that kind of brings us to the point. Going to our prayers this morning, was very similar to that emperor, that feeling. I guess in this tent we all can feel we haven't done too badly, can't we? We also notice that, of course, we can do more, or get more, or become better. But one thing's for sure: we too are going to lose all of this.

Whether it is an empire, or our health, or our friendships, anything — we're going to lose it all. And if there is such a person, or if there is anything at all that can preserve that, or can even hopefully finally give us what we really want, wouldn't we want to give him anything and everything? I think it's a fair exchange. We have all this beautiful Arizona, with the mountains, covered with flowers; the fragrance and the sunlight and the moonlight. Did you see the beautiful moon the other night? It's really lovely, and the sun and everything. I think, just to get what we always wanted, which is happiness, I think we would be quite willing to give all that. And then we could depend and count on something or somebody that enables us to achieve that. That is the point of doing the mandala offering and taking refuge. It's exactly like that. This is for the benefit of all us. It just struck me, when I saw that Gladiator movie. And you know, it shows very clearly that if we can count on something or somebody to really give us what we've always been after, which is really so simple, just happiness, we would trade that with anything we have.

Venerable Elly is going to lead us in meditation this morning. With that frame of mind, we'll do these two traditional things. As we know, we do the mandala offering, meaning, we would give anything and everything we have. In fact, the wording is almost the same, isn't it? I mean, the mountain that's covered with these flowers, the sunlight, the beautiful moon, the oceans, anything, everything. We give that to get something that we can count on. Taking refuge is no more than counting on that thing. So, we will do that. We will offer the Mandala — and it's not even enough really — so that we can receive in return something we can count on to really get what we want, which is this very simple happiness. To get that, we will count on this one. And what do we count on? In the refuge prayer, we are saying that we count on the Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Actually, the ultimate meaning of this refuge is that we count on the fact that anything can change if we have what it takes to change it. Whatever we wish, we could get it, if we know how to get it. Now that knowledge, that conviction, we count on that. That is, actually, the ultimate meaning of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha.

And we also have to realize that the biggest obstacles to obtaining that is actually when we forget that when we say "me", it's not really "me". I have to have my world, somehow, have happiness like that. You are always there. I'm never alone without my environment. I'm never alone without the people around me, so there's no point in achieving that happiness, and it's almost impossible to achieve that kind of happiness, if my surroundings are still miserable. So, acknowledging that is, more or less, the heart of the wish for bodhicitta. So with this frame of mind, let's do this prayer as part of our meditation. Bring our mind here and now, in this tent, now. Don't worry about this morning, don't worry about what's going to happen this afternoon or tomorrow, don't worry about what happened last week; just bring our mind here and now, and just worship. Just relax, and just let everything go. And just bring the mind here and now,

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and then, really from our heart, really reaffirm that conviction: we're going to, we're willing to give everything up to get something that we can use to really get what we want.

[Prayers]

I forget to mention, actually, I seek your indulgence to allow me to sit here. I really feel privileged, actually, particularly, yesterday when John-hla asked whether there were any new Buddhists here. I put my hand up also. It's not just trying to be funny or anything. I really believe, I still feel I'm new in that thing. But then, also, I immediately realized that, actually, that kind of division is meaningless. New Buddhists, old Buddhists, senior students, new students, what else do we usually say? Advanced and beginners. Maybe for yoga class you can tell immediately. But for what we do, can we really divide like that? I just wonder. So, I understood when she put her hand up to say that I'm new, because I did so also. In this tent there are so many teachers, so many people that are teaching you.

Someone just grabbed me up front and said, "I want to ask you something." I said, "Yes, please. I'll see if I can help." She says, "Is Buddhism a religion? What do you think?" I asked, "What do you mean by religion? If you mean by religion there is criteria, like, it has to have holy books, it has to have rituals, it has to have, I don't know, a prophet or a leader, things like that, then, you know, it may qualify. Buddhism may just qualify on that. But I wouldn't even say that, because really there's one thing about religion that's generally very clear — who the leader is. Like, you know the pope, or Muhammad, or Jesus. And someone says, "How about Buddha?" Well, to me, Buddha is just a description of a stage where somebody has achieved a certain state, you know, like a doctor or a farmer. You know, it's no more than that. One of the characteristics of so-called Buddhism is that if there are 245 people here, then, actually, there are 245 schools of Buddhism, because we all understand it exactly according to ourselves. And, by the way, they are all true, they are all correct. Anyway, it was quite a long talk, and finally we, sort of, came to a comfortable definition. I wonder, what was that definition? We said it's a "spiritual way of life," or something like that. I think she came up with that. I think that's very close. "Spiritual way of life." And even that, you know, the "spiritual" bit, I think it's sounding quite nice with the "spiritual" in there, instead of just saying "way of life."

Basically, what it means is that Buddhism is only a name that's applied when we hold a certain way of thinking to conduct our life. That's why I'm a great advocate of a small "b" in "buddhist," instead of this big "B", capital letter "B," "Buddhist," you know. I was going to mention that but I saw so many people doing it, so I'd better not. To be Buddhist doesn't mean that you have to have a mala on your left arm, for instance, or to have this red cord. It's not that. It's about your mind, in the way you look at things. It's the way you look at this room. Now we all follow this, and coming to places like this is just so humbling. It really is. You know, to listen to all of you, talking to you, and then talking to the teachers that have already come, and then talking to our teacher, Geshe Michael, really just shows how little you know. So really, and that's a confession, I have very little knowledge. My practice is very, very bad. I seem to say this every time, but it really is. But then, like last time I always say that, I'm counting on just my motivation.

Today what I'd like to do is to share whatever I have in my mind, or whatever

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little understanding I have about all these great things. Like, what's the purpose of life and all that, and I'd just like to share with you. So I wouldn't even call this a teaching. It's just sharing this information with you. Because it's only sharing opinions like that, so I would appreciate questions, interruptions, and even different opinions. I think it would be fun that way, okay?

It seems that people in the world when they have nothing to do, nothing better to do should I say, the perennial question is always, "Who am I?" "What is this life for?" "Where do I come from?" Do we have those kinds of questions in our mind? Well, really, if we don't go that deep, one of the pertinent questions is, actually, "What do we really want?" If we are here, there must be a reason, because we're used to being told that there must be a reason for everything. So, as we are here, there must be a reason why we are here. And, actually, what are we after? Now, what do you think we're after? Why do we come here at all? To hear Geshe Michael Roach teach?

[Audience: inaudible]

Well, that's it. Perfect answer, perfect answer. We come here, really, because we just want to be happy, and we hope, fervently, that Geshe Michael will tell us how because we've tried everything else, right? And it seems at this stage it's quite a good idea to come here to listen to what Geshe-la teaches and learn how to be happy. In the same way like when we had breakfast this morning — the fact that we chose jelly instead of peanut butter. We also want to be happy. Again, last night, it seems that when the teaching is finished the next meeting is always conducted at Safeway. [laughter] We, kind of, congregate there, and, then, "Oh hi," — everybody's there. And even at that time of the night I can still see you sweating to choose, wow, which potato chips should I have thick ones or thin ones, vinegar ones or barbecue? We still want to be happy even at that time of the night. It seems that that's true. Now, His Holiness says, it's almost an inalienable right. You do not have to justify it. It's really that deep down, that the whole purpose of aspiring to anything at all, whether I move my leg, or get up in the morning, or eat that grape jelly and all this, or come here, or do meditation, or give a donation to anybody, it's just to be happy; pure and simple.

Actually, we can all pack up and go home, can't we! It really is that. It's so simple. The problem is that we don't even know what happiness really is sometimes. When we're lazy, we just look around. The television tells us that happiness means having 2.1 children, according to statistics; girls picking daisies on the roadside; little boys chasing kites; and the husband and wife holding hands at sunset. That's happiness. You just follow that. Or, if you think that happiness is owning the latest, what do you call it, SUV. Is it called that here? In Australia it's the "four-wheel drive", and now it's apparently the big thing. Really, if that's happiness then — oh, and when I get promoted to that position — I will be forever happy. Or, looking around again, it seems that, according to the television or the paper or even looking around at your neighbors, if you have a lot of money you'll be happy. Now this is all a cliché. You've heard it all before. They're obviously not it. We often confuse the issue, like, having your desire satisfied, is equivalent to happiness.

Now, in fact, what we learn is that fulfilling one desire is itself already flagging that there's going to be further problems, because that desire will quickly be replaced by another desire. That's what we talked about last time. Remember, we said that, really,

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very often when we think that we want something, like, I think last time we talked about if we want a new car, is it the case that we want a new car, or do we want the wish or desire to have a new car fulfilled? Which one do you think? You know, it's only to fulfill the desire to have the new car. It's the same way when we want that delicious food — whatever you can imagine. You have to ask yourself, "Do I really want that taste of the food, or is it the case of another desire coming up and I'm trying to fulfill that desire again?" If you check it out so simply, you'll find that our life, the whole series of our lives, is nothing but this futile effort to continuously fulfill those desires. The books tell us, desires have only two possibilities: either fulfilled or it's unfulfilled, right? But either one, you see, either one will be replaced by another desire. And this is the crux of the problem. So whether you fulfill this current desire, or you don't fulfill it, it doesn't matter. It's going to be replaced by another one. You see, if we just follow this, if we're just being lazy, if we just we look around and take our lead from newspapers, from TV, from our neighbors, for sure it will be an endless and thankless task — impossible to achieve, because one desire will be replaced by another, by another, by another.

Just like that emperor, when he started his kingdom was still small, and got bigger, bigger, bigger, and in the end he realized, wow, it's a series of fulfilling desires; then there's another desire, another desire. So, you see, this kind of thing, this unsatisfactoriness, the nature of our existence then, if we consist of just fulfilling this desire, then it's unsatisfactory, isn't it? Because you cannot get satisfaction from fulfilling one desire, because immediately — when I say immediately it could be three days, it could be three hours, three seconds, it could be three years — it will be replaced by another desire.

Now, this unsatisfactoriness is actually what Lord Buddha calls *dukkha*, suffering. I'm not saying that all life is suffering, because the moment when that desire is fulfilled, when you get your new car, you call yourself happy; you're glad that you did that, that you have this, you know. I don't know, this nice smelling macaroni and cheese . . . I only found out last night that there is a soy cheese here. You see, you learn all the time. I always love the supermarkets in America. Best place to practice. *[laughter]*

You see, if we could look at our life very simply, then, we'd know now. Lord Buddha took 49 days to think, "If I tell all these people it's so easy and it's so simple, would they believe me?" To say, look guys, the way you live like that, you can't win. Because in-built, in you, is your habit, your habituation of looking at life like that continuously. And then, you say, right now there is the cause for that. The cause for it is that, basically, whatever we do, whatever we experience is, actually, a result of whatever we did before. So, when we are not satisfied with something, do you think that will bring something that will satisfy our craving? No way. That way of thinking will be repeated again, and again, and again. That's why, in Buddhism, there is no such thing as "human nature." They say, violence, oh that's human nature. Or when you're in business they say, well, in business, you can't tell the truth all the time, it's okay to cheat; it's human nature. No. In Buddhism what we have is just human habit. Even violence, it's 100% just habit. And, just like all habits, it can change. But we'll get to that later.

So, the cause is just that we habituated ourselves in doing the same thing all the time. Technically, it's called the 'cause of suffering' and generally it blames two things: karma and pleasure. Now, if you think about it, what is pleasure? Mental affliction,

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right? The ignorance – *lobha, krodha, moha*. Geshe Michael talked about all that last night. But, if you think about it, you could almost say pleasure is nothing but the habituated karma that ripens all the time. It's an habitual tendency. That's why it's called pleasure, because we keep doing the same thing. All the time, right? So, when we get jealous, we know it, and that's why we do it all the time. So, the cause of that, it's just nothing else; it's just because we habituated ourselves in the way we think and the way we act, and that's why it's perpetuated all the time. This is why Geshe Michael translates *samsara* as "vicious cycle," and I think it's correct. Because that's all we do, we keep searching all the time.

But then Lord Buddha said, look, there are those things we can stop and there is a way. Now, those are what we call the Four Arya Truths. So the basic teaching of Buddhism, again, is so simple, is so mundane. There is no sacredness at all about this basic tenet, which makes it really very hard to say if that's a tenet of Buddhism. We could hardly call it religion, could we? Because, generally, religion invokes this divine interference, and things like that. It's just downright simple. Buddhism, is just so simple. This teaching is just talking about a very simple thing.

Buddhism has always used the same handbook since it was devised. The textbook is always the same. What are the textbooks in Buddhism? What are the textbooks? The Five Books? No. The Lam Rim? No.

[Audience: inaudible]

That's right. The textbook that we use is always our mind. That's why it doesn't have to be revised. Still first edition, and it's still the same! [laughter] It's always the same. Always right. It's our mind. Just like His Holiness says. All this unhappiness outside, really, it's the business of our mind, because it's proven. Materially, we are so much more advanced, so much more sophisticated, and all that, but it still can't solve our problem of being unhappy, because it's the problem of our mind, isn't it? That's what His Holiness would say, right?

Now if you want to fix what is, basically, mind's problem, fix it with your mind. So don't even bother to manipulate your outside things. That's another rule: problem of our mind, we fix it with our mind. Now the way to do that, the way to stop the problem, the way to stop this desire, the way to stop. . . You know, what happened with desire? Desire makes your mind, kind of, always agitated. You're always moving somewhere. Just like if you look at the airport, hundreds of thousands of people, they're going somewhere. They're always moving. They're going somewhere. And, that's why I think yesterday or the day before, Geshe Michael explained the root word of pleasure. It's *klish*, meaning to agitate. So the mind is agitated because it has a 'pleasure attack'. That's why it's not a happy mind. In other words, you can almost reverse the definition. If there's no agitation, if there is no pleasure operating, then the mind will be calm and that is equivalent to happiness. Right? So the definition of happiness, more or less, and His Holiness also uses this word, it's really peace of mind. The mind that is calm, is not riddled with desire, is not riddled with jealousy, not riddled with all this pleasure. So that is really what happiness is.

Now, this is exactly what Master Patanjali tell us in his Yoga Sutra. In fact it's the second sutra: *Yoga Chitta Virtti Nirodha*. Yoga is the cessation? Yoga is trying to

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cease; the cessation of the fluctuation of the mind — exactly this definition. So, the purpose of yoga, as written by Master Patanjali, is exactly the same. That is, the cessation of the fluctuation of the mind. Which means, happiness. It means bliss. And that is the purpose of the whole thing. When your mind no longer fluctuates it's equivalent to happiness. So, the whole thing is to try to get this mind calm, free from fluctuation. Sometimes it's called 'free from mortification' and all that. So it's all the same.

Now, in the Yoga Sutra, this teaching, I feel so ashamed talking about the Yoga Sutra in front of many, many people that are so much more conversant with the work and more expert on these things. I just learned the Yoga Sutra when Geshe Michael first mentioned it. I went to get the book and started learning it. It's amazing. And since then it was just so engrossing it's just unbelievable. It's almost like a magnet, you know, the more you study, the more you find out that every single word is so packed, like Geshe Michael explained. So, for the last few days I'm just like a kid in a lolly shop, you know, every time Geshe Michael explained what the word means, it's just so incredible. Sometimes if I think about what I did in the past, sometimes it's kind of really incredible. It makes me feel a bit ashamed of myself. How dare I talk about the Yoga Sutra to all of you, having learned for just such a short time. That's why I call it "Yoga Sutra by Dummies." [laughter]

Basically, in the Yoga Sutra, again by dummies — oh, one qualification by the way, whatever I say here, right, please add the words, "to you." Meaning, "it's only to me" it's like that, right? So, I'm not saying, "This is the truth,". It's just, "to me", it's like that, right? So I make this qualification. So feel free to disagree, and in fact, you must question this. These all come from me, don't take what I say too seriously. But I'm just sharing. So whatever I say is just, to me, like that. To me, it is the truth.

One of my favorite quotations is from Master Nagarjuna, when he was asked, what is truth? And he said, "Truth is that which helps." "Truth is that which helps." To me it's an incredible definition. How many wars started because we wanted to discover the truth? How many fights, how much unhappiness to find the truth? Is there any truth out there? No. Is there any truth out there that everybody agrees on? No. This is why Lord Buddha says, there's only one ultimate truth. That is, that everything has no nature of its own. Nothing has a nature of its own. Emptiness. *Shunyata*. It's the only thing. You know what it means, that one. That is, actually, a very wild statement. If *shunyata* is the ultimate truth, it means that everything else, whatever we experience, however we exist, whatever we have, is 100% interpretable. It's up to you how you interpret it. It's open to you how you behave. It's up to us. The whole thing is just changeable.

So, we come back to *chitta virtti nirodhah*, the cessation of the fluctuation of the mind, or the happiness that we are talking about. Master Patanjali said, look, you can only do it by really applying, very hard effort, with a lot of effort in these things, which is, I think, *abhyasa*. And the second one is *vairagya*, which is to try to develop a sense of non-attachment. It's just a sense of, I'm quite hesitant to use the word renunciation, but it's just non-attachment. So Master Patanjali said, look, the way you do that is with *abhyasa*, which is really constant effort, constant application, determination of wanting to do that, and *vairagya*, which is non-attachment. Or, Geshe Michael said, the other alternative is *ishvara pranidhanatva*, you just depend on the blessing of the guru. We'll

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get to back to that. I'd like to see this translation of *ishvara pranidhana*, don't you think, the way Geshe Michael translated it?

But we will get back to that, I think, later on. So there are two ways. This is the application, or the other one is following this blessing of the guru. Now within this *abhyasa* or this constant effort, Master Patanjali then enumerates the eight different steps or different limb, which are the *ashtanga*, *ashta anga* — the eight limbs. We're all learning it, I don't have to go through that. You've got, *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*. You've got the eight of them, right? The first five, they call it, 'the outer', and the last three, they call it, 'the inner', because it has to do with mind. Geshe Michael really explained that. So, the Yoga Sutra says that if you want to really achieve the cessation of the mind, you have to go through these eight steps. You start from *yama*, *niyama*, the *asanas*, the *pranayamas*, then *pratyahara*, meaning withdrawal of the senses, and then, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. Concentration, and then absorption is the last one, don't you think? Or, meditation and absorption?

[Audience: inaudible]

Absorption and meditation. But, the last one is *samadhi*. *Samadhi*, which is, really, that you define the space where your mind is going to operate and then you say, what is the point that you want to really think about or want to analyze? And then, if you think that way, and the more you work on it, the more you think like that, you realize that the "I", the person that's actually doing the meditation, even that disappears. Then the whole thing becomes just awareness, or the constant mindfulness on something. And that's called *samadhi*.

Now Geshe Michael mentioned this. In the first Quiet Retreat Teaching, Geshe Michael brought up this issue of *samadhi*. *Samadhi* means that your mind is always sharp, always on the job, always aware of what you do and why you do it. More or less like that. In the first Quiet Retreat Teaching, Geshe Michael talked about the inner kingdom. Now, the inner kingdom is also no different than when the mind stops fluctuating. You will get to the inner kingdom, because by then you have already gotten rid of everything else. And Geshe Michael then says, that we can get it in this lifetime. And that is called *jivan mukti*.

Now, Geshe Michael used the metaphor of if you look at an egg, it's not the finished product. There is something that will follow that. Right? If you see an egg, you know that it's not the finished product. But, I guess if you ask my daughter, she will say, over-easy or sunny-side-up! But what Geshe Michael meant is that we are all just like the egg, you know. That means that there is something else. There's a continuation of this one, of our existence. It must lead somewhere. And that somewhere is, he said using Jesus teaching, finally to reach the inner kingdom. Whatever you call it, inner kingdom, paradise, ultimate happiness, ultimate reality. Whatever you call it, that is where we're going to go.

Therefore, our life now is to try to achieve what is actually just our ultimate potential really. What we're trying to do now is to get to our ultimate potential. It's not that we have to invent something. It's just that if we do it constantly and we do it right, we will eventually achieve our potential, our ultimate potential, which is that happiness,

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that cessation of the fluctuation of the mind, that inner kingdom.

Now, to do that, there are teachings that show us why is it so hard. Now, of all those things, they say, *klesha*, the afflictive emotions or agitation, the agitator of our mind, and karma, means that we always experience something that we created beforehand. Always. It's almost like a vicious cycle, isn't it? So if you did not do it right in the beginning, how can it be right now? It could not. But, if we reverse that logic, as long as we still feel dissatisfied, as long as we still feel there is suffering in us, it must mean what? We created it beforehand. So now it seems that the mission, our lives' mission then, is to make sure that whatever we create will be experienced as nice things. In fact, in Buddhism, which I like very much, that's the definition of good and bad. Now maybe you have a feeling that I'm a little biased towards Buddhism, right?

Goodness, in Buddhism, is defined as the happiness of beings. So things are good if it brings a happy feeling. Things are bad if you experience suffering. It's as simple as that. There is no moral luggage in it, there is no other theory attached to it, there is no thesis. It's as simple as that. You can only call it 'good' if it brings a pleasant feeling for you, or 'bad' if it's an unpleasant one.

Now, if that's the case, then we want to create the seed that is always good, meaning, it results in being something pleasant. But why can't we do that all the time, or most of the time? Well, that is karma. But why do we keep doing it, if we know that? If we know that we're creating – no, let me rephrase it. If we know that until now we still feel that we suffer, meaning, still feel dissatisfied about something, you know, stiff leg, or feeling hot, or feeling jealous, or feeling, I don't know, low self-esteem, or whatever; if we still feel that, it means we're still creating the cause to feel that, right?

When will it stop? It doesn't seem that it's going to stop, because we keep doing the same thing again. But why? If we know now that what we want is just that simple cessation of the fluctuation of the mind, the happiness that is so simple, that sometimes, as I said, you know, even watching a sunset can be happiness, why can't we get that? What's the matter with us? Are we really that stupid? Well apparently yes. [laughter] You know, it's simple, but you know, there's just no magic to it. It's so simple, isn't it?

I mean, if good means the things we experience that are nice, we'll want to create something that we will experience as a nice thing. But what do we do? We do the opposite. Are we that stupid? Yes, we're stupid. Is it our fault? Hmmmm. Let's not talk about fault here, because we're all in the same club, right? We're doing the same thing. Now, that's what Lord Buddha said is that, yes, you are stupid (the whole course of that, if you want to know, is really one thing, and that is called '84,000 derivatives').

That's why the symbol in the center of the wheel of life is a pig. It's called *avidya* or *moha*. No, they are two different things, right? *Avidya* means you don't know how things are really. That's really the big cause. Or the other aspect of that is *moha*, meaning you do not understand that things do come from that cause. In other words, you're creating that yourself all the time. Somebody asked me the difference, last time, between this *avidya* and *moha*. Now, that is the difference. *Avidya* is that you really do not see things correctly. *Moha* is just that you do not understand the law of cause and effect. So those two things we have to fix, right?

Now then, the teaching gets really serious, because that challenges our basic

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thinking. You know what we've been doing so far? Every day, every moment, we always say, "I only want to be happy", right? We keep saying that. Is there anything wrong with that?

[Audience: inaudible]

Wow! Actually, perfect. It doesn't work. You see, exactly like Katherine was saying here, because it's a trick sentence, that one — "I want to be happy." There's a little problem there, because we always put the word "I" in front, much too often. Now, why is it wrong that I want to be happy?

[Audience: inaudible]

It's not the cause of happiness. When we look at the "I," in "I want to be happy," within that sentence there's something wrong. If the "I" is wrong, then there must be something in that definition of "I" itself, don't you think? Because the "to be happy" bit is correct. The "I", if that is the only possibility, it's only the "I," that's wrong. That means the way we define "I" is wrong. The way we understand "I" is wrong. Then there are nice words, like "self-cherishing" or "self-grasping," things like that. What it means is this very simple thing, really. Everything's very simple here, but very difficult to do. If you think "I" means just this — using Geshe Michael's word — "this bag of bones," I finish here, then you have no chance of making things work. Now, I'm going to just try to convince you in this argument by saying that.

Now, I'm not going to go really very deeply like, let us find this "I" in the aggregates or this "I" is not in the aggregates. It's a very simple thing. All of us here, do we ever get up in the morning, open our eyes, when it's only "I" that is there, meaning only this bag of bones that is there, with no environment, no surrounding, no beings, no anything else. No? Is it possible?

[Audience: inaudible]

No, no. Let's not get technical. It's very simple. I'm just asking a simple thing. In the morning when you get up, or wherever you are, do you ever see you, yourself, alone, with nothing else?

[Audience: inaudible]

No. You see? This is the clue. This is where we started wrongly, because when we think "I" we only think, "this one." And yet "I" is never, ever, ever, only this one. I — at least it includes my bed. [laughter] Or my coffee. Or my, what's that, computer, my room, my house. That's still okay, you know, if it's only that. Then, my neighbor, you know, my friend, my enemy. . . my goodness. [laughter] All of a sudden you say, "I want to be happy." Hang on. Which I? Only this? Not possible, because this is never the case. Yet, try to tell that to your biology teacher, that "I" is actually beyond this. They'll think you're crazy, right?

And I think, by definition, by Lord Buddha's definition, we're all crazy, by the way. Because crazy means... what does crazy mean, actually? Usually it means, things that you perceive or things that you understand are different than reality. Is that right? Does that sound familiar? Is that what we agreed this morning, that that's our problem also? So, actually, we're all crazy in that, it's just a degree of severity.

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When somebody's quite convinced that they have a room mate all the time, you know, I'm talking about "Beautiful Mind". Again, the Australian professor is in that movie, right? *[laughter]* I'm talking about that movie, "Beautiful Mind". Anybody seen that? You know, it's so cruel, don't you think? He was just happy to think that he's got a roommate, that he's got this little girl with him, and they lock him up. Smash his brain, and try to say you are sick; you need treatment.

Well, according to Lord Buddha, we're all like that. That's why Lord Buddha's already given up making this a lock-up, because there's that many of us. It's impossible! So they just let us roam around, you know. *[laughter]* And, because we're all more or less in the same predicament, I guess we can relate to each other better that way, at least. But once you start thinking differently, then you're strange. That's why they say when you start living Dharma you are swimming against the tide, because really, now this is the serious bit, every day we almost have to do that. If we want to do that, we better stop asking why's that. Almost always the other direction is better. And that is the technique; one of the techniques of practice is questioning everything and then doing that. You see, when we start to question that, I include the environment, include the people, and that means also asking did Lord Buddha say that? Or did the teachings say that, actually? Yes, yes, the teaching says that, very clearly.

When they talk about "person", generally, in Buddhism they say body, mind, and something else makes up a person, right? So, what is that venerable Elly? Is it called, "psycho-physical"? You used that word yesterday or today.

[Elly: inaudible]

Oh, she says she made it up! I thought that sounded very good. Psycho-physical base, or something like that. What it means is, our mind and our body, right? We usually know that's "me", that's "us", right, — the mind and the body. And, I think there's a mistranslation there, a little bit, or at least it's never elaborated, what does body mean? In the book, in the teaching, body, *rupa* – form, is defined as what? There are ten different things that make up form. Come on ACI teachers; you used to know that. Now, there are actually eleven parts. The *Abhidharma* says there are eleven parts of form or *rupa* or what we usually call 'body'.

Very quickly, generally, in teaching body, we understand body, we move. But do we really understand body? That's why this book says that form, in *Abhidharma*, consists of eleven parts. Form is just one of the heaps. There are five heaps. Form is one of the heaps. The next one is feeling, the other one is your ability to discriminate, right? The last one is consciousness, and then the fourth one is the rest of them, right? So, there are five heaps. The first heap is form. Now I'm just talking about the first heap.

What is form? By definition, there's eleven parts of form. There are five objects of the senses: sight, sound, touch, feeling, and smell, and five sense powers, and consciousnesses. According to *Vaibhashika* here, right? In the *Abhidharma*, the eleventh is called the 'undetectable form'. Remember? When you take a vow, you take the belief that that is also a part of you. In other words, in Buddhism, they say when you promise somebody, that promise is part of you; it becomes your body.

Now why is it then that form or body consists of those five objects of senses, and

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five sense consciousnesses or sense powers? Does it make sense like that? It seems that it's a little bit off the mark because if you're thinking it is just body, really, then it's incredible.

Let us do a test. If I ask you, Katherine, in your body, is there a heart? You know, the heart. Oh, let us say lung, because heart is, you know, you can get the fluffy type and all that. [laughter] It's just lungs. Do you have lungs in your body? Okay. Describe to me your lungs.

[Audience: inaudible]

Color and shape, function, smell, touch, and all that — that is lung — which we haven't seen, right? We've never seen it. So when you say 'my body', there is a lung there somewhere even though you haven't seen it. So, when you say "I know this is my body", what do you actually see? You see a little picture of you, right, inside you. Which has a shape, like this? Or was shorter, or was it longer. Was that body wearing glasses, or not? Is it wearing a T-shirt, or not?

You see, we so easily say, "it's my body". We never stop to think, hang on, what are we referring to really? It's a mental image. It's a picture. You know, we are not even talking about this body. So when you say "this body", it's a wrong image of that. If only you imagined, when you say "I," that it included the rest of the things we use too — the environment and the people in it. Then, at least, even though it's not the thing that you see, even though it's an image, it's a correct image. But even that image is wrong, because you are forced by this *avidya* to see yourself detached from the rest of the world. Now this is the crux of the problem.

If I really say that my body consists of those five objects of the senses and the five sense powers, that means my body now includes you all. Includes this noise, includes the taste I experienced this morning of the toast, includes all that. That constitutes "I". So if you want to make yourself happy, do you think it's possible to have just this part okay and the rest of you, "I don't care?" Is it possible?

No. It's so obvious. You know, you ask any mother, she would trade anything if she sees her child, even something as simple as catching a cold, and couldn't breathe properly, because all of a sudden she realizes that, actually, the child is part of her. You see, just on this very basic. . . We haven't touched emptiness yet, you know. But, even in this very basic thing, it's quite obvious that really we always cut ourselves off from something that really is there. I mean, you're always part of this world.

In fact, Lord Buddha dares us to say that this world is none other than what you project as your world. There is not any other world. Don't believe your geography teacher. That world doesn't exist. This world only exists as much as, or as wide as, or as populated as, polluted as, as cruel as, as beautiful, as you create. Now that is the truth. And it's hard to swallow. How many Arizonas are there? Where is Arizona or New York? Where is New York? What is New York to you? As many as there are people here, there will be that many types of New York.

They exist only for you, the way you want them to exist. For my children, New York is always that little hotdog stand on the corner of 54th Street and Broadway. This old Italian guy selling that. But to other people, it's different. And yet we strive to say, look, there is a New York out there, that exists out there, that everybody sees as being

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like that. And yet New York exists only in my mind. It's the same when you say there is only one Katherine, one Salim, one Ruth, one Elly, separate from you all. That's not the deal.

You see, if we keep thinking that way, "I" want to be happy, and if this "I" does not include the rest of your world you're bound to fail, because then what you're doing, literally, is you've decided that you are against the rest of your world, including the annoying people and the unfavorable things. So your life, every instant, you are fighting against the rest of this world. In that kind of fight, it's not hard to tell who's going to win. You have no chance. You see?

That is only just on the basic level. But let's just take that and move on. So now we know, it's the way we look at things. This is why when we care for others, who are we really caring for? Really ourselves. You see? So it's not just, oh I'm a nice person, I'm caring for the earth. It's not that. It's your world. It's up to you how you want to do it. You see, if you include others, then we've got a fighting chance to achieve what we want. We include everybody in our so-called 'body' — in our existence. We know our interconnectedness with everybody. Now we know that we are related to everybody else within our world.

In Vimalakirti's Sutra, Lord Buddha explained that. Or this is in the Sutra where Lord Buddha was asked by some of the disciples to describe the Buddha field, Buddha-universe, Buddha paradise. And he explained that, well, a Buddha paradise, for a start, is not a piece of real estate. Buddha paradise is created by the result, the high result of all beings, by all that, it's a really beautiful thing because all the beings in it, the surroundings in it, including the perceiver, the Buddha, all's been purified.

So it's the same deal, right? Except our world now, our New York, our Arizona, is still, because our mind is still not correct in perceiving that, no wonder it still looks crummy. But when a Buddha, a person that's already purified the whole thing, looks at himself or herself and the world, of course it's pure. So Lord Buddha went on and explained this beautiful mansion with diamond walls, and every single sound teaching Dharma, and all the beings there are all just glorious, in their glorious form and all that.

When Lord Buddha was teaching that, venerable Shariputra started thinking, if it's really this, if a Buddha paradise is that good, this Buddha is not doing it right, because to him he is still in Varanasi at that time, with the dogs still running around and the smell. I think I told you this story before. I just love to bring up this point, because Lord Buddha can read people's mind, he says, "Shariputra, what are you thinking?" *[laughter]* He didn't have to say many things, because Lord Buddha knew exactly what's in his mind. And then Lord Buddha asked the famous question: Is it the fault of the sun and the moon if the blind cannot see? Beautiful, beautiful quotation. At that time, then, Lord Buddha put a foot on Shariputra's head – poof — the whole thing turned into this wonderful mansion, you know. The whole thing just become a magnificent paradise, just for a few moments. Then Lord Buddha withdrew that vision and Shariputra got his lesson. You see? It's about that.

So, we have to change the way we look at things. Now, unfortunately, we look at things like that because of our habituated way of looking at things. It's very difficult, isn't it? So then we say, okay, how do I do it? Then you have the result. No longer is it

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only me. I really have to save all beings now. All beings are my responsibility. Actually, what you're saying is that it's my happiness anyway. But you say, now the happiness of others is my responsibility. Now I know that my existence, if I include all beings, if I fix all beings, I will get *that* happy. And then, you know what happens? It's very liberating. No longer is the world against you. Now you are with it. So then all will be okay. You set out and do that.

So now you become a bodhisattva. You want to save all the world. So if need be, if there is a hungry tiger, you come forward. Eat me. It doesn't matter, because by then the bodhisattva understands anyway. It's infinite. It's never ending. We will be here all the time. So time's not a problem; absolutely no problem. The only important thing is, maybe, Monday or Tuesday at 11:00 when I have to catch the plane; but time is no problem, you see. [laughter] We have all the time in the world, as they say. These bodhisattvas feel that way. Bodhisattvas just go on, and on, and on, and help; quite willing to give their eyes, or their body, to this tiger, and all that. And by doing that, they collect the cause, the goodness, to then project their world into something better, right? Well almost, right? Except the bodhisattva thinks: it's okay for me, but how about for those people out there? They are still pickled in the way they think. It's okay for me to feed myself to a tiger, but how many times do I have to do that? It takes many years to just get up to this size, a substantial meal for a tiger. And if you have to go like that, you don't mind, but it's just going to really take ages.

So out of concern say, right now, it's okay for me. I understand. I understand why I suffer and I now know how to get out of this. It's just by changing my thinking, creating the correct seed. But it's still not all okay for the rest of my world, for the people in my world. You see, this kind of feeling, to think about them and the ones you cannot help, it's just so sad, and so you're determined to work for them. So you say, I'll do anything to get to a position where I can help all of them in the best possible way. And this attitude, actually, is the prerequisite for you to even mention or to even think, to even contemplate tantra. Without this attitude you're bound to fail. This is the base. You can talk about chakras. You can talk about channels. As they say, having a cookbook doesn't make you a chef. Just because you have the recipe, it doesn't mean that you can produce that nice cooking.

This is the prerequisite. You see, you must feel, it's okay for me now. I think we're all okay. We know now, right? We know the way. We know that. I can see it in your face. We are quite determined to get out of that. So it's okay. But then, how about the others, the ones that are still pickled in their own suffering? And how long will it take me to clear my world of those people? I can't bear to see this unbearable feeling there. We must have this before we even contemplate tantra, because this is the only valid reason to achieve tantra.

I know Geshe Michael says the purpose is to stop dying and all that. When we do not see ourselves as dying, we can show others how to do that. So, it's always thinking of others. We have to remind each other of this, right? *That* is our motivation, not so that we can be tantrikas and have this red belt, or do anything. It's not that. You know, it's just because we want to do it for them. This is why. And to do that involves thinking. But if you say, if you are told that yes, you can achieve that, you can achieve not having to experience death again, etcetera, you might find this very, very difficult to

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believe.

That's why Geshe Michael taught us in 'Second Sight' saying yes, because of the way you think, and logically, in the beginning, it's normal that you will reject this thinking; *viparyaya*, meaning your mind, to say, look, that's not true. And then you start to doubt — *vikalpa*, right? And then you say, it may be true. There is this little seed of doubt, and then you get to *pramana*. What is *pramana*? Valid perception. Now valid perception is very interesting because... Yes?

[Audience: inaudible]

Fifteen minutes, okay. Let's get to enlightenment in fifteen minutes. I always get carried away with this kind of thing. The reason I go very slowly, I hope it's not boring, is in a sense I want you to share with me this understanding, because this is how I feel, you see? This is why I feel so much joy in talking like this, because, it really is. I just can't believe it. It's just this feeling. It's so fantastic. To know that, yes, it can be done. Yes, yes. And I just want to — here it is — you know. I want to just share it. I'm sorry if I get too over enthusiastic like that. And you know what Geshe Michael does? He makes it so clear and so obvious to us. It's very doable. It's not easy. He never says it easy. But it's very doable.

And, out of his kindness, despite that it may cause him a lot of controversy and all that, he is quite determined to say, look, it's attainable. That really is so kind, because the best thing for Geshe Michael, if he doesn't think about others, doesn't have any compassion for us, is just to quietly stay in the yurt and not do any of these things, just quietly achieve bliss. So this talk about Geshe Michael is just showing off and all this — that's just not understanding the reason behind all this. So kind. So kind. I ask myself, if I were doing a three — year retreat, do you think I'd want to get out every six months and teach this? No thank you. [laughter] But you know, anyway — so, so kind, so kind.

Anyway, with that kind of feeling, you see, *pramana*. Then we get *pramana*. You see, yes, it can be done. The correct perception, you started to see that. First, it's just *agama*, meaning it's a very hidden thing so you just have to take the teacher's word for it and you just have to agree to that. And then, you go to the next stage, *anumana*, meaning by inference, this is what we're doing now and by inference now we can actually work it out. Yes, it makes sense. Yes, its doable. That's where we are now, right? And then, hopefully, we can get the next stage, *pratyaksha*, meaning, direct perception. In other words, we no longer depend on this inference but we know directly. We no longer depend on this kind of thing. This is, really, the purpose of why Geshe-la taught us about Second Sight. To say look, this is the thinking.

Now we're talking about tantra, I must say I know nothing. I know very, very, very little about tantra. So what I say is just purely based on my very, very limited knowledge. You see? But I happened also to read this beautiful poem by the Seventh Dalai Lama, who says that basically there are four pillars of tantra. I don't want to bore you with that. Enough to say that there is this.

Of the four pillars of tantra, that the Seventh Dalai Lama mentioned, one is to see that — oh actually, I have my little cheat sheet here! No, I just thought to share it with you. It's beautiful. There are five verses to describe the four pillars. This is the last, no, actually the first one, which consists of two verses talking about emptiness, actually. "In

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the mandala of knowable of things, appearing and evolving, the sky of clear light ultimate reality everywhere pervades. See everything in this indescribable light of reality. Not holding conceptual fabrication, look for the immaculate void. Not allowing negative thought to arise, then turn to face to the void. Generate unrelenting mindfulness and hold it to the realm of the void.”

Now, this is the first pillar, which is to say that if you look at everything, the whole thing here, it's almost like the Sufi philosopher said — oh, again, Geshe Michael actually used a better example: “The Truman Show.” You know, the Sufi actually said that our world, you can imagine it's almost like a dome, a blue dome that we carry wherever we go, you see? Well it's almost like the “Truman Show,” except “The Truman Show” is limited within the dome, but we just carry our world wherever we go.

Now, everything just happens, just arises, goes, evolves, within that dome, within that clear light nature, in other words. If we understand emptiness, the whole thing is nothing but just a plane of mind like that. Every single thing. That's why he said “appearing and evolving”. And then not holding conceptual fabrication, meaning, we do not really fabricate anything, just understand that it's empty.

If we see something, generally, we are more interested in the content of the experience instead of the experience itself. Does it make sense like that? And yet, guess what? The most important thing is the experience itself, not the content of the experience. Why? Because the experience itself creates an imprint in our mind. This experience itself is never the content of the experience. In our life so far, we always, 100%, look and are concerned and manipulate the content of our experience. We never worry about the experience itself. So, if we want to get something, it doesn't matter if we steal, if we cheat, and all these things, because we're interested in the content, the result, the object.

In fact in tantra, when they say... somebody asked me this before, so I thought I'd just like to share it with you. Why is it that the fearsome, that anger, that the wrathful aspect is used in tantra? I explained it like this. You imagine if we are so angry. Very, very angry. This kind of vigorous emotion to be determined, to want to right the wrong. It's this kind of very strong emotion but without an object. If there is no object of your anger, wouldn't it be fantastic energy to have? Can you imagine that? We are so determined, so angry, but without an object, because when there is an object, generally, we want to harm. That's why it's so harmful. Now, it's the same thing. They asked about the other aspect, you know, which is like, sometimes people say the father and mother; things like that.

It's almost the same thing. I said look, it just doesn't have to go to that deep. Just imagine the first time we fell in love. Looking at this girlfriend, or boyfriend, or whatever it is. And then, just imagine that feeling. For a while, just imagine that feeling, that beautiful sense of wellness within our selves. The world doesn't matter. Whether it rains or it shines, holding hands walking through it, you don't even feel the wetness of the rain. Everything's just beautiful — that kind of emotion. Wouldn't it be fantastic if it was not laced with lust, or wanting something?

You see, we have this potential but we always manage to muck it up! We somehow manage to blow it by putting an object on it. So we waste all this. Anyway,

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the purpose, why I want to mention the four pillars, is first this part, this clear light. And second, is about compassion. Now compassion, in this sense, means you acknowledge that everything is empty, right? It's based on emptiness. In tantra they mention that you look at everything that is happening in the world, that's happening to us, and the four different types of things. It's either a peaceful thing, or it's an increase, or it's a power, or a fierceness. You know, the four divisions.

So, if you look at whatever happens in the world, it's an expression of either of those four. Peace, Increase, Power, and Fierceness. Then you can see that with compassion, you say, well it's okay. If you see some violence happen, you try to see it in the divine theatre. And it just happens to have the violence aspect on that. I don't think we have time to go further into that. Even though I would love to be able to share with you these things. It's really an incredible understanding. It's very liberating.

I'm just going to one more that I think is more important, more relevant at this stage. The next one is our commitment to keep our mind in joy, and bliss, and lucidity. In other words, we commit ourselves to always having this mind of joy, and bliss, and lucidity. In other words, you look at me as perfect, you as perfect, and everything as perfect. This too is quite incredible to go into it in detail. But, anyway, I'll skip that.

The last one is that our dependence on the Guru, or Guru Yoga, is one pillar of tantra. I would just like to go a little deeper on this one. I've been asked — many of you asked me, talked to me about this guru thing. Now, I must admit this is one of the difficult aspects of Buddhism for me before, personally, to accept Guru devotion. I always thought about Tilopa and Naropa and when the Guru says, "Jump!" I just say, "How high?" You know? But like Geshe-hla explained, it's not like that. You see? I think this is how I understand about the guru, and guru devotion. As we can learn from the story of Naropa-hla that, basically, before he even became a yogi, he had mastered all the five books, all the ACI courses. And he's done Hevajara tantra, he's done Chakrasamvajra tantra. What does that mean? What does that tell us? He's had gurus before. He's had teachers before. Right? He learned it from somewhere. And yet, he's still looking for a Guru. So what is the difference between this guru that he's looking for, and those gurus that taught him the rest of the things? You see?

Now, in tantra, they say you must have this kind of a relationship with the guru — meaning now... Guru in here [points to self]. His Holiness the Seventh Dalai Lama, in the commentary on that, says there are four different types of Guru. First is what they call, Ghenhompa (?) Lama — The Guru of Ultimate reality. It means that the guru is your inner self, your inner understanding, the primordial nature of things. Meaning, that you count on this guru because you really do have a guru. What does it mean to have a guru? It's to count on the *jinlap*, the blessing, the power of transformation that you have because of your relationship with a guru. And then, it's really very strange. It was described that there are four gurus, four types of gurus. The first guru is the guru of Reality. Meaning we then have to reach deep to ask, to understand that our mind and everybody else's mind is actually empty. And because it's empty, it has the potential to be better. That's why it's called Buddha Nature. It means that this emptiness is the one that makes it possible for us to achieve our Ultimate Reality, the ultimate objective, to achieve Buddhahood. So the first guru is the Guru of this Ultimate Reality, meaning achieving your ultimate nature, your emptiness.

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The second is called Wangya (?) Lama, which means the guru of everyday experience. What this means is that sometimes, or most of the time, we go through life experiencing thousands of things. They just come and go. Just like my mother used to say, “You never learn do you?” Do we ever learn? And this guru of everyday experience, meaning thinking every moment of our life, thinking to use everything that happens as a teaching. Get something from it. Learn something from it. Get the blessing. Get the transforming power from learning from everything, from everyday experience.

Then the third one is called Kagyi (?) Lama. Kagyi Lama, meaning it’s the written, the teaching, the footprint of all these enlightened beings. Meaning all the teaching in the world that bring you here today. All the books that we read, all the knowledge, and all that. It doesn’t matter from which dealership! It’s all those things. That’s why they say of all the enlightenment qualities the most important thing is Trinling (?), which is activity, the enlightenment activity. And, out of the Trinling the most important is the activity of speech. Meaning all these enlightened beings, really what they are about, is to teach us, to show us. That’s why the Kagyi Lama are all these teachings, all these instructions, left by these enlightened being for us.

Now, the fourth one is the living Master. Now how do we relate to this living Master? Well John already elaborated on that yesterday, so I don’t have to go through it again. But actually, there is a little problem, I guess, with that checklist John. For instance, when you say that somebody has to have *shamata* and *vipashyana*, how do we check that? Do you ask to your teacher, “Excuse me have you achieved this? So I can take this one?”

I mean it’s very difficult. Therefore, you have to depend on your *kelwa*, the goodness in your heart. They say that if you have that in your heart, the Guru will look for you. If you have created the cause like everything else, and if I tell you even... you know, if we tell the story to those who are waiting for us at home, that there are these two dakinis called Victoria and Darcy who are bringing all the relics of the Buddha, they’ll say ah, yeah, yeah, nice story. Nobody would believe you. Actually, it happened right? So the same thing, you see. All this, you have to believe that you created everything. Including the Guru. They’ll come. So you know now that there are four different types of Guru. So you cannot say you do not have Gurus. If you have this you’ll know it. That is right.

They call it “Guru Devotion”. Maybe a better word would be something like making whole-hearted commitment to see the Guru as my spiritual teacher. To me it’s almost like a contract with that Guru, a personal contract — one to one. What the contract basically says is, okay at my stage I don’t know very much about this guru thing, and all that. I feel sufficiently confident, after I checked, that I want to really learn from you. I really want to get that pleasure from you. And for that, I promise, I make a commitment to look at my experience with you as if it’s an experience with a Buddha. Let me repeat that. I commit, make a promise, make a contract with you, that whatever you do, say, think, whatever you are doing now, my experience of you will be exactly the same as if I experienced it with a Buddha. In other words, what I’m saying...if Lord Shakyamuni Buddha was here, I would take whatever you do, say, or think, the same way I would experience what Lord Shakyamuni Buddha would do, say or think – in so much

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as, whatever you do, say, and think I will take it as a teaching.

So when you say, I take the Guru as a Buddha, it's not that you then imagine, all of a sudden, his head swollen, his ears lengthen, and all that. It's not like that. But you say, you accept him or her to have a contract with you that whatever I experience of you I'll take it as a teaching from a Buddha. That, actually, is all that guru devotion means.

[Audience: inaudible]

Well actually that was the next line. No, no, I'm glad. I mean, it's obviously following. You know, this always happens with John. We're always thinking on exactly the same wavelength, so it doesn't matter. Exactly that, you see. If your contract is only to take everything as a teaching sometimes — a teaching can be a test also, can't it?

There is a story about Lord Buddha, in a previous life. His teacher tells everybody to steal. And all the disciples went out to carry out the teacher's instructions. There's only one person left in the room — Lord Gautama Buddha. And the teacher says, "What are you doing here?" And he says, "Well, I don't believe stealing will bring anything good, a good result". And the teacher said, "Perfect; it seems that it's only you who understands all these instructions."

You see, the commitment to take everything as a teaching is very, very, very different – three "verys," right? Very different than just following, literally, what is said. But you must take it as a teaching. That's the point. Your contract with a teacher is to say I will take whatever you say, whatever you think, whatever you do as the teaching for me. That is my commitment to you. So I will not be moved. I will not care however people talk about him or her. It doesn't matter. That's why in Tibet they say, you better find a guru and then make sure you live three valleys away. Now three valleys away, you can say, because Arizona is something like New York. But no, no, that's too close. Rumors go very quickly, innuendo, comment, things. You better live somewhere like in Australia, for instance. Come. Come to Australia.

You see, this is just a safeguard, by the way, for this deluded mind, stupid mind like mine. Having made that commitment, to say look, everything I do, and whatever you do, say... and then at a quarter to ten, you see this guru coming up in a singlet, messed hair... a Buddha?! Or, when you ask your Guru, say, what would you like for dinner? "Oh anything." You sure? "Yes, anything. Are there any Chinese vegetarian shops here somewhere?" And then you say, a Buddha is worried to eat such things? No, you see, it's not about that. It's about, when he says, "Are there any Chinese restaurants close by?" it's a test, right? It's a teaching. You always take it as a teaching. It doesn't matter what's from him. He might not do it deliberately, or do it deliberately — we don't know. But it's really irrelevant.

The contract is from my side. I make that commitment. Oh, actually, it's both sides. But the commitment is only to do that, to do just that. You know that this is so powerful! This kind of contract, this kind of attitude, to say I will take whatever you say, whatever you do, whatever you think, as a teaching of a Buddha which is perfect in every way. A Buddha can test you also. But perfect just the same. That kind of acceptance, that kind of thing — that is the one that will accelerate your learning. That is the one that will make this learning possible.

That's what will make you understand how to open up your central channel. That

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is the one that will make you understand what is going on; the relationship between the winds, and this body, and all that. So with that as a propellant, with that as fuel, with the base of the understanding that I must do it for all, then we have a real chance to do that; to get what we want.

I don't know how else to underline that than by saying since this really is the last opportunity for us to attend Quiet Retreat teachings like this, that's how it really is, how I understand the whole thing. That's why the whole thing makes sense. The whole thing I understand now, why this Guru relationship will work. Why Geshe Michael is teaching the Yoga Sutra. Why did he teach *To the Inner Kingdom*? He laid down the gauntlet: this is what you will achieve. This is your target. And then second time: "I know you're going to be worried about it. Now I'll tell you what's happening in your mind". This is what happened in *Second Sight*. You need a teacher. What is a teacher for you?

Then he taught the *Magic of Empty Teachers*. And the last one, that I would like to mention right now, is about karma. You see everything is propelled by our karma. Our good karma, we can do it from now on, right? We know now. And it works, you see. It works. If you plant nice seeds, you will experience nice things. Things that will happen that you would never dream of. Ridiculous things. I don't know. Like you know, I was just telling some of you...I was in Tucson airport picking up a car. I go to the cheapest car possible, because I believe that if you go for a dharma teaching, I'm using family money here so I, sort of, forego comfort, and do that, and book the cheapest car — \$120 dollars a week or something. And they give me a brand new Cabriolet. Really. And I say, no I didn't book that. "That's okay." I said, can I have another car? "No, no, no. It's still the same. You don't have to pay any extra. I know it's about three times more expensive, but you can have it." I saw some of you also behind me. I said, look, give it to the people behind us. "Come on, just have it – it's fun!" [laughter] Anyway, little stupid things like that keep happening. It's just unbelievable, unbelievable. It works, you see.

So, with karma, make sure you purify your bad ones, and make sure that you create. . . . James mentioned three things — the morality of a bodhisattva. Firstly, refrain from doing bad things. Right? Because you don't want their results. Secondly, makes sure you do all the collecting of goodness. And thirdly, and most importantly, what is it James? Work for the benefit of others. Three things. No wonder that became the moral code. Now you know the reasons. The whole thing makes sense. The whole thing fits. Every word in the teaching makes sense now.

So don't bother about rumors. Stick to what you know. You're on a good path. Bit of a commercial there! But it is like that.

Actually, I'll just mention it briefly, one of the things that we often overlook. Yesterday Geshe Michael mentioned karma. One of the most important things is the motivation. The motivation also depends on the object of that karma. One of those worthwhile objects is, say for instance, you do a good deed to an ant. That's a very good deed but it's very different if you do the good deed to an object that is a worthwhile object as defined in the book. And one of the most worthwhile objects, beside the Three Jewels, are people who just finished their retreat. There's a storehouse of merit there. You see? So even, they say, circumambulate the tent that they're in. I would suggest, if the caretaker lets us, even during the break or something, rather than just chatting, let's

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just at least circumambulate the tent.

And also, of course, if during attending this retreat teaching we're doing something that is not correct... Our mind meanders. We have doubt. If we have produced some negative thoughts toward anybody or towards the teacher, or towards each other, or whoever—just make sure it's not soiled. We should apply the Four Powers. The easiest thing is we should develop regret, the base. And then maybe, if you know the mantra of *Vajrasattva*, that is very powerful.

That's just like the retreatants. Generally, when they finish the retreat, they always do a *Vajrasattva* retreat. Every time we read the *sadhana* we always do the *Vajrasattva* recitation, just to purify what is imperfect in our minds. I think we should do it now, right now, like that. You all know this *Vajrasattva* mantra right? No? Ah. [laughter] Oh, we'll do the short one.

I've received this transmission from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, among many other Lamas. It goes like this: You must do this really fervently, really from your heart, that you want to purify any negative thought that happened that things are improper. Whether we created any doubt, or any negativity directed towards our fellow students here, or even toward the teachers, or the retreatants, or towards anything— may that not soil the merit that we accumulated by coming to these teachings. To purify that, and to make sure that whatever we do, even unintentionally; to make sure it will give us the most benefit.

So as an act of an antidote we will recite this *Vajrasattva* mantra. The long *Vajrasattva* mantra is generally recited twenty-one times. The short *Vajrasattva* mantra is generally recited twenty-eight times. I will just mention it to you. It's very simple for those who haven't received the transmission. It's not because I'm a lama — please do not think that way. Purely, this transmission only means that this mantra has been transmitted correctly through the lineage. That's why I tell you that I got it from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and most kind Lama Zopa Rinpoche, from all his teachers. All the way back to Lord Buddha himself.

We'll do the first three — you just follow me — and then the rest, the twenty-five, we can do quietly. Or even together, it doesn't matter. *Om Vajrasattva Hum; Om Vajrasattva Hum; Om Vajrasattva Hum*

We believe whatever improper attitude, or any negativity that we committed during this Quiet Retreat teaching, and in the last three years, and whatever negativities we do, just by the power of the place, and the power of the retreatants, and the power of our motivation, may that all be purified. Thank you.

[Prayers]

Afternoon: Day Four ❁ April 20
Geshe Michael Roach

I'd like to request Venerable Elly to lead us in a meditation.

Venerable Elly: Okay. So, now we're going to meditate. *[laughter]* So get in a comfortable position. Get your hands comfortable, head, eyes partly shut. First thing, we'll watch our breath for a while. And see if you can count the breaths as they go out and in. Go up to ten and then if you make it to ten, start again and if you don't, start again.

[silence]

And then stop to think for a few minutes about what a beautiful place you've arrived at in your mind and in your physical circumstances. And all the things around that are really beautiful and that are so much better than even a year ago.

[silence]

And then try to think one by one who has made this possible for you: the people who have taught you; and people who've taken care of your physical needs; people who've given you money; people who've allowed you to have employment; all the people in your world. And if you think about it, you could probably think that every single one of them has helped you in some way. And so just go through them one by one and think about how they've helped you and try to feel some happiness at their kindness.

[silence]

There are so many people who help you in so many ways. Family, teachers, people who bump into you on the street: people who write newspapers; people who write letters; the farmer who grows your food; people who drive buses and fly planes; the lady that checks out your groceries; your parents; all those guys in Detroit who made your car; the mailman; your kid's teacher; your kids. And then maybe a few minutes just to reflect on how to — what we can do to pay them back; like smiling at people on the street; or actually thanking people; write a letter to your high school teachers. Just think of different ways to thank the people who've helped us.

[silence]

And then dedicate the merit of those good thoughts to your future ability to be able to really help these people, all of them. OK. That's it. Thank you.



I would like to request our Guru Ruth-hla to please lead us in a chant.

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Ruth Lauer [*chanted, call and response*]:

Om. Om. Om. Om.

Let us sing what we have learned.

Let us sing what we have learned.

Ahimsa. Shauca Asteya Brahmacharya.

Ahimsa Shauca Asteya Brahmacharya.

Aparigraha Ahimsa Shauca Asteya Brahmacharya.

Aparigraha Ahimsa Shauca Asteya Brahmacharya Aparigraha.

Not harming, not lying, not stealing, not indulging,
not taking more than one needs.

Not harming, not lying, not stealing, not indulging,
not taking more than one needs.

Shaucha Santosha

Tapah Svadhyaya Ishwara pranidhanani Shaucha Santosha

Tapah Svadhyaya Ishwara pranidhanani Shaucha Santosha

Tapah Svadhyaya Ishwara pranidhanani Shaucha Santosha

Tapah Svadhyaya Ishwara pranidhanani.

Purity, contentment, hard work, sacred study, devotion to the highest
Purity, contentment, hard work, sacred study, devotion to the highest.

Devotion to being merciful.

Devotion to being merciful.

Devotion to awakening ethical consciousness.

Devotion to awakening ethical consciousness.

Devotion to seeing more than differences.

Devotion to seeing more than differences.

Devotion to each other.

Devotion to each other.

Devotion to our teacher.

Devotion to our teacher.

Devotion to humanity.

Devotion to humanity.

God is here, here and now.

God is here, here and now.

Om.



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Last night all the retreatants went back and had a surprise cake for Trisangma, in the temple, which was delivered to her by accident at noon. But I think we were all pretty much laid out on the floor of the temple. And it dawned on me that I had gone on about three hours too long. And I really wanted to apologize. And [Audience: No, no...] And I want to say frankly, it's been a very heavy weekend — many changes, many powerful events, many strong emotions coming and I just wanted to thank you for being so courageous and patient and struggling to learn, think, and I admire all of you for that.

I have to tell you the story of my first class with Khen Rinpoche. I tried to borrow a car from Princeton. It's about an hour drive or something. And I had instructions. And the car broke. I went out to the road. It was snowing. And I tried to hitch a ride. I stood there for almost an hour. Nobody would pick me up. Finally I ran to a friend's dormitory and begged him to drive me. He wouldn't loan me his car. And then when we got to Freewood Acres, to Howell, we got lost. We drove around all over. Rinpoche had just moved from Geshe Wangyel's place on Third Street to the temple on Fifth Street, so nobody knew where he was.

And you know I got into the class, I burst in the door all exhausted and wet about twenty minutes before the end of the class, and I remember Chunyi-hla sitting there. Lama Art-hla was there, and I think three other people were there. He used to have his classes around the kitchen table, and I was very happy to hear the class. Then when it ended I remember everyone stood up, walked out, and suddenly I found myself alone, facing this holy, incredible lama that His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, had personally recommended to me. And I looked in his eyes, and I was, you know, afraid to be in a room alone with him.

And he looked up at me from his chair. And he said, "You!"

I said, "Yes, Rinpoche?"

And he said, "Did you see that fight last night with Mohammed Ali?" [laughs]

It's true! And it was like taking off on a rocket, you know? And it never slowed down. And, so you know, there are precedents for what you are going through. And keep a good humor. It'll be over in about thirty, forty years. It's like having a child, right, Andrea?



We'll start with the first line of the next — I think we left two lines from yesterday. So if we could start with those.

Allison Cohen: The fifth form of self control is to overcome possessiveness. *Ahinsa satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah.* (II.30E)

Okay. [laughs] I think the key word is *aparigraha*. *A* means "not," like in "atheist," or in "atypical." *Pari* means "all around" like "perimeter." And *graha* means

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“to grab at something.” The Sanskrit word is *grabh*, and the Indo-European is *grebh*. And of course, the word “grab” comes from this, and the word “grasp” comes from this.

It’s just what it sounds like. Master Patanjali is saying if we really want to advance in our meditations, if we really want to advance in our practices, we have to clean out, first of all, our house. And we spoke about it many times, I remember at the first teaching here, how things sneak into your house, junk. And in a round yurt, it’s kind of alarming. They come in from the sides to the center, and then you’re sitting in the center. *[laughs]* And you have to be very strict with yourself. You have to be very creative about getting rid of all of these things. You have to be very strong to keep the things out of your yurt. We actually found, the retreatants, I think all of us, that objects in the yurt were making sounds at us. So if you had ten objects in the yurt instead of five, it was twice as hard to meditate, there was twice as much noise, background noise, in the yurt. Sometimes we’d go outside to sit on the porch to get some quiet.

So it’s important to try to keep divesting. I had a nice idea for all of you. I don’t know. I don’t usually do that, but I was thinking: things that we have, nice little things that we have, we could maybe keep them in one of the yurts which is set up on the new land. And then, I had this idea that as we go on the tour, we will meet old people or sick people. And we could collect their birth dates and then maybe send them gifts on their birthday from this stockpile. And that way we could all clean out our houses also. And it means a lot, I think, to someone.

I don’t know about you but all the extra things that Christie and I have are very beautiful things. They’re all like — we have so many holy books and images and paintings, and so many people have sent us beautiful things. But I think you have to rotate them. And keep your house simple.

So, this also applies to your life. Keep your life simple. I think as we come out of retreat and new ideas are popping, it will be tempting to get too busy and have too many things going. The lama will be testing you with a thousand new projects and you have to have Fran Dayanish self control. You have to say, you know, I’ll do one or two things that I can do well, while I’m keeping my practice. And I won’t junk up my schedule like I won’t junk up my house. So I think we have to watch those two kinds of collecting things we don’t need. There’s no end to virtues that we can do, but if we get too busy and if we neglect our personal meditations daily and practice, then I don’t think we can succeed and we don’t really end up helping anybody. Next verse, please.

Kyisum, Amber, and Pearl: The third commitment is facing hardship for higher goals. *[Pearl reads in French]* *Shaucha santosha tapah svadhyayeshvara pranidhanai niyamah.* (II.32C)

[applause and laughter] Ah, thank you. The key word is *tapas*, I think. We had this yesterday in the word *tapah*. They are the same. The root in Sanskrit is *tap*, “to heat something.” And then, the Indo-European is *tep* and we see it in “tepid” and “Beltane fire.” And it’s very simple. And you know I think the retreatants can tell you better than anyone, and I think the care-hlas, when you start to try to do something very powerful, something very good, then difficulties will always be attracted to you. The bigger the

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good you do, the bigger the difficulties that will come to you. And you hear people say that, but when they come, it's no fun. When you're in the middle of a difficulty like that, you can't remember hearing that. And it's extremely difficult, I think. You know, the one thing all the retreatants said to each other when we met for the first time and spoke, was that it was just the hardest thing we'd ever done. And that's *tapas*. What Lama Ruth called hard work. There's no getting around it. You just have to work hard. You have to put your head down and work hard. It's a lot easier if you're thinking about how you can help other people. That's like the key. It's a lot easier to get through the hard times if you try to remember how much you can help other people when you can become that angel. Next verse.

[audience: *Yama*] Oh, *yama* we had before. I think, you can check back at *niyamah* in the first three pages from last time. And it's the same.

I made one mistake there, by the way. I think it was back at *niyamah*, in one of the first three pages that we had from last time, from last Thanksgiving. Was it? Anyway, the root *yem*. I said “y-e-m.” No, I said *gem* as in “Gemini,” meaning twin. It's really “y-e-m.” So, I've made a boo-boo. I've made other boo-boos, and we'll fix them. I thought to fix them altogether when we put the two books together, into one book. And we'll put back the director's talks that were supposed to be in that book and I guess got left out by accident.

By the way, I want to thank you for the beautiful books. Someone — I suppose an Australian from the spellings — has been printing all the teachings, publishing the teachings, and I know it's a lot of work and I know probably the people here typed them up. It's very precious to us, to see it done. And I think it encourages any teacher to see that the people listening have taken the trouble to record it and make it available to the next generation. Next verse, please.

Alistair and Mira: Perfect meditation then sees this same object as its simple self: Its clear light, totally void of any nature of its own. *Tad eva-artha matra nirbhasam svarupa shunyam iva samadhih.* (III.3)

Good. What are key words here? Your first one is *nirbhasa*. We had it already. If you look back you'll find it. It was at the bottom of one of the pages. But it means “clear light.” And it's another word for emptiness. Does emptiness have a color or shape, like light? No. But the experience, the direct experience of emptiness is much like a being inside of a diamond or something and experiencing some kind of clear light or reality.

Next word is *svarupa*, which we had before also. And it just means “the real nature of something.” And I'll speak more about that in a minute.

The next word, *shunyam*, we had before, meaning “empty.” And you know it from *shunyata*, you can find it in your notes. We've been through this one this teaching. I don't know if we did *samadhi* this teaching. But just briefly I'll go over it. *Sam* means “together.” *A* means “upon.” And then *dhi*, some people mistake it for *dhi*, which means “to think.” But this is a short “i,” this *dhi*, and it's a common variant of *dha*, which

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means “to set something down.” That comes into Indo-European as *dhe*, and we see it in words like “do,” “did,” “deed,” “fact,” “feces.” I think we went through this before. But it’s a deep state of meditation. I’m not going to go so much on — I think that’s the last keyword here.

I’m not going to do so much on words, but I just wanted to be aware that in his Yoga Sutra, Master Patanjali has quite a few references to the direct perception of emptiness. And this is one of them. There are two ways to perceive emptiness. One is direct. One is indirect.

The indirect one is much easier. I can lead you right now, you can see it. Someone, as we said — I’m going to keep mentioning the same example just so you remember it — but you find someone irritating, perhaps at these very teachings... It’s very common in a group of spiritual seekers for demons to run around and make us irritated at someone else. And you find someone else here irritating and we’ve been speaking about how if you look at it scientifically they are only shapes, colors, sounds. Other people experience them in a completely different way. Perhaps other people here find them quite pleasing, pleasant people. That means that being pleasant or being unpleasant cannot be coming from them. It’s not something exuding from them. And that’s their emptiness, you see? That’s their emptiness.

Again it doesn’t mean black holes, or nothing exists, or you should let all your thoughts go away and not think about anything, or other ideas like that. It’s a cold, calculated, logical truth. The people you find irritating are not irritating from their side. You are perceiving them that way because of seeds ripening in your own mind which you planted there. We are responsible for every pain, for every negative event in our whole life. And that’s an intellectual perception of emptiness. You can grasp — until the next time they say something unpleasant to you during the break — you can grasp for a short time that this person is blank, or neutral, or empty. All of these are what *shunya* means. And the way we see them is being imposed on them by our own minds forced to do so by our past karmas.

But then there is the direct perception of emptiness. I’ve met new people; well, it was some of my yoga teachers actually. And they came during the breaks, so kindly and so selflessly, to teach us special methods of yoga to help our meditations and actually help us achieve the ultimate goals. And we would sign, we had all this sign language going on. We’d say, “How did the teachings go?” and they’d say, “Oh, like Salim got up and kept talking about this direct perception of emptiness; direct perception of emptiness, you know.” And I think if you’re new you sort of wonder why people are talking about this all the time. It means that the thing that you can perceive intellectually when I talk about the person who irritates you, later on, if you practice well, you can see directly. It can only be done in a very deep state of meditation. And with lots of study under your belt, lots of courses under your belt, lots of hours listening to Venerable Phuntsok, or Salim-hla, or John Stilwell-hla, or Winston-hla, or other teachers here. Only after many hours, and then, only if you’re practicing your meditation every day, you can see emptiness directly. And this line is all about that experience.

I know you’ve all been through this explanation many, many times. But just to repeat the most important thing that happens — perhaps twenty minutes go by in the direct communion with ultimate reality. Emptiness and ultimate reality are the same

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thing. Then you come down out of that experience. And you have many, many, many experiences — realizations — on that day, for the twenty-four hours. And those are known as the Four Noble Truths; or the four truths for a person who has seen emptiness.

But I want to tell you, the one most important one is that on that day you have special powers that are born in your mind. They go away after about twenty-four hours, but for a whole day, you can see with your mind things in the future, you can see things happening elsewhere. And you can see directly the day you will become the angel we have been talking about, an enlightened being, a being who can travel to every single living creature. In fact, during the twenty-four hours, in a special few minutes of higher perception, you can see every living being in the entire universe. On every single planet, every form of life. Directly. And you know you will help them. You know that in a certain number of years, you will be able to go to each of them and help them. So, that's obviously a big milestone in every person's life.

The whole purpose of all of the projects you've heard about — saving the old books, creating the places for people to do the meditation and retreat, teaching people physical yoga and other methods, is to help perceive emptiness. To get the winds into the central channel. All of these efforts and all of these projects, all the labor of all the people here, are directed at helping people reach this one twenty-minute experience and see what they will become. And so whenever you feel tired, or whenever you feel... what do you call... discouraged, you have to remember all of this work that we do, every single minute of work that anyone of us does, in all of these projects, in all of this study, all of these teachings, has only this one goal. That one day during your meditation you will see the ultimate reality.

And you yourself... it's such a sweet, beautiful, holy thing to see the Buddha that you will become. To see that Buddha directly. To be in the presence of the Buddha that you are going to be. So, don't ever get discouraged. Imagine how it will feel and once you get there, once you break through to that level, you'll never have another real worry in your life. Then you will be Jigme. Jigme Palmo's name, Jigme — Naropa's original name, Abhaya. It means you will be fearless. You won't really worry seriously about anything ever again. And you know that you'll be able to serve countless numbers of beings. So I bless you with those words to reach that level. Next verse, please.

Salim Lee: On that day the seer comes to dwell within their own real nature.
Tada drashtuh svarupevashthanam. (I.3)

Thank you. I think the keyword is *drashtuh*? We had *darshanah* before and this is the same root. “D-i-r-s-h,” meaning “to see.” And in the Indo-European is “d-e-r-k.” And we said it came in the word “dragon” and “dragoon,” meaning the creature with the evil eye.

You know what hooked me on the Yoga Sutra... And I repeat the reason I began to study it, was that a certain lady yoga teacher who sings very well gave me a copy, me and Christie. And then, a holy teacher, David Life-hla, I think a few days later or earlier gave us a copy, a different copy. And we were just looking at the first few lines, Christie and I. And it starts out talking about how yoga means stopping your misperceptions,

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basically. And then, within the first five lines, here is this line — the seer can abide in their own nature. We were so excited. I think that’s what made us believe in the book. And what made us continue in the book.

Right off, Master Patanjali is describing the direct perception of emptiness. The key word is *drashtir*. It means *tonglomba* in Tibetan. *Ton* — “to see,” “to see ultimate reality.” This is the exact spelling and wording of all the descriptions of reaching your first direct perception of emptiness. Which is here called *svarupa*.

Every object around you has its own emptiness. You know? If I tell you the irritating person in front of you is blank. And it’s us who are imposing the irritating-ness on them. Well, then it’s easy to understand that every other object in this room is the same. Including me. Obviously I’m blank. Some people think I’m great. I get lots of letters that people think I’m great. I get almost get equal letters people think I’m terrible. And I get lots of letters in between, people who don’t care much about me. And it’s the same for any of us. It proves that we are blank.

And then, how we even perceive ourselves is coming from our own karmic seed. When you see emptiness for the first time directly, you see the emptiness of Winston, you see the emptiness of John, you see the emptiness of Lama Ruth. You see? Each person sees their own emptiness first. That makes sense because it’s that emptiness that will allow us to see ourselves as a Buddha later.



Thank you. It’s a custom on Sunday at the break, it started I think at the first retreat’s teaching, I’m not sure — but the retreatants were saying how much they wanted to hug the care ladies, caretakers, and we never could because there’s a fence between us and them. So we had asked everyone to be our proxies. And we had asked people to go up to the three caretakers and hug them for us during the break. But then it later became a general hug-fest [*laughter*] and we decided everybody needed a hug. So we’ll take a break now. You have to hug the caretakers for us, and then you have to hug everybody who’s helped them. Then you have to hug all the directors, and then you have to hug all the people who are teaching, then all the volunteers elsewhere. Then you have to hug all the children, especially, here, and their moms. And then you have to hug the new people. And I think you know how it’s going to end up. When you hug them, you put your arms around them and you try to push a little bit in the back, behind where the heart would be. This is like a blessing for the heart *chakra*. Okay, have a nice hug and some refreshments.



Oh, just to say, despite my intentions I think we might go a little late. [*laughs*] And I know some people have to catch a plane, so I suggest that anyone who has to catch a plane sit near the back, and then you can sneak out when we get to the next Indo-European root. [*laughs*] Okay, let’s do the next verse.

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Ted Lemon: It comes because those who understand things have broken through the idea that past and future are times that could exist in and of themselves. *Atita-anagatam svarupato styadhva bhedad dharmanam.* (IV.12)

Thank you. We covered this, I think you may recall, in a past teaching about the emptiness of time itself. Let's do the words first. What's the first keyword? *Dharma*. That's not bad. We did this last Thanksgiving with the word *dhruva*, which referred to the central channel. But we'll cover it again. The Sanskrit word is *dhir*, "d-h-i-r." And the Indo-European root is *dher*, "d-h-e-r." And I think we had fun with this root because it turns into a root called *dheru*, "d-h-e-r-u," which means "tree." And then that gets changed into a root... the word for tree itself. The Sanskrit and the Indo-European mean "to be firm," "to be fixed," "to hold strong." And so in ancient times a tree was considered the strongest thing around. So *dhir* changes to *dheru*, changes to "tree," and then becomes the word "truth." And so the word "truth" is directly connected to the word "*dharma*."

What is the second keyword? *Adhvan*. *Adhvan* means "time." The Sanskrit root is *at*, it's kind of unusual, "a-t." If you know Sanskrit, it's retroflex "*at*." And the Indo-European is the same, "a-t." And from this the "a-t" gets an "n-o" stuck on the end of it, *atno*, and then the "t" changes to "n" and it becomes *anno*. We see it in the words "annual" and "perennial," meaning "to pass through time," "passing through time." Oh, there's one nice Celtic word from the "*dharma*" word: "druid" is from *druvid* meaning "true seer" in the Celtic.

We all have the experience of time moving at different speeds. I mean, of all the things that we sometimes feel are self-existent, we sometimes think that time might be self-existent. For example, a watch has a certain number of marks on it that define how long an hour is. So it seems to us that an hour is something fixed, in and of itself. An hour is something that comes from its own side. Once you get deep into emptiness and understanding how your karmic seeds create everything around you... sooner or later I think you have to try to understand how karmic seeds are actually creating our sense of time itself.

And time itself is not self-existent. Time itself is also empty, meaning that everyone experiences time in a different way. And you know when you're having a good time, time seems to fly by, like when you get to blab after three years of silence. And then sometimes time can slow down, like when you're at the dentist. The point is that time itself is not self-existent. This is why it's possible, when you see emptiness directly, to see ahead into the future. It could be almost, say, five centuries, seven life-times. You can see ahead to the day when you yourself will become an angel. Time itself is not self-existent. The relationship we have with time is not fixed. If you had the karmic seeds in your mind, you could perceive future and past and present all at the same time. There's nothing fixed about past, present, and future. The implication is that on the day that we become enlightened, we will be able to transcend the normal limitations of time. We will be able to see all things in all times at the same moment, because that is also empty. Next verse.

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Joanne Stilwell: When knowledge is no longer blocked, then all there is to know is reduced to the size of a puddle. *Tada sarva-avarana mala-apetasya jynanasya-anatyaj jnyeyam alpam.* (IV.31B)

Thank you. I think the first keyword is *jnyeya*. We had already *jnyana*, meaning *jnya*, “j-n-y-a,” meaning “to know.” And of course the Indo-European is *gno*, “g-n-o,” and that’s why “knowledge” is spelled with a “k.”

I think the second keyword is *alpa*. *Alpa* means “tiny” or “very small.” The Sanskrit root is *lup*, “l-u-p.” The Indo-European root is *leup*, “l-e-u-p.” This is kind of a neat one because it means “something broken off of a tree,” “something small, peeled off of a tree.” And the word “leaf” comes from this root. Also the word “lobby” and the word “loft” come from this root, because in the old days they were made with the bark of trees; the roof was made of shingles made of pieces pulled off of trees. And from this come the German *lufth*, like in “Lufthansa” or “Lufthwaffe,” meaning “the sky,” because the sky was perceived as a canopy made of pieces of bark stripped from a tree. So *alpa* means “tiny” or “very small.” I think the Tibetan is *chungse*. *Chungse* means just “itsy-bitsy” in Tibetan. Very tiny.

This concept here in this verse was very big with Arya Nagarjuna. He said, “Once you understand emptiness clearly, then all things are shrunk to the size of a puddle on the road and you can just step over it with one step.” When you see emptiness directly, one of the experiences right after that is that you understand the content of every single scripture ever written. You understand it perfectly. So the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*, which John Brady and his crew are working so hard on — four and a half thousand great books — you realize that you have perceived their true meaning. And there’s nothing really new in a scripture for you after that. But you realize at the same time that they are so precious and so true. And so it would be worthwhile to devote the rest of your life to translating them, preserving them, typing them, making sure they’re not lost in the world. Every single line of every single scripture in the four and a half thousand great books of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* is completely true. And this is something that you perceive all in a nutshell, all in a single small puddle, in a few minutes after you see emptiness directly. Next verse.

Venerable Chukyi: The fourth commitment is to regular study. *Shaucha santosha tapah svadhyayeshvara prandidhanani niyamah.* (II.32E)

Ah, thank you. *Svadhyaya*, right? You saw the *sva* before in *svarupa*, meaning “self.” And then *adhy*, the next piece of this word comes into English as “epi,” like “epitome” meaning “great.” And then comes *ay*, “a-y,” which is from, again, the Sanskrit root, simply *ay*, and the Indo-European is “e-i,” and again we see it in “circuit” or “exit” or “itinerary,” the “i-t.”

You know, this is one of my favorite subjects. Everybody wants to have mystical experiences. Everybody wants to go into a yurt and come out twenty-four hours later [*laughs*] having seen all kinds of amazing things, you know? When I was growing up

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during the hippie days, it was very common for us to make fun of or to criticize the idea of having to study spiritual things. The idea was that you gain mystic experiences by going off into the woods and eating some peyote and [laughs] you know, getting these things the easy way.

But as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, sweet being, constantly says, “Behind all those mystical experiences is just a lot of hard work, and a lot of study, formal study.” I think you’ve gotten a sense for how Master Naropa, Naropa-hla... he didn’t bump into Tilopa and all those holy angel ladies a week after he started. He went through decades of very formal study. And I’m sorry to say he started with logic, which is still where monks start in Tibetan monasteries. So in a way, after you learn to read and write you jump right into logic. So really, thinking clearly is the basis of later being able to go beyond thinking. You need that kind of formal training in order to have mystical experiences. And it’s always been that way. People who seem to have mystical experiences without training have had countless years of training in their previous lifetimes.

So *svadhyaya* means “to study,” “regular study.” The Tibetan is interesting here. *Kandun* is the word for memorizing and reciting texts. So that gives us the sense that the early Tibetans understood *svadhyaya*, which seems to mean “self-study.” They understood it to mean coming to a point in your study where you are self-running. You’re independent. You can run on your own steam now. And in the old days that was done by being trained and then memorizing the appropriate texts. We spoke previously how to memorize. I still think it’s a very beautiful and important thing. It will be part of the deep training done at Diamond Mountain, along with ancient debating techniques, meditation techniques, and other study techniques. I can’t describe to you the difference it makes in your study. These ancient methods of memorization, debating, logic, and meditation on the books that you study are incomparable. They have been largely lost in the modern world. But I hope that at Diamond Mountain we’re going to recover these. Within a few months you can get a depth of understanding and mystical experiences that you wouldn’t be able to get in years outside of that kind of a program. And it’s really fun. It won’t be any kind of trouble or hassle, I think. Once you see how it works, it’s like having a party with your friends but you come out, like, really smart. [laughs] Okay. Next verse.

Brian Smith: The second commitment is to be contented with whatever we have.
Shaucha santosha tapah svadyayeshvara pranidhanani niyamah. (II.32B)

Thank you. I like the word *santosha*. It just sounds cool, I don’t know why. It sounds like my old favorite band, Santana. [laughter] One of, not *the* favorite; you know *the* favorite. *San* comes from *sam*, which is “com” in our language, “c-o-m,” meaning “together.” *Tosha* comes from a root, *tush*, “t-u-s-h,” in Sanskrit, meaning “to be contented or happy.” I think many of you know the word *tushita* which comes from the same root. In Tibetan it’s called *ganden*, meaning the “heaven of bliss.” And it’s been used as a name for many great Buddhist centers in the west, *Tushita*. The Indo-European root is *teuh*, “t-e-u-h,” and it has meanings of “contented” in the sense of being fat and happy, like how do you call it, “stuffed,” really. So it came to mean “thick,” and

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the word “thumb” comes from that because it’s the thickest finger, and the word “thigh” comes from that because it’s the thickest part of the leg. And I checked about the word “tush.” *[laughs]* It’s not listed in the Indo-European dictionaries, but I’d guess it’s the same thing. And the Greek word for “butter” comes from the same root, and so our own word “butter,” the “t-e,” comes from the same root, meaning “something which has gotten thick or congealed.”

I was thinking, there are really two retreatants who are not going to get to talk about their number one most important experience. Well, there’s a reason, wait... *[laughs]* The first one is Ora Maimes-hla. She did some important work to set up this teaching, and then she’s been on a special assignment which required her to be elsewhere right now. I wrote her and asked her if she would send a tape, but she’s too shy. And then there’s myself. I would also like to tell you about my most important realization, right? And then later, Christie-hla, who’s not at all nervous, is going to talk about her... *[laughs]*

And it’s very simple. *[laughs]* It’s very simple. Christie and I, we did a lot of homework in the two... We had two years warning about three-year retreat. We went to many beautiful lamas. In India we were granted very special deep instructions by several very high lamas. And also we were honored to have instructions and oral lineages passed on by even lamas from other traditions about the special meditations and practices. Of course, we also had very beautiful teachings from our yoga lamas that very much connected to the ancient traditions of Naropa. And we had a very difficult schedule during the deep retreats. The alarm would go off at three o’clock and we had it scheduled almost to the minute up until ten o’clock or eleven o’clock at night, with a big nap, I have to admit. *[laughs]* And we really, really worked hard. We really, really worked hard. And I think all the retreatants, they killed themselves, they really, really struggled.

There’s such intense pressure on your mind knowing that all of you have worked so hard for us. It’s an intense pressure. It wasn’t like anything I’ve ever felt before. I mean, I’ve worked in a corporation; corporate life, New York City... you know, eighteen-hour days. But it wasn’t anything like this. It’s one thing to get paid for what you do. It’s another thing to have this extraordinary kindness, people giving up their entire lives because they believe in what you’re doing. And so it’s an intense pressure to perform. And we really worked hard, due to the kindness of our teachers. And the support of the other retreatants was intense, although it was all mental and spiritual. We didn’t see each other, almost at all.

And out of all these deep practices, out of all these holy meditations, out of study of the ancient scriptures that we did — memorizing, chanting — extraordinary forms of yoga that we were taught... Out of all those deep practices, the single most important practice that I found useful, and that I would like to recommend to all of you, was exactly the meditation that Venerable Jigme Palmo, Elly, led today. Just sit down, comfortable, maybe make yourself a cup of tea, and just think about everything we have to be thankful for. Think about everything there is to be grateful for.

When you get into deep retreat you go into wild emotional swings. One day you feel like you’re about to step into Vajra Yogini’s paradise, and then an hour later you feel like you’ve stepped into hell. You go through these extremes... they sound funny, but at

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the time they were like, almost feeling like committing suicide or something. Extremely difficult, extremely intense. And the one thing I learned from retreat was to stop and sit down and think about all the beautiful people, like you. I mean, I could sit for three, four hours and just think, one by one, through the beautiful people I have met through the dharma. The beautiful teachers, the fellow students, the dedicated people serving other people. And then I would just feel happy and I would realize that my mind had gone off the edge of the spectrum. Like, to be sad about your life, to feel anxiety, is to live in the one percent at the edge of the spectrum, and then ninety percent of your life, ninety percent of the spectrum of your life, is filled with these wonderful people doing wonderful things.

We live in a wonderful time. We live in a wonderful country. It's an incredible time in the history of humanity. You could never get the teachings we're talking about even in Tibet. You couldn't see the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama came out of the Potala Palace once a year. He was carried through the streets on a palanquin. You, maybe, could catch a glimpse of him over someone's shoulder. And then he would go back to the palace. It was out of the question that a common man, anyone but a high geshe, could even meet with the Dalai Lama for five minutes. And here we have the Dalai Lama traveling through the world teaching us. It's extraordinary times.

People were imprisoned; people were threatened with death for traveling to Lhasa without permission even a hundred years ago. There was a Japanese scholar who tried to pose as a Chinese monk and study at Sera. He studied for some time. His teacher was imprisoned when he was revealed. Tibet was closed to foreigners. No one could go and study at Sera. You weren't even allowed in the country. And here we have holy lamas, the greatest in the world coming to serve us, coming to teach us.

What I'm trying to say is the most important thing I learned in meditation retreat for three years was simply to sit down and think about all the beautiful, wonderful things we have to be grateful for. And you will pop right out of your depression. You can't have low self-esteem if you think for five minutes that you are one of the only people on the whole planet in history who has received teachings from His Holiness, or Khen Rinpoche. You can't go on thinking you're a normal person if you have had the teachings on the Yoga Sutra and you've heard the story of Naropa-hla, if you know the secret of how to relate to your close family and other people in your life no longer as normal people. You don't have anything to be sad about anymore. You just have to sit down, stop, drink some tea, and think about how lucky we are. If you start a fantasization in your mind about all the wonderful things that have happened to you, you will easily pass two or three hours, and rise from it refreshed and joyful.

So *santoshā*... [laughs] *santoshā* is "don't beat yourself up." I mean have contentment in the sense of realize how lucky we are. You know, it doesn't take more than a few minutes of meditation to realize that we are the luckiest people in the world. Next verse.

David Stumpf: Theirs is won through effort. *Shraddha virya smirti samadhi prajnya purvaka itaresham.* (I.20B)

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Thank you. The keyword here I think is *virya* and, in Tibetan, *tsundru*. *Virya* comes from a root, we think, “v-i-r.” And the Indo-European root is *wiro*, “w-i-r-o.” There are three important words in Sanskrit for a person or a human, like one that comes from *mun*, one comes from *near*, *nur*, and *wiro*. *Wiro* means “a warrior,” a human or a man in the sense of a strong person, almost a warrior person. The word I like the best that comes from this is “werewolf.” [laughs] “Werewolf” means *wiro*, “wolf” means “half man, half wolf.” And also, obviously, “virile” and “virility” come from the same root.

There’s an old Irish name, I don’t know how to pronounce it, maybe Kevin can tell us. *Fergus*? Is it *Fergus*, “f-e-r-g-u-s?” *Fergus*? Ah. The *fer* means “man” and the *gus* means “strong,” “strong man.” So *fer* and *wir* come from the same root.

So *virya* means “power,” “strength,” “vitality,” “effort.” And as Salim-hla mentioned, when he... I don’t know if you noticed that his corporate mission statement is the six perfections, right? [laughs] Sneaky... but that’s good sneaky. That’s the kind of sneaky we want. But *virya* is to look at what you’re doing and realize it’s the greatest thing in the world you could be doing. And that gives you the energy to do it. You see? Most of us look at our meditation cushion and we sort of grimace at it, you know. [laughs] But it’s because we haven’t thought about... *virya* means think about all the beautiful things you can do if your mind is well meditated, and then just get excited, I mean, joyful. It’s a kind of thing I never want to lose from all of our work together, all of our projects. We have always had this kind of energy, this kind of excitement running through all the people. You know, it’s been part of ACI and all of our projects since the beginning, this kind of energy, or excitement, or electricity running through it.

We’re in a tough world. We can save the world. We have the equipment, we have the information that’s needed, and we have the practices, pure lineage passed down to us. You know, we can do anything. Everything is available to a person who just wants to work for free for everybody. John Stilwell-hla and I were talking. Nobody can compete with us. [laughter] He says, “Yeah, nobody can do it cheaper...” [laughs] “...because you just want to give it away for free.” And it’s this kind of electricity, and that’s the way... You know, we’ll have ups and downs, we’ll have good times and bad times, we’ll have a fat grant and we’ll be broke. We’ll have harmony and we’ll have trouble sometimes between us. But I think the thing that will get us through is this electricity about the rightness of serving everyone else for free. Next verse.

Ven. Jigme Palmo: You gain the body of perfection: a form of light itself; a frame of diamond strength. *Rupa lavanya bala vajra sanhananatvani kaya sampat.* (III.47)

Thank you. What’s the first keyword, *rupa*? We had *rupa* before in *svarupa*, so I don’t need to do it. But here it means “body,” or your physical form. It’s the word “form.” Okay? We had it before and you can find it with *svarupa*.

The next one is *bala*. *Bala* means “power.” When we talk about the four powers of confession it’s actually the four *bala*.

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I forgot to mention, back at *musjara*, *mudito*, and we talked about “honey,” all the words for “honey”... I forgot to say, those of you who do *tsechu*, Vajra Yogini, the *madana* comes from that, the same root, meaning “elixir” or “honey drink.” And this had reminded me, because *bala* is the other word for our sacred substances in the ceremony, and it means that this small object can give you power, it’s very powerful. The Sanskrit root is *bal*, “b-a-l,” and the Indo-European root is *bel*, I think it’s “b-e-l.” The word “anvil” comes from that, the “v-i-l” means “something you can beat against and it will keep strong.” And then, there’s one other, what was that? Oh, all the words with *pel* in it, like “compel,” “repel,” “impel.” *Pel* meaning “to push in a strong way.” So *bala* means “force” or “strength.”

The next one is *vajra*? Is it *vajra*? Yeah. I think *vajra* is one of my favorite words here. I was really — surprise — I was really excited because I thought Amber-hla would like it. *Vajra*, which means “diamond,” and I think we spoke about it before. Sometimes “diamond bolt” is called *vajra*... I mean “a thunderbolt,” “bolt of lightning,” because it was believed by the ancients that since a bolt of lightning could break a big tree in half, there must be a diamond at the very tip of the lightning. I think also it’s very significant that the *vajra*, which we use in our ceremonies, that little thunderbolt instrument, is in the shape of a pure diamond crystal.

Pure diamond crystals grow in that octahedral crystal formation and a *vajra* is a twinned octahedron, perfect diamond crystal, twin diamond crystal. So *vajra* means “diamond.” It comes from an old root *vaj*, “v-a-j,” and the Indo-European root is *weg*, “w-e-g,” and they both mean “to be powerful” or “strong” in the sense of having intense life energy running through you. And the words in English that come from the same root are “waking” or “wakeful,” “vigilant.” Even the word “witch” and “wicked” come from this root because in the old days, “witch” meant “wicker,” which means “someone who can wake up the dead,” “who can put energy back into a dead body.”

But the one that’s most exciting for Amber-hla is “vegetable” and “vegan.” The “v-e-g” in both words comes from the exact root as *vajra*, same root as *vajra*, meaning “powerful life energy running through these plants and can impart strength to your body.” The Tibetan is *dorje*. *Do* meaning “stone” and *rje* meaning “the king of stones.”

What’s the next word? *Kaya*. *Kaya* we had in the Thanksgiving teachings. If you weren’t here you can get it from the book about it. But of course all the Buddhists here know the words “*sambhogakaya*,” “*rupakaya*,” “*svabhavakaya*,” “*dharmakaya*,” “*nirmanakaya*,” meaning the various forms, the various components of an enlightened being. When you become enlightened your body changes, as we said before. It’s that, and very importantly, the practices which Naropa-hla brought to Tibet from Lord Buddha himself, right, are teaching us how to move all the energy into the central channel. And when all the energy is moved into the central channel, then your body changes into *kaya sampat*. Master Patanjali here is describing the angel’s body. He’s describing what the angel’s body will be like. It will be like a diamond. It’ll be totally powerful, totally strong, and totally clear, and made of light, like a diamond. He’s describing what we call the *sambhogakaya*, which is the body which each of us will possess in our own paradise, like a diamond.

And it’s important to realize that the reason we are studying Naropa’s life, the reason we are trying to introduce Heart Yoga in a general way to many people without

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Buddhism, is to help them come closer to the point when they reach an angel's body. You know, I grew up a Christian. I believe strongly in the teachings of Jesus, as well. I believe that it's possible to reach heaven. But what's exciting to me is that here we have the methods, here we have the outline, here we have all the information of how to do it, how to actually do it. And we can gain that kind of a body. Your body will change. These practices that we've been talking about this weekend, and which you can learn in detail only if you pass your eighteen courses... that's blackmail... [laughter] These teachings, they actually show us how to do it, and to me that's very beautiful and exciting and a glorious time in the life of human beings. Next verse.

Allison Jucha and Jim Dey: If you make it a way of life never to hurt others, then in your presence all conflict comes to an end. *Ahinsa pratishthayam tat sannidhau vairyā tyagah.* (II.35)

Thank you. Oh, I think this is one of the most exciting verses. I say that about every verse, don't I? [laughs] *Ahinsa pratishthayam* means "if you can keep up this non-violence stuff long enough." And by the way, Buddhist textbooks say you will never be able to be non-violent over the long run unless you understand that it hurts yourself. You see? When you get backed up far enough by a violent person, you will do violence unless you truly understand where it's coming from.

Tat sannidhau vairyā tyagah... so cool. *Tat* means *dey*, *tat* means "that" and it's the root of all the English words like "the," "that," "this," "then," "there," same root. But *sannidhau* is the interesting one. *San* means *sam*, meaning "together." *Ni* means "down." *Dhau* comes from *dha*, which we had before in *samadhi*, "to be set down." But what *tat sannidhau* means is *dey drung du* in Tibetan, "in your presence violence will end." In your presence violence will end. It's very powerful... the key here is "in your presence." In your presence violence will end.

What it means is if you truly forsake violence on every level — if you work hard to become a truly non-violent person in body, speech, and mind — then your world will transform. The world as you perceive it will transform. There won't be violence in your world. If there's some terrible disaster going on, some terrible violence being done even in your own country, you won't hear about it for three years. You'll be one of the only people in the whole United States whose mind is not disturbed by these things as they occur, because you simply won't experience that object. If your non-violence is strong and strict, then in your presence, in your world, violence simply won't occur anymore. It's a very powerful thing.

Then you get the moral question, "Well, won't you become sort of an apathetic person? How can you serve others who are being exposed to violence? Isn't it sort of make-believe if you can be in the world and never be aware of the violence that really is there?"

You have to realize that "really is there" is a lie. There is no "really is there." There's no such thing as "really is there." There's the violence perceived by people who have been violent in the past, and there is the lack of violence perceived by people that have been non-violent, in the very same place, in the very same space on this world.

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There is no violence or non-violence in the world. It's blank. It's empty. There is no way it really is. If you experience the world as a violent place, it's only because you have been violent. A person who has been truly non-violent will not experience any violence in the same world.

You can walk through New York City and have this experience, right? People visit New York... My brother, I remember, dear brother Geoff, I brought him to New York, to show him the wonders of New York, on the bus. He got out of the Port Authority terminal. He took one look around; he turned around and went back in the door. *[laughter]* And you meet other people who say, "New York is the Big Apple." They step through this land of opportunity, constantly meeting wonderful, helpful, interesting, exciting people. Where is New York, what is New York? Is New York violent or non-violent? You see? It's up to your own seeds.

So how do you stop war? *Ahinsa*. It's so beautiful. It's such a beautiful thought. You don't have to get into, "Should we attack this country or should we not attack this country?" It's good to express your opinion. It's good to say, "I feel we should be peaceful." But in the end, all violence is created by the tiny seeds, billions of seeds within a pinpoint spot inside the heart *chakra* of each person here. It's amazing, it's extraordinary. You can stop all violence on this planet by becoming a perfectly non-violent person.

It doesn't mean that we should space out and not undertake activist means of expressing our opposition to violence. That's how you change the seeds in your mind. That's how you change those seeds. So we have to speak out. We have to try to stop violence when we see it being done. But when violence stops, you have to realize it's being stopped within the tiny, infinitely small drop within your own heart.

I think maybe it's a good time to break for a minute and ask the last retreatant *[laughs]* to describe her most important experience during the three-year retreat. So Christie-hla will speak.



Christie-hla: Just before we went into retreat, Holy Lama Geshe-hla and I were invited to Ofer and Aya's [Geshe la's old diamond bosses] house for dinner. Ofer asked me a really funny question. He said, "Why are you going on three year retreat?" And I realized at that time that he was a really, really smart guy because, of all the people who I talked to about three-year retreat, no one had asked me why I was going.

And it's really important in three-year retreat... when you go to undertake something like this... And I'm speaking to all of you because I hope that one day you will undertake something like this because it's very important in everybody's spiritual development to eventually go on an extended retreat. It doesn't have to be three years. It can be six months or something like that, but to really delve into your own mind.

But you need to have your goal, or you won't make it. And that's the one thing that all the retreatants had in common, I think, is we all had a really strong goal. We all

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really wanted to stop suffering, our own suffering and the suffering that we see in everybody around us.

And there comes a time when you understand that working through the hard cement – outside methods – aren't going to cut it. You have to go into your own mind, that's where you're really going to make the difference. That's why you go into three-year retreat. You go in because you want to get enlightened so that you can actually help people. Because as it is now we really can't help people. We can't really help people. You can sit there at the side of someone's bed while they're dying and give them a cold glass of water and change their bed pan. But you can never take the terror out of their eyes... that their body and their mind are being ripped from them and they don't know why. So you have to have a good goal, a strong goal.

And then all the hardships that Geshe-la has been mentioning, and there were a lot of hardships, they become easy to take because you know that you're there to get to the ultimate goal. But you know, I found it really difficult to think about myself becoming enlightened. It seemed like a really far off goal to me. So actually, my goal in retreat was just to see emptiness because, really, we're all on the second path, right? I mean most... I don't know your mind but I mean I'm just... *[laughs]* maybe most of us are on the second path and we need to get to the third one. We need to see emptiness directly, and we need to work very hard and put a lot of effort into doing that. And in order to do that we need to get into a deep meditative state.

I would like to say that once you study — as Geshe-la mentioned just ten minutes ago — emptiness and you've collected virtue by doing the projects that we've been discussing all weekend, then it's time to go into retreat. And then you need two things. And I'm going to talk about the second thing you need first, and then I'm going to go back and talk about the most important first thing.

The second thing you need is in the Yoga Sutras, what is called *abhyasa*. And Master Iyengar, he translates this really nicely as “constant and determined practice.” When I began retreat I wasn't very good at meditating. I would get all restless and shift around, and my mind was totally unfocussed. But three years of constant and determined practice and that changes, no matter what. You put in the time, and you get the results. So everyone can do it.

The first thing that happens is that you get what is called *shinjang* in Tibetan. We were just talking about this with Alison-hla, one of our ballet teachers, she was describing how you get to the point in your ballet when you're putting in the maximum effort but you're totally comfortable. *[laughs]* And we thought that was a very funny dichotomy because we can't imagine doing that with our ballet. But I think we can imagine doing it in our meditation, so we can relate. First your body gets really comfortable, even though your back is totally straight and you're sitting in this weird cross-legged position. After a while, if you do it over and over again, it's just exactly the place where your body wants to be every day. It gets so comfortable, and that's when it can relax and things can start happening with it.

And then there's *shinjang* of mind, when first you work and your mind is scattered every which way and you're thinking about twenty different things you're not supposed to think about. But then you go through this process where you do it over and

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over again, and eventually your mind just goes to the object, and it gets comfortable there. It gets comfortable in meditation. Then you reach a point where your mind gets single-pointed on an object. You fix your mind to this tiny point, and then that point starts to grow larger so it encompasses your entire awareness. And when you start out it requires a huge amount of effort. I was just exhausted trying to maintain single-pointed concentration for, like, five minutes. It's so hard. Try doing it just with your breath. Just to focus on one thing for that long – our minds aren't used to it.

But eventually the time gets longer. You get to ten minutes, and then fifteen minutes, and then twenty minutes. And somewhere in there you reach the state where single-pointed concentration requires no effort at all and you're in this state of single-pointed concentration the entire day. And it's the most beautiful, amazing experience. It's like, it's like all of your discursive thought stops and you're just immersed in experiencing things. Everything you focus on, even when you're out of meditation is this huge experience. And it's the most blissful thing I've ever experienced in my life. It's so wonderful, and you should all experience it if you haven't already.

This is where that vow comes in – don't get attached to those great meditative experiences and just [*laughs*] get into the pleasure of it. You really have to focus on your goal. You have to turn your mind to emptiness. And really, that's what it's all about; you have to turn your mind to emptiness. Whether you're doing an outer or an inner method of meditating on emptiness, it doesn't matter. It's the same goal.

The outer methods, grosser outer methods are actually moving the body, like with the yoga *asanas*. But there are more subtle outer methods where you're sitting in meditation and meditating on your channels. But all the outer methods are working with the body to get the winds into the central channel, which is where they are when you see emptiness directly. You're working from the outside in.

And then you have to focus on the inner method. And you have to do both, because the mind is this huge place. I think that's another thing that all the retreatants realized, that it's so amazing how immense and how many things we've got stuck in there from lifetimes, and tons of seeds that you don't even know about until you get in there. And it takes a lot to change the mind. So you have to work on both methods if you want to reach enlightenment in this life, if you want to see emptiness directly in this life and help all those people out there that are suffering, including yourself, you know you have to. It's the only way.

But the nice thing about being in a state of single-pointed concentration when you're doing meditations on emptiness is that even with an intellectual understanding of emptiness you get this deep experiential understanding of it that doesn't come from reading class textbooks. It's your own personal experience of it and it resonates in your mind and your body much more deeply. You really know you're doing well when you come out of a meditation and you're just awestruck by what you've just seen. It's not for the grandiose glory of being awestruck by your meditations. It's because if you realize that everything is a projection, then the possibilities are just endless. You can create your own reality, you really can. You can create your perfect world. The vows become these totally different things. They are like special secret codes by the great magician, Lord Buddha, that were given to us so that we could manipulate our own reality and change

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our world into exactly what we want. Like perfection for everyone. So practice, constant and determined practice, can get you really far on this path.

But I think the most important thing, the number one thing that I'm going back to, is you need to rely properly on a holy lama. I don't think any of us could have done this retreat without the blessing of our lama, without a proper relationship with our lama. Without relying on a lama you're never going to get beyond your present understanding of emptiness, and eventually it will degenerate because your karmic seeds will wear out. With relying on your lama your practice just skyrockets.

So why is that? I think we talked about the four laws of karma yesterday: *shi sampa, jorwa, tartuk*. And one of them, which is the most important one for this topic, is the first one, *shi*, the object. In order to change your mind in that really immense way, you need a really powerful object. Otherwise the karma just won't ripen in this life. And who knows where you'll be the next time it ripens. You might not be in this perfect situation where you can meditate and have teachings. You have to get the karma to ripen now, because now is when we have the chance.

You have these powerful objects, like your parents, and things ripen really quickly, like in this life maybe; ten, twenty years later you'll experience results from things that you've done with your parents, good or bad. But with a lama, I've had the experience of things ripening in two or three days. *[laughs]* It's amazing, it's really amazing. And that's my own personal experience. It's not in the texts but it's valid for me. I mean, I see it. It's very obvious. Sometimes it's very negative karma, to tell you the truth. *[laughs]* And it comes back... I'll have like a brief moment of irritation towards my holy lama and, say, two or three days later he'll have several hours of very intense irritation at me. So this is how this powerful object thing works.

So it's very beneficial for us if we can control our minds, not like me, because first of all you get this complete understanding that karma is totally true. You see it working; it works in two or three days. It's very obvious; you don't have to wait too long for the effects. And that's very beneficial because then you start living by the laws of karma, and your mind cleans up and you're able to think clearer and have better concentration. But really it's so that we can transform our reality.

So what does it mean to rely on a lama? First of all your lama has to be, for you, a completely infallible being. There's no other way to get around it. Otherwise you don't have a lama, really. It's not a lama, it's a teacher that you decided to take and you see some faults in them, but it's not a lama. Your lama is a perfectly infallible being.

And the second meaning of relying on a lama is that you follow what they tell you. You take their advice. You learn from them. And this kind of faith, this kind of relying on a lama, it's only for us. You know, the lamas, they don't need us. We're just a pain in the butt for them sometimes. *[laughs]* I mean they love us because they're totally compassionate, infallible beings, and they want to help us. But all our mental afflictions... I mean, if they weren't infallible beings, we would probably get on their nerves. *[laughs]* And all the times that we didn't listen to them, and all this stuff, you know it's just... They probably could do all these projects better themselves, you know. *[laughs]* It's all for us, it's all for our own merit, it's all for our own seeing emptiness directly. That's all they want us to do.

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So how do you get this view of your lama as a totally infallible being? Because in our normal perception we don't have this view of people as totally infallible beings because we're human and our reality is not that. We don't see infallible beings in the human realm. So what do you do about that? Well, you use logic. This is a completely infallible being because he is empty, and... It's so hard to be clear. As Ani Chukyi-hla said in her meditation the other day, the things that we're perceiving are mirrors of ourselves. Everything that I see is a mirror of my own mind. The imperfections that I see in other beings are simply my own mental afflictions being played out before my very eyes.

And at some point you pick someone to be an infallible being for you, someone who almost seems like an infallible being already, and you make a leap of faith based on that logic, based on the understanding that you have of emptiness. Because if you make a leap of faith without logic, it's going to fail later. If you do it just on some emotional whim, they don't last. It has to be logical. And then, it's really interesting, people wait around for the lama to do something miraculous or amazing so that they can have unshakable faith in them. But what happens is that it's your unshakable faith which creates the miracles. That's the karma of unshakable faith, is that you get to see miracles.

So, I'll give you this hypothetical example. You and your lama are sitting by a fire. And the lama says something to you vaguely Tilop-ian. Says something like, "If I had a student [*laughs*] they could put their hand right in that fire." And you're sitting there and you're thinking, and all of a sudden you're just thrust into this conundrum because obviously your lama is talking to you about your own hand, and you're kind of attached to your hand and you don't want it to be burned. And you can't see any reason why burning your hand could get you enlightened in this life. But of course, you're not a totally enlightened, infallible being with a perfect mind that sees all three times, are you? You sit there and you reason it out through logic. "Why would this be a good thing to do, to follow my lama's advice and stick my hand into this fire? Well, he is a perfectly infallible being who has so much love for me I can't even understand it. And all he wants is to get me enlightened in this life. All he wants is for me to see emptiness directly."

And so you get the faith you need, and you stick your hand into the fire. And what happens, funny thing, your hand, it doesn't burn. It doesn't burn. You're sitting there with your hand in the fire, and flames are all around you, and it doesn't burn. So it's an object lesson on emptiness, right? It's the emptiness of fire's ability to burn you. It's the emptiness of your hand's ability to feel the fire. It's the emptiness of your awareness of the two of those coming together. *Khor sum*. But it's also a miracle, you know, brought about by your faith. That's all. Thank you.

[Applause]

I think we have one verse left, and then we'll do a little Naropa-hla.

Gail Deutsch: The bodies that you send out come only from your thoughts, and from the true nature of yourself. *Nirmanā chittanyasmita matrat*. (IV.4)

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Thank you. I think the first key word is *nirmana*. In Tibetan, *trulpa*. *Nir* here means “out,” “sending out.” *Ma* means “to move” or “to mete out.” The Indo-European route is *me*, “m-e,” and you get words like “measure” or “meter.” I think one interesting one is “moon,” because the moon was used to measure the passage of the month. And then “menses” and all the words that come from that.

The second keyword I think is *asmita*. We had this once before, as one of the *kleshas*, as one of the mental afflictions. But obviously, in the course of the Yoga Sutra, Master Patanjali uses this word in two or three different ways. For example, in the first chapter it’s used to describe a stage of meditation, with *vitarka*, *vicara*, and *ananda*. But here in the final chapter it’s used to describe a kind of emptiness, the emptiness of yourself; *asmita*. *Asmi* is the first present singular verb “to be,” “I am.” *Asmita* means “I am-ness.” But here again it means “a quality of emptiness of yourself.”

We’ve talked a lot about how to, in the final hours before your transformation into the body of an angel, we’ve talked a lot about how the side channels collapse, they break down, they withdraw into the central channel. And then it triggers the creation of the body of light.

I think we didn’t speak a lot about the other body that you have. When you become enlightened, in the last moments before you become enlightened there’s a transformation also of your mind. If you traced on a graph the process of the last moments before enlightenment, your mind suddenly shifts. The karmic seeds are no longer presenting objects to your mind in a sequence and the karmic seeds are no longer presenting discrete objects to your mind; one, one, one, one. The karmic seeds of trying, struggling with all our practices for all these years, they flip totally. And then the seeds are producing to your mind a single object, which is all knowable things in all times. And that’s the only way that you could ever become enlightened. So the seeds in your mind flip, shift, and then suddenly a single seed is presenting a single object, which is all things, in all places, at all times, to your mind. And you perceive everything there ever was, is, or will be.

The one thing about you that never changes is your *asmita*. Right now all of us have the seeds for enlightenment within us. Because of the simple fact that we are empty, because of the simple fact that we don’t exist from our own side we can become enlightened. So what we call the *sugata garbha*, the Buddha nature, your own nature of Buddhahood, it’s not some strange little Buddha living within your chest somewhere. It’s the simple fact that you don’t come from your own side. That is the potential for you to become an enlightened being. Just as if you change your karmic seeds, someone who used to irritate you will become a beautiful person to you, you can do the same with yourself. The karmic seeds to see your body get old, the karmic seeds to see wrinkles form and aging continue are suddenly stopped, and new karmic seeds assert themselves and you see this body we talked about. *Kaya sampat . . . rupa lavanya bala vajra samhananatvani* – you see the body change. It’s not that the body is changing, right? It’s just different seeds ripening in your mind.

How do you get those seeds there? Obviously you have to practice everything from non-violence on up that creates this body. I’ll show you a little secret method that I

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should bring out because I don't want people to think I'm too strange. *[laughs]* It's very important as a practice to pretend or to try to emulate the kind of body you will have later. So this diamond body that you will have, you can help plant seeds for it in your mind now just by doing some simple things. For example, the reason to wear the robes of a monk or a nun is to... It's like Halloween; we're pretending to be like Lord Buddha or Je Tsongkapa, Khen Rinpoche-hla. We're dressing up like them and then we're hoping that that will plant a seed in our minds. That's one of the most important reasons to wear robes. You're sort of impersonating those holy beings. But at some point if you do it enough the impersonation becomes real.

We do the same with the yogi's life, yogi's style. It's why a yogi would wear their hair long. You can see Naropa-hla's hair. I don't have much hair left, but the ten or twelve strands left, *[laughs]* I've grown it long. And to be among friends to tell you why, because you will be asked and you will wonder... I want to remind myself constantly of the Angel of Diamond. I want to be like her. I want to plant seeds in my own mind that one day I can become her and go to countless planets. So it's one more method. This method taught by Lord Buddha to... If your practice happens to be trying to become like this beautiful, exquisite, compassionate angel then whatever hairs you have left, you could grow them. And then every time you touched it or someone asked you about it you would recall why you're doing it and that would plant seeds in your mind to actually become her. So this is why yogis would wear their hair long or wear some kind of jewelry, to remind them of this. In a secret initiation, a lama will often dress up as Vajra Yogini, even wear the clothing and there are special wigs that Tibetan lamas would wear. The idea is that even during an initiation you get deep seeds planted in you to become like an angel. So this is a very powerful method.

If you can keep your faith and your vision of what you're doing all the time in awareness, then even as you walk around partly dressed like the angel you will become, in a very shallow, in a very artificial way, really, that seeds would be planted within you to actually become her later. Later those seeds will ripen. You will become this beautiful exquisite angel.

I encourage you even to look through books, magazines. If you see a beautiful picture of someone who looks like an angel... and it will be your own version, each person will have a different vision. The Chinese people draw the angels as Chinese. The Tibetans draw them as Tibetans. The Indians drew them as Indians. You should, according to your karmic seeds, seek out pictures of who you will become. These are not real pictures, they are human beings with skin and bones and flesh, but you can pretend, you can approximate. You can find paintings or photographs of beings that you would like to become. And then I encourage you to keep it near you, look at it often, pretend it's your mirror sometimes. This is the meaning of the religious paintings and *thankas* of Tibet and India, Mongolia, China. It's that when you see them you are dreaming of becoming like these beings. But I urge you not to think of them as two dimensional flat things with painted bodies. You have to think of them as like candle light, or firelight. Their bodies are made of light itself. It's a good practice to do.

As you get more advanced in your practice I think the images — paintings, statues — mean less and less. They are something put on an altar to worship. We don't much believe that in the higher teachings. You have to start looking at these paintings

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and images, and seeing them as yourself, as you will be. And as I said yesterday, when you're around your close family or your close friends or your teachers, and in this practice especially a spouse or even a child, you have to struggle to believe that they are already this angel, and they are struggling to bring you to the same place. They are struggling to make you an angel, too. As your practice gets higher and higher, you will need fewer objects on your altar, because they will be replaced by the people around you. It can only be done if you keep your vows well. Because it's not the decision that you make, it's something that your karma forces upon your mind and then the beings around you are actually holy beings. Like we said in the beginning, Je Tsongkapa and Kenchen looking at each other and yelling, "Oh, you're a tantric deity!"

So the verse means "in the first millisecond of enlightenment you become able to perceive all objects because your karmic seeds have changed." The emptiness of you has carried forth from beginningless time up to enlightenment. It never changes. It's what makes it all possible. That's the *asmita*. *Chitta* means "the enlightened state of mind." And suddenly, one millisecond after enlightenment, countless angels' bodies fly forth from your body. They appear in every single planet of the universe. Try to imagine yourself in the future sitting still in a paradise and then at the same instant you are appearing on countless planets in front of countless beings helping each one of them. If you are not this already you will become this, surely, certainly. You are so close; you have received the highest teachings possible to reach this goal. We just have to meditate, regular daily practice.

If you have had Vajra Yogini initiations then you should do *tong len* but in the special way that is taught there, and then if you haven't yet had that empowerment then you should be doing *tong len* every day. I beg you to do *tong len* every day. And I think the Heart Yoga, which will be taught in the next two weeks I understand, is a very powerful way to combine inner method and outer method. It is the secret teaching of Naropa. It is the essence of Naropa teaching. It's not just a little half hour routine. It is the essence of the highest teachings that ever reached Tibet.



So we'll finish up with Naropa-hla. I wanted to talk about how Naropa-hla's teaching reached Tibet itself and came to us eventually. You can say that Naropa-hla's teachings have come, for us, have come down through two great lineages. We spoke already about the fact that almost all the great secret teachings in Tibet came down through Naropa-hla: the Kalachakra, Yamantaka, Bhairava, Chakrasamvara, Guhyasamaja, and also Hevajra. All of these holy secret lineages, you can find Naropa-hla in all of the lineage trees, in all of them. Also *mahamudra* and Vajra Yogini. As far as the open teachings, we said that Naropa-hla had been Lord Atisha's teacher for the subjects of Hevajra and *Prajna Paramita*. And thus you can say that Naropa-hla also has a place as the fore-father of our *lam rim* Kadampa traditions and the lineage of the Dalai Lama.

How did this reach Tibet? I just think it's a neat story. It's a lot like the efforts and the hardships that were accomplished by modern day people to bring great teachings

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from India and Tibet. I know we have two, at least two, extraordinary yoga masters here today. People who learn these teachings from them, which are part of Naropa lineage, I don't think you often stop and thank these teachers for all the pain they have gone through to go to India and bring the teachings back here to our country. Countless troubles, countless days with all kinds of parasites, diarrhea, and just plain pain and trouble to bring those teachings back to us. You take a yoga class, you think it's a nice exercise, but it's the result of ten or twenty years of struggle and pain to go to India and learn from the great masters there. And you should sometimes thank them for the pain they have taken.

The first great lineage of Naropa-hla, the six yogas of Naropa-hla, came to Tibet through Marpa, the translator. We left Naropa-hla burned at the stake and then jumping around with his partner. He later settled down with Niguma, his original practice partner, and they began to teach. One of the first students to come was Marpa, the translator from Tibet. Marpa was born in southeastern Tibet in a place called Sodra. I think as a child his parents found him to be... His parents were wealthy land-owners, farmers, and he was such a naughty and mischievous child — reminds me a little bit of a great lama in New Jersey as a child *[laughs]* — that his parents determined that he should be sent away to a lama who might discipline him.

So they sent Marpa-hla as a young man — he was still in his teens — to a place in south central Tibet called Nugo Valley, and there he studied with a great translator called Drogme. The problem was that Drogme was very strict and he charged a lot of money. In those days you had to offer gold, large quantities of gold, to a teacher to get any kind of a teaching. They didn't take you seriously if you didn't show up with tens of thousands of dollars, basically. So they collected money and sent it with Marpa-hla. He paid Drogme Lotsowa. And Drogme for three years taught him the languages of India, including Sanskrit. Then Marpa-hla was running out of money and being such a stubborn person, like all the retreatants and caretakers, he said, "This is silly. This guy's charging me all this money. He just went to India for awhile and learned all this stuff. I should go to India. I could bypass these charges."

So he went back home to southeast Tibet. He talked his parents into giving him his inheritance ahead of time. He converted it all into gold. He sewed it into his clothing and he started walking to the only path to India three hundred and fifty miles away. He crossed the pass at fifteen thousand feet, came down into Nepal. Tibetans living at such altitude can't come directly to India. They just get tuberculosis immediately because of the difference in the altitude. It can be a ten, twelve thousand feet difference. That's why so many of the lamas who escaped Tibet came down with tuberculosis in the refugee camps in 1960.

So he spent three years in Nepal trying to get his lungs adjusted halfway. He met Chitherpa and another close disciple of Naropa-hla, and he heard about Naropa-hla's qualities. He was very excited. And then after three years of acclimatization he walked the other, oh I think seven, eight hundred miles, down to Phullahari, or Pushpahari, which is near Nalanda, which is not far from Bodhgaya in India. And he met Naropa-hla.

And it seems like his original relationship went pretty easy, I think because of all the pain he had taken to get to India. Naropa-hla was impressed with Marpa, and he had also received a prediction from Tilopa that Marpa would be coming. Tilopa warned

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Naropa-hla that a student named Lodru, which is *Mati* in Sanskrit, would be coming. Chitta Lodru was Marpa-hla's personal name — Marpa is his clan name — and so he was expecting Marpa-hla and he granted him many tantric initiations.

Marpa stayed in India with Naropa-hla and Maitripa and other great masters for twelve years studying the great teachings. He returned again to Tibet and then came back to India for a second time and then a third time. The second time he stayed six years, the third time he stayed three years. And during this time he was trained by both Naropa and by Niguma. Sometimes Naropa would send Marpa to his partner for training, to Niguma.

And so in this way Marpa-hla was taught mainly the six yogas of Naropa, which are the basis of the *Tibetan Book of Yoga* and the Heart Yoga *asanas* and programs. And Marpa during this time translated at least one of the tantras in the *Kangyur* and about fifteen works in the *Tengyur*, including most of the works of his teacher, Naropa. So that's the way in which the six yogas came into Tibet.

Marpa-hla taught them to his disciple, Milarepa. And I think it's important to say, Marpa-hla was not a monk. Marpa was a farmer. Marpa was a family man and a business man. Over the course of his life, nine different angels came to Marpa to stay with him and train him. The last one to come was named Dagme-ma. *Dagme-ma* means "Miss Emptiness" [*laughs*] and it was with her that Marpa-hla settled down and did his main practice, started a family, had children. And I think of him a lot like Art-hla, Lama Art. On the outside he was just a layman – and he's an extraordinary translator – and he was bringing up a family and running a farm, a business. But inside he was doing a lot of practice on the six yogas of Naropa.

Marpa and his disciples often did long retreats, you know. They would go to Marpa's house, which was a huge tower called Tsekhar, and they would do, six-week retreats, three-week retreats together, and Marpa taught his disciples. Many of his disciples were his children. And then some of his disciples came from the outside, like Milarepa.

It was Milarepa who received most of the lineages of the six practices of Marpa, because Marpa's main son died, his eldest son died, but not before Marpa had forced Milarepa to build the Tsekhar tower. *Tse* means "my son," *khar* means "tower." This is a nine-story tower which still exists in Tibet, which was built by Milarepa as a test from his lama, Marpa. So Marpa – you should be encouraged – Marpa put Milarepa through the same trouble that Tilopa put Naropa through. And Marpa was forced later by Naropa to go through a lot of horrible tests also, including swimming across poison lakes to reach an island called Tsosa, to go meet Niguma in a burial ground to get special teachings on Vajra Yogini. So the kinds of tests you are getting put through are not much I think. And it's a tradition, it's an old tradition. Marpa kept giving all the great teachings and initiations and secret information to his own son and kept ignoring Milarepa, who he would say, "you go out and plow the field" or "you build another story on this tower." The day after the tower was finished Milarepa expected his first initiation. I think it was after six years or something. And Marpa called his son in and gave it to his son instead. Milarepa went outside to commit suicide. But [*laughter*]... there was an interesting twist of fate. I don't know how long you want to go. I can go pretty long. [*applause*] Okay, okay.

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There was a lot... I'll tell you, this is a long story. *[laughs]* There was a lama named Loplama. Lope is a special area of Tibet that was known for Sakya logicians, but he had a lot of the initiations that Milarepa was hoping to get from Marpa and never got. And Dagme-ma, Marpa's final partner, his wife — and by the way, it's considered that the nine angels who came to Marpa during the course of his life were the nine *dakinis* or angels of the Hevajra mandala — so Dagme-ma was getting upset at all the torture that her husband was giving Milarepa. She felt bad for Milarepa.

So one day she sneaked into Marpa's belongings and pulled out a ruby which had been Naropa's. Naropa had given it to Marpa. So Dagme-ma sneaked it out of a bag and gave it to Milarepa and said, "You know what? You make some excuse and you go over to Loplama, and you give him this ruby, and tell him you need all those initiations, and you can get them from him instead of Marpa."

So he took the ruby, he went to Loplama, which seems to have been something like a week's walk away. He presented the ruby. Loplama looked at it and immediately began to grant him initiations. Actually something happened just before the initiation.

Loplama said, "I have some trouble with some students who are trying to reach me from other parts of Tibet, are constantly being mugged on the way."

Milarepa was known, in the earlier part of his life as a black magician. He had learned the arts of calling down hail storms on people and killing them with this... and actually they say that all of the hardships that he underwent under Marpa were only for the purpose of cleansing his karma. He regretted that he had killed people in the past, and when he came to Marpa for initiation, Marpa had to purify him first. So anyway, now Milarepa is more mature. He goes to Loplama.

Loplama says, "These people are getting mugged. I think you should send some hail storms down upon the muggers and kill them."

Milarepa respectfully said, "I used to do that before I understood the Dharma. And I came here because I wanted to purify that bad karma, and I respectfully refuse."

Then Loplama said, "So now I see you are worthy for initiation."

So I think it's an example of when to respectfully refuse an instruction from your lama which you feel you cannot morally carry out. So Milarepa-hla gets the initiations.

Then he gets word from Marpa-hla, "Come back quickly bringing expensive silk and other ornaments we can put on top of the newly finished tower."

So he hurries back with Loplama. Marpa-hla calls them in for dinner. They're sitting around with Dagme-ma, Marpa-hla's wife, and they have a big dinner and then Loplama says, "Well Marpa-hla, you'll be glad to know I gave Milarepa all the initiations."

Marpa says, "What are you talking about? I wasn't done with him yet."

He says, "You told me to give him initiations."

Marpa says, "No, I didn't."

He says, "Yes you did. You sent me Naropa's ruby with him, so I knew it was time to give him the initiations."

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So Marpa knows what's happening. He picks up a stick. He goes after Dagme-ma. [laughs] But in the end they all sit down happily and have some *chang* and [laughter] Marpa completes all the initiations. And then he goes and puts Milarepa into retreat in a place called Drolume. John Brady knows Geshe Drolumba, who wrote the *Ten Rim Chenmo*, and that was his home state. So Milarepa was put into deep meditation by Marpa-hla. And then Marpa-hla went back for his third trip to India to meet Naropa.

Then Milarepa's songs are famous, the hundred thousand songs of Milarepa. The visions he had, the poetry he wrote in his cave, very similar to Pelma-hla's poetry and CD, [laughs] which all the retreatants and caretakers wrote a bit, but nothing like Milarepa's.

And then his disciple was Gompopa. Gompopa was the first monk in the lineage after Naropa. He founded a monastery and he wrote over thirty volumes of beautiful texts. And in that way the six dharmas of Naropa come down through the Kagyu lineages. It comes then down through the Karmapa. You guys know the third Karmapa who wrote a book which we are now studying at Diamond Mountain. And then the fourth Karmapa gave vows to a young man named Tsongkapa. And that's how the lineage reaches down to us.

In modern times the six yogas of Naropa have been taught by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for example, to Lama Yeshe, and you can read about that in his book called *Inner Fire*. In that book he calls the deep practices, especially with a partner, to be unsurpassable method of reaching enlightenment in one lifetime.

Then in our own lineage, I have received, with other close friends, the six yogas from two high masters in India. When we get to the secret teachings I'll tell you more details about it. And that's how the six yogas of Naropa have come down to us.

What about the other teachings of Naropa, of Vajra Yogini? How did they come down to us? These weren't so much emphasized in Naropa-hla's teachings to Marpa. But rather there were five brothers, called Patingpa brothers, in Nepal, who had a chance to study with Naropa-hla. And Naropa granted them the teachings of Vajra Yogini, which we call Naropa's Vajra Yogini, *Naro Kechara*. This is the Vajra Yogini practice which holy Lama Khen Rinpoche has so kindly taught us for over twenty years. This lineage was taught especially to two of the five Patingpa brothers. The eldest was named Patingpa and the others had other names. The eldest studied it for twelve years with Naropa-hla. And then I think it's interesting that Naropa instructed him to go to China, to the border of Tibet and China, for special practices and special meditation. He just went, not knowing anyone or anybody, but he left according to the instructions. And even as late as the 1950's, there was a tomb in that area which had an inscription on it. It said that the eldest Patingpa had left his body here, and that his body and the body of the Chinese woman who had been his spiritual partner had been entombed there.

This practice then entered the Sakya lineage and we have great Sakya teachers, who are not monks but lay people, pass down this tradition. Drakpa Gyeltsen is one of the most important names of this particular practice. And then it comes down through the Sakya lamas down to the current day. It was taught by His Holiness's teacher to Khen Rinpoche.

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And I should say that the Pantingpa lineage, the one that Khen Rinpoche has so kindly taught us, emphasizes first-level tantra, which involves reaching angels, being able to meet with them, learn from them. And then the six yogas of Naropa that came down through Marpa-hla, they more emphasize the practices for turning your body into an angel's body. And that's where we find the yoga *asanas* and yoga practices which have descended directly down through Tilopa to Naropa and Marpa. Above Tilopa they break off through a teacher called Shabari. And they descend down into the two great modern lineages of Master Iyengar and Patabhi Jois.

Just this last thing... I think it's auspicious we should talk about how Niguma's six dharmas got to Tibet. Remember, Niguma, Naropa-hla's spiritual partner had also given a teaching on her own six yoga practices which are found in the *Tengyur*. I like the story of how they came into Tibet. I think they should be strong in the West. I think we should try to preserve this lineage and practice is strongly because it's a statement that a great lineage has come down from a woman lama, even from ancient times. I think it would be extremely beneficial to follow that practice here at Diamond Mountain and in our tantric series for ACI courses. *[audience applause]*

Niguma... Well, there was a lama named Kymbo, Kymbo Neljor. They say he was born in about 1086 but the dates are a little fuzzy. He was brought up in a Nyingma and Bonpa family practice. Nyingma is the ancient Buddhism of Tibet. It started as early as the 600s in Tibet. And then there was a very terrible time in the 800s when there was a very evil king in Tibet who wiped out Buddhism almost completely. And the era that began with Marpa and Lord Atisha was called the second transmission of Buddhism into Tibet from India. So really there were two separate propagations of Buddhism into Tibet. The first was almost killed by this evil king. But the survivors were called the Nyingmas or the "Ancient Sect."

So Kymbo Lama, sometimes called Yogi Kymbo, Kymbo Neljor, he had grown up in a Nyingma and a Bonpa family. Bonpa is the ancient religion of Tibet before Buddhism. It's a kind of like shamanism, but it is very deep and now-a-days many people are realizing that it has deep yogic roots also. Kymbo Neljor decided to go India... Oh, I should say, he was ordained. I'll tell you the person who ordained him; you tell me who it is. Dorje Sengye. Yeah, those of you who studied *lojong*, Diamond Lion. He is the author of the Eight Verses that His Holiness taught in Central Park, for example; a very popular teaching by all great lamas of His Holiness's tradition, Gelukpa. Here you see where around the time of Naropa-hla — I think it's very exciting — you see an intersection of the Kadampalas, the *lam rim*, the Gelukpas, the Kagyus, the Nyingmas, the Bonpas. I think it's very exciting. To study and practice Naropa-hla's teachings is to stay at an intersection where we can relate to all the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. I think it would be exciting to see the different view-points of Naropa-hla's practices by inviting great lamas of different traditions to come and explain and give teachings on how Naropa-hla's practices have come into their own lineages.

So Kymbo Lama went to India. It seems that Naropa-hla had already gone into deep practice. He was no longer... he often went into deep retreats and refused to teach during that time. So Kymbo wanders around asking everybody, "Is there anybody who has seen Vajradhara directly?" Vajradhara is Lord Buddha in his long-haired, tantric form. He kept asking people, "Has anyone actually seen Vajradhara?" Finally a group of

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people said, “Only one person. It’s the woman, Niguma.” “Where can I find Niguma?” “Oh, impossible. She stays on this island in a poison lake called Tsosa in a burial ground there, doing her practice. You probably can’t even get to her.”

But Kymbo is determined. He goes to this horrible... it seems like a swamp or something. He gets incredible hardships, almost eaten by different creatures. But he finally gets to the island where Niguma is practicing.

Then he searches the island, he can’t find her. So he decides to do a mantra. He’s a... very interesting, out of all the secret mantras that exist, thousands of secret mantras, each one competing for the title of highest secret mantra... [laughs] If you read the texts, each one is supposed to be. He sits down and what does he start saying? He says, “*Namo Buddhaya, namo Buddhaya, namo Buddhaya,*” which as every child knows, it just means “I take refuge in the Buddha, I bow to Lord Buddha.” It’s no tantric mantra at all. It’s a plain old, non-secret, first thing that every kid learns in the monastery. But he says it from his heart. And he keeps saying it over and over again. And he sits in the burial ground and he says, “*Namo Buddhaya, namo Buddhaya,*” and he’s calling Niguma.

Finally, in the air, the text says at the altitude of seven coconut trees... [laughs] this beautiful, actually fierce, woman appears, flaming red light.

And she says, “Why are you calling me?”

He says, “Are you, are you the lady Niguma, Naropa’s spiritual partner, the only one who has seen Vajradhara directly?”

She says, “No way, I’m a demon. I’m going to eat you.” [laughs] You heard this story; you have to have faith at that moment.

He closes his eyes and says, “*Namo Buddhaya, namo Buddhaya.*” [laughs] “I don’t believe you’re a demon. I believe you’re Niguma.”

“Well even if I was, it’s going to cost you.” This was very typical you know, the Tibetans brought gold and offered it to the lamas, the gurus.

So he said, “I’ll pay anything. Grant me initiation.”

She says, “Five hundred *sangs* of gold.”

This is like, maybe a hundred thousand dollars or something, you know? But luckily, Kymbo Neljor had been taught by Maitripa the mantras for creating gold [laughter] and he had brought a good supply. He hands up bags of gold dust up to her. She descends. He gives them to her.

She flies up over the forest, rips open the bags and sprinkles the gold over the forest. Then she comes back and, in the air, she turns into Vajra Yogini and all of her angel retinue, beautiful, holy, sacred ladies.

They say that other people only saw normal humans but Kymbo Neljor, because of his faith and his practice, he saw Vajra Yogini. People are looking out and seeing just regular people. People are seeing regular women walking around on the ground even.

But Kymbo Neljor is experiencing this empty object as Vajra Yogini and her angels. And she grants him the six dharmas of Niguma.

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Kymbo Neljor returns to Tibet. And then the second great branch of the Kagyu lineage, Shangba Kagyu, carries the six practices of Niguma down to the present time.

There are several great lineage holders. The father of Kenden Gyatso, the second Dalai Lama, was a great lineage holder of Niguma's six practices. And I think it's exciting for those of you studying *Sama Randen* now-a-days, Kama Ranjen Dorje, the author, was also a heavy practitioner of *Negu Chedup*, the six practices of Niguma. And from there it descends down through the Shangba Kagyu down to the present day. So these are the lineages by which the practices of Naropa and Niguma-hla have come down to us.



It was my hope before going into retreat that after three year retreat we could shift gears, as you may have noticed, *[laughs]* to the higher teachings. And it is my dream that we could have a standardized course, much like the eighteen courses of ACI. And I urge you again to prepare. You need to finish the eighteen courses before it is proper for me to grant to you the higher teachings, which I think will take five or seven years. And I think it will cover about eighteen courses.

My hope is, in August and September, to visit different areas of the country, possibly an emerald island in some area of the world, and just meet quietly with students, describe to them what the course will be like. Go over with them, you know, review with people how many courses they have left to do and generally get everybody excited and ready, and then see who's qualified. You don't need to finish the eighteen courses until the higher courses start. But I think it would be a good chance in August and September, first, to review with everyone what they'll have to get ready, how much they've finished already, and then I think answer any questions you may have about higher teachings. They can sometimes seem unusual and a little bit, I don't know, not scary but... I don't think weird is, maybe weird *[laughs]* but they are very beautiful, holy, sweet, very sincere, beautiful methods of reaching ultimate compassion and knowledge so that we can serve countless beings quickly. It's the only way. If you don't enter the higher teachings, it's impossible in one lifetime to reach this goal.

And then we'll start into the courses. I believe it will be taught first at Diamond Mountain in the fall of 2004 when the university opens. And then I pledge, if I am still healthy, to repeat those courses in New York City, because I know many people can't come out here for long periods of time. And then I see the transmission going to other locations through the senior teachers in New York and here. If there were a group of qualified people, say, in other states of the United States or other countries, then the transmission of the higher courses would be done by people like the senior teachers that have spoken here, or the ones who have been teaching the courses, like the caretakers and other highly qualified beings. That's about all I have to say about the *spiel*.



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There's absolutely no way to thank all of the individuals who helped for the three-year retreat. It's the energy that you put into it, and extraordinary progress of all the different holy practice projects which all of you have done.

To tell you the truth, I went into retreat ready to be possibly disappointed when I got out. I didn't know if all of the hard work that some of us had done to start the courses and start the input of the great books and other activities, I didn't know if they would survive and I was a little afraid that they might die. But coming out I have seen that everything has flowered extraordinarily. For every person who was studying any ACI courses in the month we went into retreat, I think there must be ten or twenty or thirty more people now who have studied the courses or been involved in the beautiful works.

I don't think there were more than ten or fifteen people who had completed a deep retreat before our retreat. I believe now it's maybe close to a hundred or more people have done deep retreats. People had come to me before retreat, they had gotten down on one knee, I remember at Godstow, promised to do two deep retreats a year. And as far as I'm aware, those promises were kept almost perfectly.

So you have, with your actions, you have called the higher teachings to yourself. It's not a decision by anyone else. You have sent out an energy which cannot be denied. You have drawn the angels to you through your actions so they can't refuse you now.

And we can never thank you for helping us do the three-year retreat. None of us can thank you. There's no way we can thank each one of you. Only to say that, as I mentioned at the beginning, your devotion, your hard work, your persistence, every person here, I think, has contributed in some way. Some of them with all their life, all their money, all their time. It has set in motion powerful forces that are not limited even to this one earth. And we will soon see the great... I don't think you can imagine the results that will come out from the great goodness you have done.

[Prayers]