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Lake of Lotus

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Not the Same as “Recognizing
Brightness”**

**The Paths of “Liberation from
Samsara”**

**The Applications on the “Nine
Levels of Samadhi”**

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the “Realm of Form”?**

**A Case of “Near-Death
Experience” in Crossing Over
Various Higher
Spiritual Domains**

**Strategies for Dharma Practices
in Times of Adversities**



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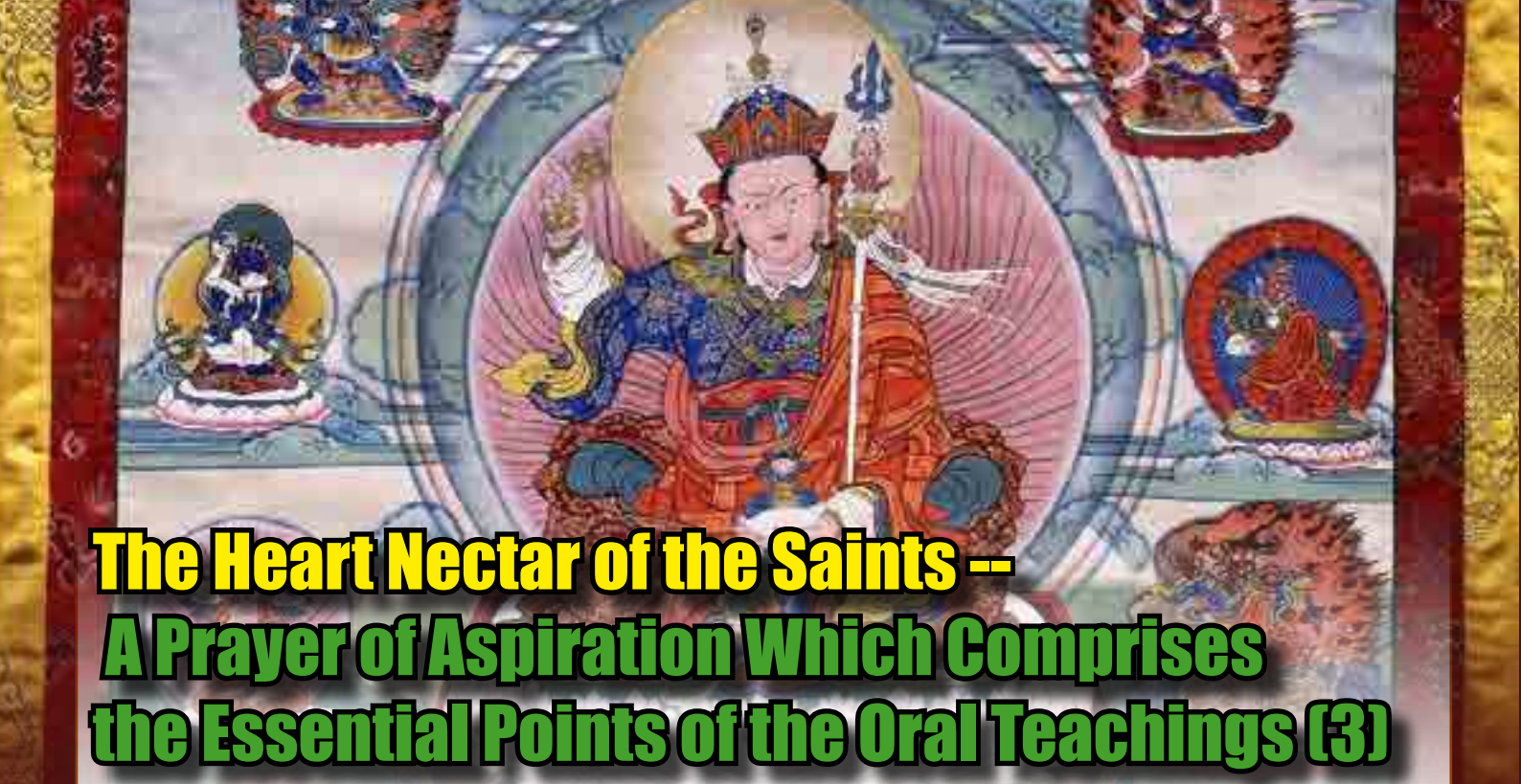
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The Heart Nectar of the Saints -- A Prayer of Aspiration Which Comprises the Essential Points of the Oral Teachings (3)



by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche

This **enlightened aspiration** (or **Bodhicitta**), like a fertile ground,
If I do not cultivate it, there is no way in attaining Buddhahood.
Without being indifferent to the accomplishment of this great cause,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.

The **five poisons**, like hot embers among the ashes,
If I do not extinguish them, I cannot remain at rest in the Nature of the Mind.
Without raising venomous serpents in my bosom,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.

My own **mind**, like an agitated monkey,
If I do not train it, there is no way to avoid the conflicting emotions.
Without giving way to all kinds of mad fantasies,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.

This **attachment to the ego**, like an inseparable shadow,
If I do not abandon it, there is no way to reach the Land of Bliss.
Without creating ties of friendship with this enemy,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche

These **distractions**, like the never-ending ripples of the water,
If I do not give them up, there is no way to become firm.

When I am **free to choose**, without consecrating myself to Samsara,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.



The **Guru's blessing**, like the warming up of the earth and waters at springtime,
If I **do not receive it**, there is no way of **recognizing my own true Nature**.

When I set out on the **short-cut**, without taking the grand detour,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma. 🗝️

..... (To be Continued)

This **character** of mine, like the stiff leather of a butter-sack,
If I do not soften it, my mind will never be able to merge with the Dharma.

Without spoiling the child that is born from inner me,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.



These **ingrained bad habits**, like the strong tides of a river,
If I do not stop them, I can never be separated from those profane actions.

Without selling weapons to the enemy,
May I sincerely practise the Supreme Dharma.



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche



His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche



The Contemporary Mahasiddha with Many Prophecies --- **Our Lord of Refuge, His Holiness Chadrak Gyendun Rinpoche (12)**

by His Holiness' Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren



Namo Gurubhya!

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

Palden Tsa'wai Lama Channo!

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

Emaho!

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

His Special View and Understanding of the Dharma in an Essential and Precise Nature



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

In order to help modern-day Dharma practitioners, the following **statements of Spiritual Advice** were written by His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche Himself at the age of 87:

An autobiographical account containing **direct teaching that hits the vital point**, written about a present-day **misleading trickster** like myself, is this:



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

May the spiritual master and the Three Jewels think of me!

I am an old man, at the end of my eighty-seventh year and approaching my eighty-eighth. Many persons close or distant to me have asked, "Please write an autobiographical account of your life of spiritual liberation to help your followers." I have recognized this as an obstacle and a hindrance to liberation and I see no need to write many misleading words. As no one is better informed than me on this subject, I will act as my own witness and reply with this composition, "A Reply in Three Syllables":

The dry kindling of boastful pretense of having the qualities of moral conduct and transcendental knowledge's three forms,
Yet evidently not even having a scent of it,
I fling it into the expanse of blazing fire: Zvala Ram!

The blend of the spiritual and worldly materialism in a lama's form,
Whose practice accords: I know that's not me.
The dry ashes of the fraudulent, cunning persons, spoiled to the Dharma,
I throw to the winds at the mountain-top: the syllable Yam!

The offerings given with faith or for the dead impede life and liberation.

Knowingly, still save and invest, to make representations and offerings.

With the pure water of turning from attachment, not needing nor accepting,

I wash away (such bad karma): the element syllable Kham!



Apart from being a reply to my own self-inquiry, these lines should not be construed in any way as dart of criticism or accusation toward genuine, holy individuals who see the truth of the nature of reality's equanimity and who work actively or inwardly to benefit themselves and others. Please don't misunderstand these words in anger or jealousy: I ask that you relax in the equanimity of great exaltation. With the exception of such individuals, I and persons like me in general, those who have not risen above the state of ordinary individuals, have towering pride that disrupts the Buddha's doctrine and creates discord. Such persons should regard these words as the truth:

May they become a cause for the practice of "caution and mindfulness"!

..... (To be Continued)



His Holiness Chadrak Rinpoche

The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death : The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (17)

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

“Dissolving into Brightness” Is Not the Same as “Recognizing Brightness”

In the last two chapters, an **extraordinary** case of a Near-Death Experiences (NDE) survivor had been cited. The case was provided by Ms Satana, a lady who had psychic abilities, religious belief and the knowledge about the operations of the “posthumous world”. This case has a very profound meaning of revelation and its content was **unbiased, down-to-earth** and is nearing to the real truth of Mother Nature. Not only will the window of vision for the “nullifidians” be broadened, but also the door leading to the **“review of one’s spiritual practice”** for those religious people will also be opened. As a consequence, the **wisdom** of “facing the reality and searching for the truth” will then **arise**.

“The Tibetan Book of the Dead” suggested that one should give the following instructions to a deceased person in front of the corpse: “When the mind departs from the body, the pure form of the **‘intrinsic nature’** (or **‘primordial nature’**) of **‘Dharmakaya’** would exhibit itself in the form of a great excellent brilliant ‘brightness’. Its **illumination** is so thrilling and startling, as if the relentless twinkling flames of the scorching sun shining upon a wild field. These kinds of scenes would occur to everyone, and so please do not feel panic, and do not be frightened. You should recognize that this is the **primordial light** of your own **‘intrinsic nature’** (or **‘Dharmata’**). **Recognize it!**”

Satana had chased after the beam of light, and she had really advanced one higher level after another, reaching to the final stage. Yet, why did she still fail? In the *“The Tibetan Book of the Dead”* on **“Recognizing Brightness”**, isn’t it the facing of brightness and advancing towards it already represent its success? If not, then **what else should be done in order to “Recognize Brightness”**? What were the reasons for Satana’s failure? According to the descriptions of the case, Satana had precisely **“identified** the moment for the occurrence of the brightness”, had **“seized the moment when the brightness appeared”** and chased after it unyieldingly. As a result, the occurrence of the “brightness” continued to last. However, Satana still had failed and could not merge into the “Dharmadhatu” in **“Recognizing Brightness”**. She was just one step away from **“Recognizing Brightness”** in order to recover the “primordial nature/ Dharmata” which is also the attainment of “enlightenment” (or **“Buddhahood”**)

by the recovery of the “Buddhata”. (The “intrinsic/ primordial nature” is the originally-possessed pristine awareness which is primordially and inherently possessed by all sentient beings. Please refer to the articles on “The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 4 and 5 of “The Lake of Lotus” concerning detailed explanations on the ‘intrinsic nature’ and ‘Dharmakaya’. The ‘Dharmadhatu’: the boundless domain of the “Dharmakaya”).

Although “*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*” had revealed the “abstruseness of life and death”, and had pointed out that once the (deceased) person was able to “identify the brightness”, distinguish the degrees of illumination and even the colors, and ought not to be afraid by dissolving into “brightness”, while “**Recognizing Brightness**” is equivalent to the attainment of “enlightenment” (or “**Buddhahood**”). The issue is how to “recognize” it (the brightness)? There was no description in “*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*” about the scenes that one would encounter after entering into “brightness”. It had merely mentioned that the person, after dissolving into “brightness”, would either be able to become liberated from “cyclic reincarnation” (or “**Samsara**” in Sanskrit), or be able to attain “enlightenment” (or “**Buddhahood**”).

According to Satana’s description, after entering into “brightness”, there was still a long way to go before one would formally be entering into the “unification” with the “**Absolute Noumenon**” (or “**bhutatahata Dharmadhatu**” in Sanskrit). Even if one can enter into these kinds of scenario, that one’s “**Awareness**” could also be raised, and also know that there must be the “dissolution into the Dharmadhatu” before one could recover the “primordial nature/ Dharmata”, however, will it mean that this is equivalent to definite success? The case of Satana proved that the odds of failure still continue to exist. Hence, how should one conduct one’s spiritual practice in order to ensure that the odds of success to become higher? As a matter of fact, the “dissolution into brightness” is not the same as the “**Recognition of Brightness**”, and neither does it represent the successful “attainment of Buddhahood” or the “liberation from Samsara”. Hence, how should those “Vajrayana Buddhist” Dharma practitioners, who have always deemed that they could take the shortcuts, interpret such shortcuts? Is it merely a beautiful misunderstanding, or whether there are some other effects? If failed, what would be the consequences?

Will all persons who have entered into “brightness” venture the same kind of experiences as what Satana had gone through for a long journey after her entering into “brightness”? Will it be dangerous during the journey? What will be the explanations on this long journey in Buddhism? What will be its relations with

our “Dharma practices”? How much time and energy can a Dharma practitioner save if these shortcuts, as described in “*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*”, for the attainment of “enlightenment” (or “**Buddhahood**”), or for the “liberation from Samsara” are to be taken? How should a Dharma practitioner cherish and make good use of these shortcuts so that it would not become a waste?

In the last two chapters, some of the reasons for Satana’s failures had already been explained in depths. The first reason was: the skepticism and wrong cognitions about the multi-bodies shown up after death (please refer to the article “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”). The second reason was: a specific cognition about the colors leading to the deviations of one’s “mental strength” (please refer to the article “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 16 of the “Lake of Lotus”). Before our further elaborations on the other related reasons, please have a review on some of key points of this case, and then to be followed by answers to the aforesaid questions.

Case 19

Satana was a native inhabitant in America (that is, an American Indian) who possessed the “psychic abilities”. She had studied in India, and she had studied in great depths on the teachings of Hinduism. She could be said to be a spiritual practitioner whose practices are based upon the teachings of Hinduism.

During her stay in India for her pursuit of spiritual studies, she had paid a visit to her friend at one time. Due to courtesy, she dared not refuse the offer of a glass of cold tap water by her friend. After taking it for a while, she felt extremely uncomfortable in her whole body. She went home and her condition deteriorated very quickly. In less than two hours, she had developed high fever and her mind was unclear. She suffered and struggled in bed. A large portion of the pink bedspread was being wet by her sweat.

The following is her self-narration:

“At first, I found myself sitting at the rear of the bed with both legs crossed. This was my usual sitting posture while I was in India. I was looking at my ‘other self’ whose body was tossing, turning to and fro in bed, and was fallen into coma. I saw that the bedspread was now green in color, which was a color of healing, and so I knew that my body could recover. The ‘self’ who sat at the rear of the bed looking at my body in coma was completely relaxed. I called this relaxed body the ‘observer’.

This ‘observer’ suddenly sensed some sort of a ‘ling-

qi' (an invisible existence of an essence of energy) upon its left shoulder. Through my experiences and knowledge during trainings in meditation, I knew this 'lingqi' was the 'eye-witness'. Let me explain it: this 'eye-witness' could be said to be my second body, which had no cognitive ability and could not communicate with my other body, the 'observer'. The 'eye-witness' did not have any thoughts, and so it merely has no cognitive ability and comprehension. It was only an 'eye-witness'. I knew some wizards who said that the 'God of Death' would stand on the left shoulder, and I so believed that this second body of the 'eye-witness' was what they were referring to.

Once I sensed that there was this 'lingqi' upon my left shoulder, I was forcefully dragged into the 'eye-witness' immediately. From that moment onwards, I moved swiftly because I knew that I had to chase after that 'beam of light', and should not be interrupted by any other things. As all other matters had already been finished, so I should not think of them any longer. I told myself to use all of my might to chase after the light. Hence, I dashed off towards that 'beam of bright Light'. When I floated up in the air, I found that what surrounded me were the dainty scenes of great elegance. They were so beautiful that I couldn't help lingering around, almost forgotten to move forward. I could 'achieve everything that I would think of' and 'could do anything at my own will'! The beauty of tints and sounds were so diversified and exquisitely touching that it has greatly exceeded what mundane people could have thought of them. I believed that many of the inspirations of many great musicians and artists must have come from here. I am very sure that all those who had crossed the threshold and entered into this place would want to stay behind, simply because it was just too beautiful.

However, I knew that I must have to maintain my 'attentiveness' and sustain to enter into that 'beam of light', and should not be stalled by the scenic beauty. I unceasingly penetrated through that 'beam of light', passed through it, and then kept on overtaking it. At first, I had transcended the 'time' element, and finally I had also transcended the 'space' element, and thus had arrived at a certain 'point without space'. At the same time, I had also transcended any kind of 'physical body', and had just left behind my 'self-awareness'. In abandoning the 'physical body', I felt freedom without the slightest bondage. Not until I had abandoned my 'physical body', I had always thought that there was no such thing as 'flawless perfection' in this world, but then by now I could actually be able to realize this.

When I further penetrated through that 'beam of light', I entered into a state of ecstasy. It was not a joy but a state of ecstasy which was beyond any descriptions. I continued to move onward in overtaking it, and even

transcended the level of 'experience' itself. At that very moment, I had discovered some sort of a freedom which was 'without any emotions and experiences'. It even went so far as of having simply without the existence of the "self". When I proceeded even further in overtaking it, it had become a state without a 'single consciousness' while existed only in an endless and boundless vast expanse. My 'point of consciousness' was just like a tiny drop of water that has been completely dissolved in the vast great ocean.

I then returned back to my 'physical body'. When I woke up in the hospital, I noticed that I had the 'self-awareness' and my mind was very clear. I realized that there was no "separated individuality", and that all things had been "combined into one" in union. The first thing in my mind after waking up was that I must have to remember the direction of each and every stage, so that I could inform others as to how to proceed."

The Paths of "Liberation from Samsara"

In fact, what sort of stages does a person have to go through in the course of one's "liberation from Samsara"? Are there any tracks or paths to follow? Let us take the very example of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni himself. According to the descriptions in the "*Digha-nikaya*" of the "*Sutta Pitaka*" of the "*Pali Canon*", as well as in the "*Maha-Parinirvana Sutras of the Southern Lineage*", when the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni was about to take his "*Maha-Parinirvana*" (that is, the "dissolution into the Dharmadhatu"), the paths taken were as follows:

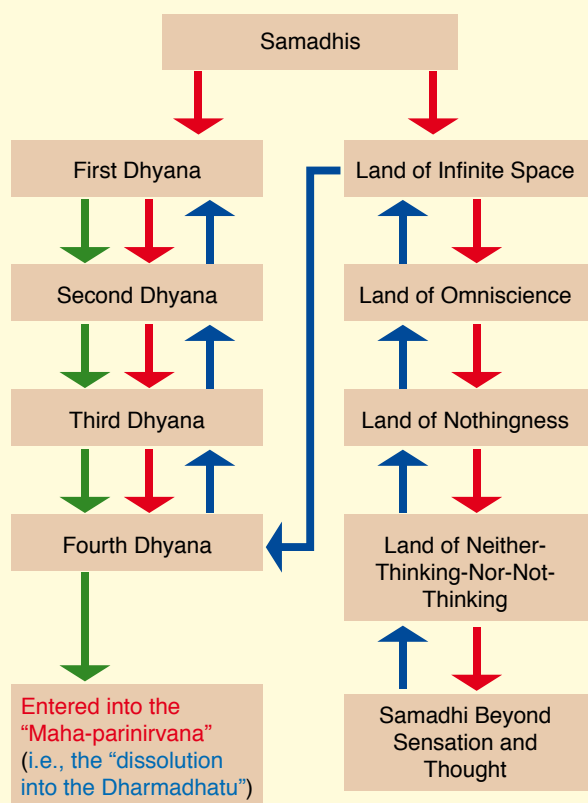
1. He first entered into the "First Dhyana" (mental concentration), and then came out from the "Samadhi (deep meditation) of the First Dhyana";
2. After his coming out from the "Samadhi of the First Dhyana", he then entered into the "Second Dhyana", and again he came out from the "Samadhi of the Second Dhyana";



3. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Second Dhyana”, he then entered into the “Third Dhyana”, and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”;
4. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”, he then entered into the “Fourth Dhyana”, and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”;
5. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”, he then entered into the “Samadhi of the Land of Infinite Space” (or “Akasanantayatana” in Sanskrit), and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Infinite Space”;
6. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Infinite Space”, he then entered into the “Samadhi of the Land of Omniscience” (or “Brahmaloka” in Sanskrit), and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Omniscience”;
7. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Omniscience”, he then entered into the “Samadhi of the Land of Nothingness” (or “Akincanayatana” in Sanskrit), and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Nothingness”;
8. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Nothingness”, he then entered into the “Samadhi of the Land of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking” (or “Naivasamjnana-samjnayatana” in Sanskrit), and again he came out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking”;
9. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking”, he then entered into the “Samadhi Beyond Sensation and Thought” (or “Nirodha Samapatti” in Pali), and again he came out from the “Samadhi Beyond Sensation and Thought”;
10. However, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni did not enter into “Nirvana” via the “Samadhi Beyond Sensation and Thought”, which could also be attained by the Arhats. But, instead, the Lord Buddha came out from the “Samadhi Beyond Sensation and Thought”, but then he returned back to enter into the “Samadhi of the Land of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking”;
11. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Land of Nothingness”;
12. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Nothingness”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Land of Omniscience”;
13. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Omniscience”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Land of Infinite Space”;
14. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Land of Infinite Space”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”;
15. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”;
16. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the Second Dhyana”;
17. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Second Dhyana”, he then returned back and descended down to enter into the “Samadhi of the First Dhyana”;
18. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the First Dhyana”, he once again ascended to enter into the “Samadhi of the Second Dhyana”;
19. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Second Dhyana”, he once again ascended to enter into the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”;
20. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Third Dhyana”, he once again ascended to enter into the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”;
21. After his coming out from the “Samadhi of the Fourth Dhyana”, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni then formally entered into the “Maha-parinirvana” (that is, the “dissolution into the Dharmadhatu”).

According to the various Sutras, those disciples of the Lord Buddha who could possess “divine visions” had, indeed, witnessed the “ins-and-outs” of the various junctions of the different “Samadhis” by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni until His coming out from the “Samadhi Beyond Sensation and Thought” and His descending to enter into the “Samadhis” of the different conditions of the lower levels. They had kept all these happenings in good records. **Why did the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni do so?** What are the implications, if any? What do the various conditions of the aforesaid “Samadhis” represent?

The Process Upon Which the Lord Buddha Had Entered into Maha-Parinirvana



How many kinds of “deep meditation” are there? According to the traditional classification of the study of meditation, the divisions on its study in Primitive Buddhism is the most complete and organized schema. Primitive Buddhism divided the major “Samadhis” into **nine levels**, and named them as the “**Nine Levels of Samadhis**”. The Mahayana Buddhism also follows this kind of classification, and so this “**Nine Levels of Samadhis**” has become a common classification of “Samadhis” in both Mahayana and Hinayana. When entering into the “Dharmadhatu”, a Dharma practitioner has to **experience and stride across** different spiritual domains and realms, and in conjunction with the abilities and conditions of one’s “mind”, it is at large known as the “**Three Realms (or “Triloka” in Sanskrit) and Nine Lands (or the “Nine Gati”)**” with their detailed classifications as follows:

1. “**Kamaloka**” or the “**Realm of Desire**” – this realm can be entered without practicing “deep meditation”. This is a **spiritual domain and realm** which is full of desires. For those sentient beings whose “minds” are in the conditions filled with desires, such as lust, passion, materialistic greed, food gourmandizing, desire for fame, wealth and power, etc. All these kinds of sentient beings would stay in this realm. In the Realm of Desire, it comprises of the beings in hells, hungry ghosts (**pretos**), animals, humans, demons (**asuras**), and gods (**devas**), and so it is also known as the ‘**world of mixed dwellers of five species**’.

There are also six “heavens” of the lower levels in the “Realm of Desire”, where the inhabitants could uplift themselves for entering into the “heavens” of better conditions so long that they can **kind “hearts” and carry out wholesome deeds for the accumulation of fortunate rewards**. Yet, these immigrating sentient beings can enter into these realms **without practicing “Samadhis” for stable** conditions of their “minds”, and so the structures and densities of their physical bodies are coarser than the gods of other “heavens”. These six heavens are thus known as the “**Six Heavens of Desire**” (or “**Devalokas**” in Sanskrit) where the dwellers still have various desires such as dining, sex, sleep, etc. Their characteristics are as follows:

- 1) “**The Four Directional Devarajas Heavens**” (**Catur-maharaja-kayikas**) – there exist the enjoyments of lust similar to those of the human world, and they also have marriages of the two sexes.
- 2) **Tavatimsa** – Also known as **Trayastrimsas**, meaning comprising of 33 heavens. The lust of the dwellers could be satisfied by

The Applications on the “Nine Levels of Samadhis”

“**Samadhi**” is a Sanskrit term which means “deep meditation”. Different conditions of “deep meditation” represent **certain kinds of abilities and stable conditions of the mind**, the possession of which would enable those sentient beings with such abilities or such conditions to enter into certain levels of **spiritual domains or realms**, or even sufficient enough to become “liberated from Samsara”. In Buddhism, in order for one to attain “Buddhahood”, it is deemed that the person must **relentlessly elevate** the quality of one’s spiritual condition. When the ability and condition of one’s “mind” have been upgraded continuously, the person would **experience and stride over** different spiritual domains and realms, until the possibility of “liberation from all the tractions” or of the “attainment of Buddhahood”. This sort of **adventure and leap-over** is the path upon which the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had entered into the “Dharmadhatu”. The kind of “**deep meditation**” (or “**Samadhi**”) is the **strength** which **renders support** to Him in His smooth application of appropriate methods in order to uplift the strength and conditions of His “mind”.

mutually sensing of each other's breath and odor. There still exists marriages between the sexes. Their longevity could be as long as 1,000 years (one day in this heaven is equivalent to 100 years on earth). When they are just born, their figures would appear as six-year-old human children of very good-looking, and their clothings come naturally. The highest deva king is "Sakra" or "Devanam-Indra", who is also known as the "Godhood-Emperor of the Heaven" in the Chinese tradition.

- 3) **Yamadeva** – the lust of the dwellers could be satisfied by mutually embracing. Around the clock, it is full of brightness, and so their time of day and night is defined by the opening and closing of the lotus flower. Every moment, the dwellers are singing and enjoying inconceivable happiness. Their longevity could be as long as 2,000 years (one day in this heaven is equivalent to 200 years on earth). There still exists marriages between the sexes.
- 4) **Tusita** – the meaning of which is "being contented". The lust of the dwellers could be satisfied by holding hands with each other. The joy in this heaven can satisfy the desires of five senses of "vision, sound, smell, taste and touch". The inner part of this Heaven is inhabited by various Bodhisattvas where the three kinds of natural disasters would not befall upon them. The Bodhisattva Maitreya is present over there to reveal the Buddhist teachings. The outer segment of this Heaven is the dwelling place for the gods and deities where the three kinds of natural disasters could befall upon them.
- 5) **Nirmanarati** – the lust of the dwellers could be satisfied just by looking and smiling at each other. They could also transform various matters from the environment for the satisfaction of their five senses of desires.
- 6) **Paranirmita-vasavartin** – the lust of the dwellers could be satisfied by the vision. They would rob the materials, which were transformed by others, for their own satisfactions of the desires of the five senses. It is the place where the demons inhabit. The king of this Heaven is "Mara" or "Papiyan", the demon king who had attempted to disrupt the attainment of

enlightenment (Buddhahood) of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni.

2. **"Rupaloka", or the "Realm of Form"** -- sentient beings must need to practice **"Samadhi"** in order to enter into this realm. The dwellers of this "Realm of Form" are away from the desires of lust and food, and yet possess bodies and worldly environments of pure materials. This realm is above the "Realm of Desire", and so they are not tarnished with desires, neither are they distinguished into males and females. However, there is the format of a country whereby emperor, liegemen and citizens are divided. The sentient beings of this realm are born of **metamorphosis**. Since they have to practice **"Samadhi" for the stability of their "mental strength"**, and so the structures and densities of their bodies are sparser than those of the dwellers in the "Realm of Desire". The palaces and gardens where they dwell are majestic and splendid, which are formed by **metamorphosis of various materials**. All of these are exquisite and elegant, and since they are still **present in materialistic forms (structure of matters)**, and so it is called the "Realm of Form". There are altogether **18** Heavens:

- 1 –3) The **"First Dhyana Heaven"**, comprising of three heavens – If the practitioner has practiced the **First Dhyana** into the condition of **"Bliss Born of Separation"** so as to depart from the five kinds of desire, thus bringing about the unified **bliss** of body and mind, with a **stable condition of the "mind"**, and so they could enter into these three heavens of the "First Dhyana Heaven" – the **'Land of Bliss Born of Separation'**. The specific feature of the First Dhyana is to **"suppress the lust so that a series of coarse vexing passions would not function temporarily"**. However, the sentient beings still have **coarse thinking patterns**, such as: grasping on "pondering, inspecting, discerning, conceptualizing", etc. Those practitioners who have attained this "Samadhi" would have the sensations of a "sturdy body and mind with energy orderly activated just like shadow and cloud". Furthermore, all the pores of the body are opened, so that natural in-and-out exchange of air would take place without hindrance. The intake airflow is smoothly distributed throughout the body without amassing at a certain location, while the outgoing airflow is complete without dispersion.



- 1) Brahma-parisadya
(Brahma Assembly Heaven)
- 2) Brahma-purohita
(Brahma Officials Heaven)
- 3) Mahabrahma
(Great Brahma Heaven)

When the practice of “Samadhi” has reached the **first level** of the “Nine Levels of Samadhis” (**that is, the “Samadhi of the ‘Bliss Born of Separation’**”), the practitioner could be able to enter into these Heavens. The “First Dhyana Heaven” is also known as the **“Brahma Heaven”**. If the practice of “Samadhi” has transcended the domain of demons (i.e. the “Paranirmita Heaven”), the practitioner would attain a better outlook of physique. Upon achievement of different levels of Samadhi, their physiques so derived are different, and hence there exist the three Heavens. The “Mahabrahma Deva” (the deity of “Mahabrahma”) has been dignified as the “Creator” of this Universe.

- 4 –6) The **“Second Dhyana Heaven”** is comprised of three heavens – Practice on the second level of the “Samadhi of **‘Bliss Born of Mental Concentration’**” would have the **bliss** due to the attainment of “Samadhi”. For those “Samadhis” that are above the “Second Dhyana”, the practitioner would have no coarse thinking patterns. Hence, there would be **no grasping** on such activities as “pondering, examining, discerning and conceptualizing”

in the “Second Dhyana”. Upon entering into such “Samadhi”, the creation of brightness would result, and so it is called the **‘Land of Bliss Born of Mental Concentration’**. For those practitioner who have entered into this Samadhi, they would have “crystal-clear and calm minds without sensation or vision” and “brilliant discernment just like under the brightness of sun and moon”.

- 4) Parittabhas
(Minor-Light Heaven)
- 5) Apramanabha
(Infinite-Light Heaven)
- 6) Abhasvara Heaven
(Light-Sound Heaven)

When the practice of “Samadhi” has reached the **second level** of the “Nine Levels of Samadhis” (**that is, the “Samadhi of the ‘Bliss Born of Mental Concentration’**”), then the practitioner could enter into the “Second Dhyana Heaven”, which is also known as the **“Light Heaven”** where the inhabitants could generate brightness due to their practice of such Samadhi, so that the appearance of the materialistic forms could be seen. Due to the differences of the conditions of the “Samadhis” being attained, the brightness so generated will also be different. Hence, this Heaven is sub-divided into three other heavens.

- 7 – 9) The **“Third Dhyana Heaven”** which comprises of three Heavens -- Practice on the third level of the “Samadhi of **Wonderful Happiness of Being Apart from Bliss**” would generate the **bliss** and **peaceful happiness** due to the extinction of the bodily sensations. Upon achievement of the “Third Dhyana”, the mind and the body would become impeccably pure

with the sensation of **bliss** but **not joyfulness**, so it is named as the **‘Land of Wonderful Happiness of Being Apart from Bliss’**. The practitioners who have achieved such a Samadhi would experience continuous bliss being generated from the mind with sustained universal coverage.

- 7) Parttasubha
(Minor-Purity Heaven)
- 8) Apramanasubha
(Infinite-Purity Heaven)
- 9) Subhaktvtsna
(Universal-Purity Heaven)

When practice of the Samadhi has reached the level of the third level of the “Nine Levels of Samadhis” (**that is, the “Samadhi of the Wonderful Happiness of Being Apart from Bliss”**”), then the practitioner could enter into the aforesaid three Heavens. The “Third Dhyana Heaven” is also known as the **“Pure Heaven”** where the inhabitants could generate pure and bright outlook of pure physiques. Due to the differences of the conditions of Samadhi being attained, the outlook of pure brightness so generated will also be different. Hence, this Heaven is sub-divided into three other heavens.

10 –18) The “Fourth Dhyana Heaven” comprised of nine Heavens -- Practice on the fourth level of the “Samadhi of ‘Clear Purity of Abandonment of Thought’” would cause the embodiment of either “suffering or bliss” not arising, due to the “absence of thought” and so the sensation of body and mind becomes extinct and attains purity. So it is called the ‘Pure Land of Clear Purity of Abandonment of Thought’. Upon the achievement of this “Samadhi”, the practitioners would feel the “ceasing

of in-and-out flows of air, and the mind is impeccably clear as a mirror in truly reflecting all the phenomena”. Furthermore, “all the fantastic thoughts are abstained and the proper thoughts are sustained firmly”. The higher the level of “Samadhi”, the lesser are the psychological activities. The sensation of happiness of the body and mind would gradually be abandoned, and straightly advance towards the pure condition of ‘abandonment-of-sensation’ until the “Fourth Dhyana”.

10) Anabhraka (Cloudless Heaven)

11) Punyaprasava (Blissful-Birth Heaven)

12) Brhatphala (Broad-Fruition Heaven) - The above three heavens are inhabited by mundane/ mortal beings

13) Asanjnisattva (No-Thought Heaven)--

This heaven is inhabited by “non-Buddhist practitioners” due to the achievement of the “Asanjni Samadhi” which is a kind of non-Buddhist “Dhyana” with imperfections.

14) Avrha (No Vexation Heaven)

15) Atupa (No Heat Heaven)

16) Sudrsa (Well Appearing Heaven)

17) Sudarsana (Beautiful Appearance Heaven)

18) Akanistha (End-of-Form Heaven)

The last five of the aforementioned heavens are inhabited upon by the Bodhisattvas and the Hinayana practitioners who had achieved the third fruit of saints (that is, the fruition of the last before entering into parinirvana and would not return to the Realm of Desire), and they are also called as the ‘Five-Heaven-of-Not-Returning’.

When practice of the Samadhi has reached the level of the fourth level of the “Nine Levels of Samadhis” (that is, the “Samadhi of the Abandonment-of-Thoughts”), then the practitioner could dwell onto these nine Heavens. The “Fourth Dhyana Heaven” is also known as the “Broad-Fruition Heaven (or “Vrhatphala” in Sanskrit). Due to the differences of the conditions of Samadhi being attained, the ‘broad rewards’ upon the virtuous retribution so generated will also be different. Hence, this Heaven is sub-divided into nine other heavens.

3. “Arupaloka”, or the “Formless Realm” – The practitioners must practice “Samadhi” and the “contemplation on emptiness” in order to enter into this realm. Dwellers of this realm have no “physical bodies”. They have no desires of lust and food gourmandizing. There is no palace, land, nor any materials. Dwellers merely sustain on their “minds” in the “profound Samadhi” (deep meditation) and so it is called the ‘Formless Realm’. It is the world only with “spiritual existence”, and is the highest among the “Three Realms”. Once the practitioners enter into this Samadhi, they would usually stay there for 80,000 “great kalpas”. “Kalpa” is a Sanskrit term meaning ‘a long period of time’. A ‘small kalpa’ is the period of time needed for one cycle for the completion of the four stages of ‘formation, existence, destruction and annihilation’ of a materialistic world. The time frames required for one cycle of “formation, existence, destruction and annihilation” for different materialistic

worlds are quite different. If we strain to take one materialistic world for reference, a ‘small kalpa’ is approximately equivalent to 16 million and 798 thousand years. Twenty ‘small kalpas’ is equivalent to one ‘middle kalpa’. Four ‘middle kalpas’ is equivalent to one ‘great kalpa’, which is about 1.3 billion 43 million and 84 thousand years. Therefore, all sentient beings who stay in the “Formless Realm” would have a longevity of astonishingly long period, up to 80 thousand kalpas. If a sentient being could not have aroused one’s wisdom to enter into the “Dharmadhatu”, or to become liberated from the “Three Realms”, it is no different from being trapped in the “domain of nothingness”. Once the condition of “Samadhi” could not be sustained, and the practitioner resumes from it, it would then be the end of one’s life, upon which the sentient being would be dragged down in accordance to one’s “karmic forces” for retributions, and thus one would be reborn in one of the “six

realms” to continue in the ocean of sufferings for the cycle of karmic existence (Samsara). (“Karmic forces” are the various “tractions”. The web of “karmic forces”: due to both “virtuous or wicked” deeds amassed through countless past lifetimes, the linkages of the mental strengths of both oneself and of others are crisscrossing and inter-influencing each other, so as to form the network of ‘tractions’. This is known as the ‘karmic network’. Please refer to the DVD on the ‘The Inconceivable Law of Karma, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association.)

The “Formless Realm” is classified into four heavens in accordance with the conditions of “Samadhi” and the “contemplation of emptiness”.

1. “Heaven of Infinite Space” (Akasanantyayatana) – Practice the fifth kind of “Samadhi”, (that is, the “Samadhi-of-Infinite-Space”) and contemplating “the outlook of one’s physique is the same as empty space, with the mind concentrating on the condition of boundless empty space”, with the aid of the strength of deep meditation, the practitioner could dwell on this Heaven. Upon achieving such Samadhi, the practitioner would feel that the “mind is rather clear and pure, unrestrained and free from hindrance”. If one’s wisdom could not be generated by the condition of this Samadhi, the practitioner would be trapped in this Heaven.
2. “Heaven of Omniscience” (Brahmaloka) – The “mind” refers to one’s “consciousness” (please refer to the article on ‘The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences’ in Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus” for a more detailed explanation). On the foundation of the “Samadhi of ‘Infinite-Space’”, the practitioner should carry out further practice of the sixth kind of “Samadhi”, (that is, the “Samadhi of Omniscience”), which is to contemplate that the “spacious emptiness is boundless and so does one’s consciousness. The emptiness is contemplated as outside, while the consciousness is contemplated as inside. Focusing one’s mind on the boundless expanse”, and with the support of deep meditation (Samadhi), the practitioner could dwell upon this Heaven. Upon achieving such Samadhi, the practitioner would feel that the “mind is so concentrated without any instability, and it activates with the consciousnesses of the three time periods (present, past and future), with all of them resonate with the Samadhi such that the mind will not go astray”. However, if one’s wisdom could not be generated by the condition of this Samadhi, the practitioner would

be trapped in this Heaven.

3. “Heaven of Nothingness” (Akincanayatana) -- On the foundation of the “Samadhi of ‘Omniscience’”, the practitioner should practice the seventh kind of “Samadhi”, (that is, the “Samadhi of Nothingness”), which is to contemplate on “the non-existence of spacious emptiness nor materials. On the extinction of emptiness and materials, as well as the extinction of consciousness and mind, the dweller would erase the consciousness of cognition and result at the stage of ultimate emptiness and extinction, such that the concept of ‘go-or-stay’ is erased”, one is able to dwell on this Heaven with the support of the strength of Samadhi. The practitioner who could attain this Samadhi would feel that “no thinking would arise in one’s mind and it is clear, unshaken, with all passions precipitated”. However, if one’s wisdom could not be generated by the condition of this Samadhi, the practitioner would be trapped in this Heaven.
4. “Heaven of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking” (Nairasarynanasanjayayatana) -- On the foundation of the “Samadhi of ‘Nothingness’”, the practitioner should practice the eighth kind of “Samadhi”, (that is, the “Samadhi of Neither-Thinking-Nor-Not-Thinking”), which is to contemplate that “the nature of consciousness is unshaken so to exhaust the concepts of extinction, it seems to exist but actually does not exist, it seems exhausted but actually not exhausted, neither-thinking-nor-not-thinking”. With the support of the strength of this Samadhi, the practitioner would dwell on to this Heaven. The practitioner who could attain this Samadhi would feel “no sensations on the objects regardless of their having forms or without forms, and that all are impeccably pure without any intended activity”. However, if one’s wisdom could not be generated by the condition of this Samadhi, the practitioner would be trapped in this Heaven.

The aforesaid eight kinds of “Samadhis” are also taken for practice in other religions, and the levels are graded either high or low in accordance with their tenets and the teachings of “Samadhis”. The higher level of spiritual realm attained by a practitioner represents the higher the level of the tenet and teachings of the “Samadhis” being practiced. If there are no teachings on “Samadhis”, with the instructions merely on teaching others to “conduct more virtuous deeds with a kind heart”, the highest level attainable would only be the “Six Heavens of Desire”. However, regardless of the levels, since the teachings of the eight afore-mentioned

“Samadhis” are **still having some deviations** from the truth, and so the practitioners would not be able to leave the arena of tractions of the “Three Realms”. Once the fortunate rewards are exhausted, or due to the loss of the strength of Samadhi, the practitioner would be tugged by “karmic forces” to descend to extremely adverse spiritual domains. Especially **in the “heavens”, where the redemption of fortunate rewards is tremendous**, those sentient beings who descend from the “realm of heavens” are left with not much retributive fortunes, so that they would go from extreme happiness to extreme sufferings. Hence those eight kinds of “Samadhis” are called the **“mundane Samadhis”** or **“Discharging Samadhis”** (**“Discharging Samadhis” meaning those “Samadhis” with afflictions**) because these eight kinds of “Samadhis” could not help the practitioners to become liberated from the sufferings of Samsara, and are thus still occupied with afflictions and distresses.

Therefore, Bodhisattva Nagarjuna had revealed that: “Although the dwellers of Brahma had left greediness and attained bliss, later on they will suffer from the relentlessly burning fire like faggots of firewood, and thus will experience the pains continuously.” It means that the sentient beings could be born in the “heavens” for happiness because they had abandoned greediness. Later on, however, it will turn out to be tossing fuel to intensify the fire of their own sufferings, and hence they will relentlessly suffer the painfulness. The main reason for this is that the **redemption of fortunate rewards is tremendous in the realm of “heavens”, so inducing “overdrafts”** and so the debts will have to be paid back by “relentless sufferings”. In general, those sentient beings who have fallen from the “heavens” would go to either one of the “three lower realms” of Hells, Pretos (**Hungry Ghosts**) and Animals.

The Ninth Kind of “Samadhi” (as “Nirodha Samapatti” in Pali)

To be freed from the sufferings of Samsara, a practitioner must have to practice the Ninth “Samadhi”, that is: the **“Samadhi-of-Extinction”**, or the **“Samadhi-of-Complete-Cessation-of-Feeling-and-Perception”**. The practitioner who has attained this Samadhi would feel that even the **“slightest meticulous perceptions would extinct, and no coarse thinking patterns would arise**. As there is no thinking, neither is there any sensation. Both the sensation of the body and mind would be completely extinct. The nature of Samadhi thus unfolded and there is **no more exhibitions of conditioned forms**. Not for long after attainment of this Samadhi, the **“Arhathood”** could be achieved, and so the practitioner would be able to be freed from the arena of tractions of the “Three Realms”. Therefore, the Ninth Samadhi is classified as **“Supra-mundane**

Samadhi”, or can also be called as **“Samadhi-Without-Afflictions”**.

Why did the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni Enter into Maha-Parinirvana from the Realm of Form (Rupaloka)?

There are totally nine kinds of “Samadhis” as aforesaid, and are thus called as the **“Nine Levels of Samadhis”**. When the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had entered into the “Dharmadhatu”, He did not enter via the **“Samadhi of Extinction”**, but had entered into Maha-Parinirvana from the “Fourth Dhyana” of the **“Realm of Form”** instead. **Why was it so?** At each intermission in-between two Samadhis, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni first resumed from the condition of the previous Samadhi, and then re-entered into the condition of the next Samadhi. The state of Samadhi was not kept continuously. His descendents believed that the Lord Buddha wanted to **demonstrate** that He was not avid of the “enjoyment” in each of the “Samadhis”. However, the reason why that the Lord Buddha had entered into Maha-Parinirvana from the “Fourth Dhyana” in the “Realm of Form” **was not recorded**.

“The Tibetan Book of the Dead” has revealed that on the brink of death, the **“eighth consciousness”** would be released from the physical body (please refer to the detailed explanations on the “mind” and the “consciousness” in the article on ‘The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences’ in Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”). This kind of process of releasing from the inside of the body would have to undergo **a series of changes**. A practitioner must have to master the occurrences of such processes of changes, in union with **“appropriate samadhis, methods and oral pith-instructions”** for the **“Recognition of Brightness”** at the critical points. If the practitioner is successful, he or she would then be able to attain the **“Buddhahood of Dharmakaya”**, and thus **directly proceed by entering into the “Dharmadhatu”** (please refer to the detailed explanation on the “Dharmakaya” in the articles on ‘The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences’ in Issues 4 and 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”). “Brightness” is a kind of “materials” with a sparse density in its structure. A characteristic of the realm of “heavens” is “brightness”. Yet, different kinds of heavens would possess **different degrees of illumination and purity**.

“The Tibetan Book of the Dead” has revealed that when the “eighth consciousness” is **released from the physical body**, it is the moment for the occurrence of the **purest “Brightness of Dharmakaya”**, and thus one could directly enter into the “Dharmadhatu” and attain the **“Buddhahood of Dharmakaya”**. The fact that

the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had entered into Maha-Parinirvana from the “Fourth Dhyana” of the “Realm of Form” has rightly **proven and demonstrated** the truth of *“The Tibetan Book of the Dead”*. Furthermore, *“The Tibetan Book of the Dead”* has also indicated that after the “eighth consciousness” had **left the physical body**, it would encounter **extremely brilliant “Brightness”**, which is the moment for the occurrence of the **“Brightness of the Complete Enjoyment Body (or “Sambhogakaya” in Sanskrit)”**. If the practitioner could **“Recognize the Brightness”** at the critical moments, he or she would then be able to attain the **“Buddhahood of Sambhogakaya”** (please refer to the detailed explanation on Sambhogakaya in the articles on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issues 4 and 5 of the “Lake of Lotus”). This has properly explained that the Lord Buddha could enter and be present in the “Dharmadhatu” in the form of the “Brightness of the Complete Enjoyment Body” at the “Realm of Form”, without going through the “Formless Realm”. The “Vajrayana Buddhism” considers these crucial moments as **“shortcuts”** of either “attaining Buddhahood”, or of “liberation from Samsara”. We called them **“shortcuts”** because we, being worldly secular people, in order to recover the **limitless great abilities associated with our “primordial nature”**, and to be freed from all bindings of the “tractions” for the “attainment of Buddhahood”, we must have to **combine** gradually, step by step, the “Eighth to the First Consciousnesses” (which have been split from the “Mind”) and **“dissolve them into one entity”** so as to enter into the **“Dharmadhatu of One Union”** (please refer to the explanation on the dissolution of the “Mind” and other “Mental Consciousnesses” in the article on “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences” in Issue 15 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

The question is that the **split** of the “Mind” is **materialized** through a long duration of three “great asarikhya kalpas” for its **gradual evolution**. (One asarikhya kalpa is the time period needed for 10 to the power 51 times of a universe to go through the whole cycle of “formation, existence, destruction and annihilation”). This is more commonly known as the “Theory of Evolution” in contemporary times. Speaking in an unbecoming way, this is the condition of **“continuously worsening of the schizophrenic nature of the mental states”**. Speaking in simple terminology, the lesser the desires one has, the better improvements will one have for the various symptoms of **“schizophrenia”**. By complementing one’s practice of “Samadhi”, one’s mental conditions would become more stable. Hence, one’s uplifting and further rebirth onto a higher level of spiritual realm would become easier. Thus, in order to recover the limitless great abilities associated with the “primordial nature”, the practitioner has to **“go back” (to the previous states)** for gradual **“combination and dissolution** of the schizoid mental conditions **into**

one entity”. The time period needed for the returning journey of the ‘round-trip’ is equally long as for the previous journey. Therefore, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said that the “Dharma practices” in the “way of exoteric Buddhism” will need an **unpredictable and immeasurable time frame** of three “great asarikhya kalpas” for one’s actual “liberation from Samsara” and to “attain Buddhahood”. This is extremely **correct and agrees** totally with the normal procedures of the **Natural Law of Mother Nature**. The Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had just **factually** explained these proceedings. Indeed, the **Natural Law of Mother Nature** is meticulous and subtle, and there is the characteristic of **“re-cycling** and repeatedly returning to the starting point”. That is why *“The Tibetan Book of the Dead”* has revealed that there will be “physical and chemical changes” taking place at the moment of death, when the “consciousness” and the physical body are separating from each other. The “nature of the mind” would then **return to its most primordial state**. For practice that would need three “great asarikhya kalpas” in order to return to the starting point, if a practitioner knows how to master them (the **“shortcuts”**), then he or she could promptly achieve its arrival at this very point and so the time-period of numerous “kalpas” **could be saved**.

As for the aforesaid “Realm of Form” and the “Formless Realm”, a practitioner would need to carry out practices on “deep meditation” and “contemplation on emptiness” in order to enter into them. Many a worldly secular people would complain on the pains of the lower limbs, even just after a short while of taking a simple meditation posture, and hence the “Samadhi” becomes a practice that could only be **performed by a very few people**. Furthermore, the “contemplation on emptiness” is also difficult for many a practitioners in order to master the **correct methods**, and hence many a Dharma practitioners have entered into the “condition of nothingness” (**wrong perception that “everything is emptiness”**), as if they had gone insane due to the “curse of nothingness”. As such, there is no way to generate one’s own wisdom, and thus the practitioner would be **trapped inside the “realm of nothingness”**. Many a practitioners carry out spiritual practices **blindly as if ‘shooting in the dark’**. Due to their own self-pride and self-esteem, as well as many other reasons, they are unwilling to look for or take refuge in those “genuine Gurus” who can truly have the relevant knowledge and experiences in this area. As a result, their **efforts** would have **no effects**. Moreover, they might end up like “being tied up in the cocoon of a silkworm”. Another possibility is to follow a “fake guru” and a superstitious one who has **neither the true knowledge and learning nor practical experiences** of these practices. Without exceptions, the result would be tragic. The aforesaid **“shortcuts”** are ways that the practitioners do not have

to endure the “pains of the lower limbs due to hard practice” before successfully reaching the condition of “Samadhi” in order to be stable enough for entering into the “spiritual domains” of high levels. What they are **lacking** of is that they must have to further pursue their studies and learning with **an open mind from an “authentic Guru”** for the **practices** of the correct methods for the **“Recognition of Brightness”**. What are the evidences? **“The Tibetan Book of the Dead”** is such a piece of **written** evidence, which not only agreed with scientific theories, but has also collected **“practical experiences** left over by the past Saints” who had actual practices and experiences behind them. Parts of these descriptions **correlate very well** with those experiences of the “Near-Death Experience” (NDE) survivors. The case study of Satana is such an **actual** case in point.

A Case of “Near-Death Experience” in Crossing Over the Various Higher Spiritual Domains

Satana said “I could **achieve everything that I would think of**, and **could do anything at my own will!** The beauty of **tints and sounds** were so diversified and exquisitely touching that it has greatly exceeded what mundane people could have thought of them.” This statement proved that Satana had entered into the spiritual domain of the “Six Heavens of Desire” in the **“Realm of Desire”**. Satana said “When I had travelled through that beam of bright Light, I have entered into a state of ecstasy. It was not a joy but a state of ecstasy which was beyond any descriptions.” This statement proved that Satana had entered into the lower level of spiritual domain in the **“Realm of Form”**. Satana said “At first, I had **transcended the ‘time’ element**, and finally I had also **transcended the ‘space’ element**, and thus had arrived at a certain **‘point without space’**. At the same time, I had also transcended any kind of physical body, and had just left behind my **‘self-awareness’**.” This statement proved that Satana had entered into the **highest level** of the spiritual domain **in the “Realm of Form”**. Satana said, “I continued to move onward in overtaking it, and even transcended the **level of experience** itself. At that very moment, I had discovered some sort of a freedom, which was ‘without any emotions and experiences’. It even went so far as of having simply **without the existence of the ‘self’**.” This statement proved that Satana had entered into the lower level of the spiritual domain in the **“Formless Realm”**. Satana said, “When I proceeded even further in overtaking it, it had become a state **without a ‘single consciousness’** while existed only in an **endless and boundless** vast expanse. My ‘point of consciousness’ was just like a tiny drop of water that has been **completely dissolved** in the vast great

ocean.” This statement proved that Satana had entered into the **highest level** of the spiritual domain **in the “Formless Realm”**. Satana continuously chased after the beam of bright Light, such thus she was able to **swiftly leap across** numerous spiritual domains of high levels. If it was not a **“shortcut”**, then what would it be? Even though many a NDE survivors might have proceeded towards the “beam of bright Light” by “random trials” and might enter into the realm of “heavens”, but in general, they would have been expelled out of the “Brightness” before they could transcend the **“Six Heavens of Desire”** of the “Realm of Desire”, as they did not have the kind of experiences, training and knowledge that Satana had. This is due to the facts of **non-availability of guidance, training and support from proper Gurus**.

Therefore, a practitioner of “esoteric Buddhism” is required to look for an “authentic Guru” for the guidance of one’s “Dharma practice”. The Guru must be able to **explain** the aforesaid scenarios, **with practical experiences**, and can teach the methods on **“Recognizing Brightness”**, all of which are very logical and would meet pragmatic needs. If a guru does not even know how to explain the above-mentioned situations, but only knows how to **boast oneself** of his/her so-called practical experiences, his/her **“supernatural powers”** and the effectiveness of his/her **“blessings”**, would it be the case of “blessing for the enhancement of **superstitions**”? Non-Buddhist practitioners could also possess ‘supernatural powers’ but **what are the uses** of these? **Didn’t they also fail (in the “Liberation from Samsara”) in the end?** The **“Dissolution into Brightness”** is not the same as the **“Recognition of Brightness”**. Neither does it represent the successful “attainment of Buddhahood”, or the “Liberation from Samsara”. As such, how should those “esoteric Buddhist practitioners”, who deem that they could **cherish** the **“shortcuts”** and **make good use** of them, prepare their practices in order not to waste them? If they fail, what would be the consequences? As for the journey taken by Satana after she had entered into “Brightness”, would there be any dangers on the way? What are the methods on **“Recognizing Brightness”**? Due to the fact that numerous practitioners have entered into the **“state of nothingness” (due to the wrong perception that “everything is emptiness”)**, they were not able to generate their “wisdom”, but were being **trapped in the “domain of nothingness”**, as if being insane due to the **“curse of emptiness”**. Hence, how should one practice “Samadhi” and the “contemplation of emptiness”? What are the **correct methods** of “Samadhi” and the “contemplation of emptiness”? Spiritual practitioners **should humbly and sincerely seek the spiritual advices from their “authentic Gurus”** as to what are the correct ways and methods, instead of being **superstitious** about the mysterious power of the “Gurus”.

Therefore, the **third reason** for Satana's **failure** was that she did not know the **correct** methods of **"Recognizing Brightness"**. Are there any other reasons?

The Areas and Questions Pending for Further Discussions

As a matter of fact, are they the same reasons for the occurrence of "Near-death Experiences" (NDEs) as well as the bad scenes at the "brink of death"? In the article on "The Meanings of Near-death Experiences" in Issue 8 of the "Lake of Lotus", it was mentioned that some scenes at the moment of death had also occurred in some other religions. There were also similar reports of "being besieged by brightness, and saw that Jesus and Mary coming to fetch them." Why is it like that?

In fact, what do the phenomena of the "scenes at the moment of death" really represent? Whether it represents some worrisome results of miserable ending when encountering some bad scenes? In the descriptions about the twenty-five Dharma practitioners in Issue 8, they were using the same kind of method for their Dharma practice, and they were united together and endeavored with the same efforts in their practices. Yet, various bad scenarios had occurred on their verge of dying. Why is it like that? In fact, what had gone wrong?

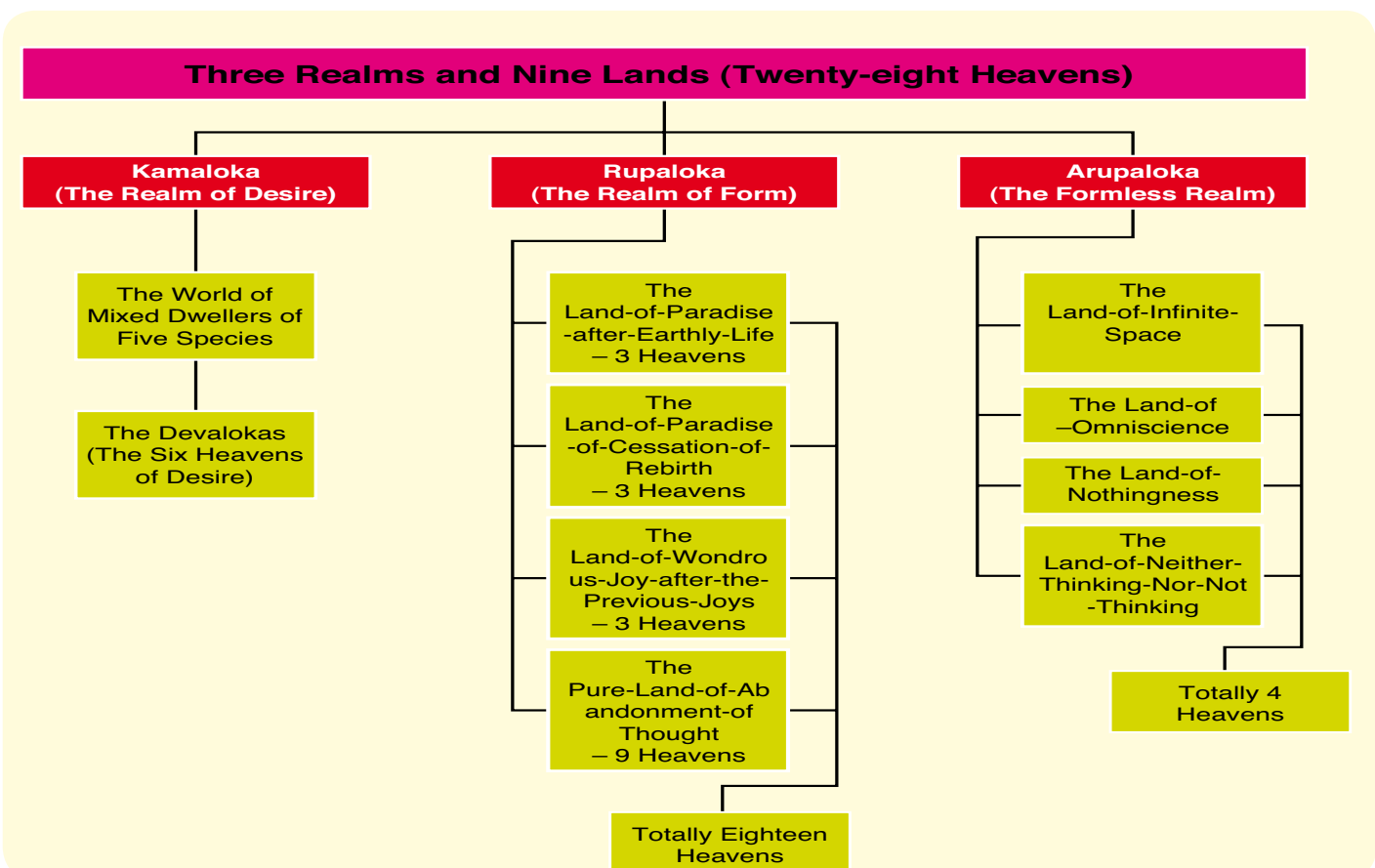
In the other religions, there were reports about the coming of "God" to fetch for the deceased persons, and so does it mean that all religions are having the same kind of effect? How to carry out one's Dharma practice in order to ensure that an "auspicious scene" can occur at the moment of death? If bad scenes had appeared at the moment of death, is there any method of rescue for such kind of emergency?

In fact, **what are the required conditions in the methods of "Dharma practice" that are considered as "up-to-the-point" "training on the spiritual elevation"?** How can one make a choice amongst the so many methods of "training on the spiritual elevation" when coping with the different stages?

We may conduct another "brain storming session of wisdom" and give these some more thoughts. In the future articles, we will continue and try to verify the answers which can adhere to both science and the Buddhist teachings. How about that? 

..... (To be Continued)

(Note: The newly-released book on "The Meanings of Near-Death Experiences (1)" has been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Meaning of the Near-Death Experiences" "from Issues 1 to 10.")





The Application of Wisdom

The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (17)

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

Excerpt of Last Issue The Skills in the Setting-up of "Plans"

The primary condition for "success" is the setting-up of an "objective" (please refer to Issue 2 of the "Lake of Lotus"). In the setting-up of an objective with regards to one's preference, capability and ideal, to be supplemented with the skills in the setting-up of an "objective" (please refer to Issue 3 of the "Lake of Lotus"), a blueprint of grandeur for the ideal of one's life has more or less been drawn up. Then, what is the next step to proceed in order to ensure success "in achieving the objective"?

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

1. **Complementarity and the Enhancement of Effectiveness:** The links between 'plans' should have compatible, complementary and interdependent effects....(please refer to Issue 4 of the "Lake of Lotus").
2. **A thorough elimination process to decide what to "adopt and abandon":** Irrespective of working out

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

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

- (i) **Importance:** To what extent would the "plan" help in achieving the "objective"? To what extent would this "objective", in which one is prepared to achieve, help in achieving the major objective"?..... (please refer to Issue 5 of the "Lake of Lotus").
- (ii) **The Price to be Paid:** Life is short and limited. All the resources that you presently possess could be lost at any moment. One must clearly understand the characteristics of the "Combination of Resources" and its relations with Destiny in one's own life before making any changes, to realize the price that one has to pay for the different "plans", and then go through the processes of elimination and deployment in order to "adopt and abandon" in these

various “plans”. In this way, this would enable the limited resources to become “ever-renewing, inexhaustible and of unusual value for money” within a limited framework of time and space (please refer to Issue 6 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(iii) **Strength and Weakness:** Every person has his/her own strengths, merits, skills, as well as his/her weaknesses and the Achilles’ heel (weakest point). In order to achieve success of any “objective” or of any “plan”, one must be very clear of one’s own strengths and weaknesses; and then through various skillful arrangements, try to complement and make use of one’s strengths and weaknesses in designing the contents and procedures of the “plans”. This is an “important strategy” in eliminating and deploying the “plans”, and thus should not be underestimated (please refer to Issue 7 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(iv) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (1):** In drawing up any “plan”, one must take into account the “planning of time”. The “principles for the usages and wastages of time” must be clear, and have to be linked up with the effectiveness of the “plan”. Hence, time should be spent on those “plans” which are most effective and can bring the highest rate of return. One should prioritize one’s different “plans” according to the long or short durations of time used and their relative effectiveness. “Plans” that require one to put in a lot of time and effort, but with low rates of return and low effectiveness, should be scrapped. One should refine and improve one’s “plans” by making reference to the “principles for the usages and wastages of time”. This is a major direction in the selecting, eliminating and refining process of one’s “plans” (please refer to Issue 8 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(v) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (2):** Due to the simple fact that one has only very limited time and energy in one’s lifetime, and if one’s own objective is either to be “liberated from the cycle of transmigration” (known as “Samsara” in Sanskrit), or to attain “full enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”) within this very life, then your “planning of time” and the “principles

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

(vi) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (3):** Does it mean that if one is unable to undergo “long-term retreat”, one would not be able to achieve the “objective” to become “liberated from Samsara or in attaining Buddhahood within this lifetime”? If you want to know the answer, please answer the following three questions first and to know about the “three essential factors” in the application of Buddhist teaching in our “Daily Living” (please refer to Issue 10 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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

No matter in the setting of what kinds of “plans”, one has to try and predict what would be the outcomes that would be brought upon you by this “plan”? What

will be the side-effects and how many? One always hopes for the best but be prepared for the worst. Many a Dharma practitioners, when planning the times for their “Dharma practices”, will tend to **take care of one but then lose hold of the others**, making it more contradictory, and also more confusing, for one’s own “daily living”, and thus ending in the **loss of what to “adopt and abandon”**. (please refer to the Issue 11 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

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

- (ix) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (6): The Skilful Usages of the “Main Theme” and the “Sequences of Events”: The “cardinal mentality” is the major key in deciding on all things, and so the **“planning of one’s Dharma practices”** in one’s “daily living” has to use the “cardinal mentality” as the “main theme” to link up the “static states of Dharma practices” with the “dynamic states of Dharma practices”, by connecting their “common points” so as to get through the rigid dichotomy in one’s “planning of time,” and thus opening and tidying up the disordered “sequences of events” in

order to synergize the contradictions of these two and to make them to become complementary to each other, while using the “cardinal mentality” as the basis all through. This is, indeed, the **“main points of planning”** for one’s Dharma practices in “daily living”. Yet, how one focuses on the “cardinal mentality” and the “planning of time” would become the **main key points for one’s “successes and/or failures”**.... (please refer to the Issue 13 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

- (x) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (7): Flexibility in the Using of One’s “Mentality” for One’s Dharma Practice: While practicing the Dharma during the undulated waves of “daily living”, one can hardly sustain one’s “meditational power” and the **degree of the steadiness** of one’s “Dharma practice” by **relying solely on “Emptiness”**. In order to be able to continuously enhance and elevate one’s Dharma practice in “daily living”, one must have **to adopt “Emptiness” as the unchanging and everlasting “cardinal mentality”**. One further needs to flexibly make use of the “three main essential points” of one’s Dharma practice in “daily living” so as to **train one’s own “mind”** in addressing the problems of one’s “daily living”, as well as to transform one’s “emotions and feelings” in becoming the “driving force for one’s Dharma practice” (please refer to the Issue 14 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
- (xi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (8): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (1): In the undulated journey in



the course of one's lifetime, it is **unavoidable** that one would meet with many adversities. If you encounter these adversities and could not handle them properly, they would become the **obstacles** to all of your plans and objectives. Regardless of what "time and effectiveness" that you may have, they would be **completely** disturbed and delayed, and would hardly function properly. Thus, when one can skillfully adopt the strategy of getting through the obstacles by linking up the "Main Theme and the Sequences of Events", and when one has set up the principles for **choosing** one's "Cardinal Mentality" and also for the "Three Essential Factors" within one's "mind", one should at the same time follow the criteria for one's "Dharma practices in times of adversities" as the **procedures for handling the situations** (please refer to the Issue 15 of the "Lake of Lotus").

- (xii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (9): Criteria for "Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities" (2):** Among the criteria for "Dharma Practices in times of Adversities", one should pay attention and **adhere** to the following **procedures**: 1) to alienate from one's role; 2) to remain calm; 3) to analyze accurately; 4) to act within one's own capacities – this can be regarded as the "time planning for one's Dharma practice during adversities"; 5) to take advantage of the different circumstances; 6) to learn from one's own experiences; and 7) to elevate one's own awareness, with particular reference to 3) to analyze accurately (please refer to the Issue 16 of the "Lake of Lotus").

- (xiii) **The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (10): Criteria for "Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities" (3):**

4) To act within one's own capacities – this can be regarded as the "Time Planning for one's Dharma practice during Adversities"

In times of favorable circumstances, it would be easy for one to achieve success regardless of what one does. One would **naturally** be successful without having to wait for the right opportunities, neither does one have to make any planning. As long as the "causal and auxiliary conditions" are ripen and matched together,

then success will slowly come simply because this will be the time for **the arrival of the "achieved rewards"**. The good deeds that you have accumulated in the past are the best planning for the **"achieved rewards"**. However, in times of adversities, no matter what one does, one would have encountered many obstacles and have one's head badly battered. If one simply goes along naturally, it would lead one to a dead end. This is because in times of adversities, it is the time for **the coming of one's retributions due to one's past bad deeds**. If one does not remain calm, wait for the right opportunity, and plan appropriately, it would be difficult for one to get out from the plight. The question, then, is **when will be the best time to get out from the plight?** And what would be considered as the **appropriate planning?**

There are many methods to be employed in achieving "success". If one meticulously analyses the successful people in history up till the present day, one would find that **different people**, even though faced with similar situations and had used similar methods in order to achieve success, have **different degrees of success**. The main reason was because of the fact that they had **different capabilities**. Even for the same person, his capabilities would not be the same at the very different stages of his own life time. Different environmental factors would influence the clarity of one's thinking and its orientation. The worst environment would make one to lose one's rationality, and thus would not be able to think clearly. One would then try to do one's utmost to get away from that environment, and so these are **the tortures at times of adversities**. At such times, one would easily get impulsive as one was already **amidst traps**, and would try all of one's might to break away. However, adversities were like "fires on a chain of boats which are linked to each other, or like the waves coming one after the other", such that **numerous heroes had been defeated** by such kind of situations.

Strategies for Dharma Practices During Adversities

Since **the characteristics of adversities** are that: "before one can recover from a serious wound, one would have fallen into other numerous traps which are all linked up to one another", and so all the more one would need to **calmly plan the opportunities, re-organise** the remaining capabilities and resources in order to breakthrough the adversities. Hence, "one would have to plan carefully before taking any actions". However, if one does **not "act within one's own capabilities"**, and do not preserve the only remaining strength, but **blindly** "stake everything in a single risky venture", one's chance of failure would be very high.



This is because the characteristic of adversities is that one would only have a very narrow escape, and the chance of success is only about “one out of ten”, that is a 10 percent chance.

Why is it that the chance of success is only about 10 percent chance? Why it cannot be 20 percent chance or 30 percent chance? The answer is yes, it is possible to have a higher percentage if one knows how to make good use of the remaining capabilities and resources, and then the chances of success could be more than 20 percent or 30 percent ! However, if one just blindly dashes through the “mine field”, it is inevitable that you will have a “close shave”. The chance of being able to dash through successfully would be even less than 10 percent. This is the consequence for not having any planning, not waiting for the right opportunity, and dashing through blindly, and this is just only common knowledge and is not difficult to understand. With such “reckless courage” to practice the Dharma during adversities without any wisdom and patience, one would not be able to breakthrough even adversities in this secular world, let alone to break away from those “universal karmic forces” of the ocean of sufferings in this “cycle of karmic existence” (or “Samsara” in Sanskrit)?

Hence, “to alienate oneself” in order “to keep calm”, and “to analyse accurately” in order to study and weigh the different situations are the most fundamental mission during adversities. It is also the important foundation

stone for planning the strategies for moving forward and retreating. The most important strategy during adversities is to hold on to one’s own positions, and not to let the situation to get worse. Then, one would have to act within one’s capabilities by considering and deciding on the strategies for moving forward or retreating. One should not carelessly try one’s utmost to breakthrough the encroachment, resulting in getting oneself deeper into the mire. Those positions that one has to hold onto firmly when one practices the Dharma in times of adversities are one’s “mental state” and the “precepts” (or “Silas” in Sanskrit, meaning “disciplines”).

Investment, Speculation and Precepts

Take a real concrete example: the whole global economy has been booming since 2003, where the stock markets all over the world have continued to rise. For the stock market in Hong Kong, it was ever rising without any signs of falling, with one climax after another. There was a Dharma practitioner whose objective for Dharma practice was to become “liberated from the cycle of karmic existence”. He insisted to practice at specified times each day with few interruptions. He even urged his family members not to do anything to disturb him during his daily quiet practices. He had continued to practice in this way for a few years, feeling that his “mental state” was quite stable and the “precepts” had been observed quite well.

This Dharma practitioner found that the buying and selling of stocks seemed to have become a “sure win” investment and that one would hardly lose at all. He has given rise to a “mental state” of greediness, but since he did not have any more capitals for investment, he could only get anxious about it. His father happened to suffer a big disease, and so had asked him to take care of some savings reserve in the mid-2007. Without a second thought, this Dharma practitioner then put in this extra amount of savings reserve from his father, together with all those savings that he and his wife had, as well as the education saving plans of his children, into the stock market.

He was thinking in his mind that: “since I have been practising the Dharma for so many years and thus should have accumulated at least some good merits. If I can gain money through this investment, I would take out a portion of it as offerings for the usage on the propagation of the Buddhist teachings”, believing that all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would endorse such a move, and would thus bless him for what he had intended to do. Even though the “subprime



mortgage crisis” was already in the heat, it had not been able to inflict upon him any sense of awakening. His **superstitious, yet greedy, mind**, on the other hand, was getting more and more inflated.

In order to gain more money, he specifically invested in those mini-sized information stocks that fluctuated tremendously. At first, it seemed that he really gained some money from them. However, by the end of 2007, he had already lost three-quarters of the total amount of money that he had put into the stock market. He was so **upset** and had started to **lose his position** such that he was like an ant on the hot pan. His **mind of greediness had become even stronger** to the extent that he even **borrowed money** from his friends and relatives in order to invest further into the stock market. He then continued to pray to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and begged for their blessings. He even made greater pledges and more vows hoping that, with **the powers of the Buddhas and the strengths of his vows**, these could help him to revert his losses and to regain success by recovering both the interests and principal of his investment.

Unfortunately, time had already changed. The speed and the amount of losing additional money that he had put into the market were even quicker and larger than ever before. He was seriously hit by this and was in great debts. As he earnestly hoped to break away from his plight **as soon as possible**, he again borrowed some more money from his **closest relatives**. Given

the honest and trustworthy image that he managed to build up for himself in the past years, as well as his persistency in persuading his relatives, he managed to **borrow** from them **all the monies** that they had **earned by hard toil**. He then put all these monies into the stock market once more.

The outcome was that the more money he put into the stock market, the more he had lost. On top of all the living costs for his whole family, his monthly payment on the mortgage of his flat, and so on, he has now inherited an even greater debt than ever before, all of which have created a great pressure upon his whole family. In the past, he was able to **concentrate** his mind on his Dharma practice; but now, he was so confused and upset as if sitting on a cushion of needles, and he just could not tolerate it even for a moment. The chain of painful thoughts on his plight made him unable to sleep at night. He had given a harsh thinking of how to face his relatives and friends who **had become penniless** due to him. Even though he is constantly in tears, he still does not know how to deal with all the difficulties in his daily living from now on? His **“mental state”** was totally **upset and confused**, then how can he continue to **practice** the Dharma? Actually **whose fault** was it? Whether **all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were not effective enough?** or whether the vows that he had made were not big enough?

One of the precepts for all Bodhisattvas is that: “when one’s mind has been swayed by great desires”. If one violates this precept, **one’s mind, wisdom and meditational power** that had been concentrated on Dharma practices will then get lost. This is one of those precepts that “upon its violation, it would block out all the good deeds that can be assimilated by the practitioner”. It would further block the road **for dealing with greediness**, and also block the mind for “the generosity of giving”, thus making it difficult for one to accumulate merits. Ever since the time when this Dharma practitioner saw the rising of the Hong Kong stock market, his degree of greediness had increased in steps, from small to great, with the rise of the stock market. Having followed his great desires and got changed, his mind has thus given rise to the thought of borrowing money in order to help him to get rich. He has then put this thought into practice in order to satisfy his greediness.

How “great desires” and “small desires” are delineated in the Buddhist teachings? What are the meanings of “violating the precepts” or not? What will be the outcomes if one has violated the precepts? If one can **“act within one’s capabilities”** and **leave any margins for retreat or a fallback**, even if one fails, it **will not affect** the road for one’s retreat for both oneself and others, and so this is considered as the **“small desires”**. In

this case, the behaviours of putting money into the stock market can be regarded as “investment”. If one **does not** “act within one’s capabilities” and **does not leave** any margins for retreat or a fallback, and when one fails, it will affect the road for one’s retreat for both oneself and others, and so this is considered as the “great desires”. In such a case, the behaviours of putting money into the stock market can be regarded as “speculation”.

This Dharma practitioner adopted the method of “emptying all his savings” in order to satisfy his desires. If he failed, it would totally affect the quality of living and the psychological conditions of both himself and all his family members. This would make him feel the pain of “having lost a large portion of what he had got”, and would thus feel **worried and upset**. This is, indeed, the whole idea of “great desires” and “speculation”. On the other hand, if this Dharma practitioner had used only “part of his savings” to satisfy his desires, and so even if he had failed, it would not have affected so much on the psychological conditions and the quality of living of both himself and all his family members. It **would not have resulted in his feeling painful**, and **would not** have put himself to such a position of being subjected to the pains like an ant on the hot pan, nor being so upset that he had **totally lost his own position as a Dharma practitioner**, resulting in his **mind of greediness** to become even **more fierce** than before. Instead, his road for retreat should be that the “**whole troop** can retreat at anytime”, meaning that he can still “retain the main strengths so as not to affect his overall situation”, which is known as “**small desires**” and “investment”.

How to Remove Adversities

The characteristics of adversities are that: “before one can recover from a serious wound, one would have fallen into other numerous traps which are all linked up to one another”. Due to his greediness, this Dharma practitioner had “submerged all his rationality” by not having given due weight to the message that the “subprime mortgage is a crisis and trap”. He was “no expert at all” in the stock market, and lacked the required experiences in trading stocks. With his mediocre techniques, and his dubious courage from his superstitious and distorted understandings of the “Buddhist teachings”, he was **proactively and personally responsible** for being sunk into adversities. With his first failure, he should have “alienated himself in order to keep calm, to analyse accurately by studying and weighing the situations” in order to plan **the strategies for advancing and retreating**. The most important strategy in times of adversities

is to “**hold onto one’s position**” and not to allow the situation to worsen. Then, one should “**act within one’s capabilities**” to consider and decide as to whether one should advance or retreat, instead of **trying one’s best to break through the situation**, resulting in only **getting oneself deeper into the mire**. For one’s Dharma practice during adversities, the positions that one should hold on to are **the “mental state” and the “precepts”**.

Unfortunately, this Dharma practitioner did not know that he himself had violated one of the Bodhisattvas’ precepts, when his mind was so full of great desires that he had been swayed by them. He thought that **the strength of his vows** was not strong enough, and hence he kept on praying to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas for further assistance. This had further strengthened **his hope and desire** and thus had **persisted on** in his own **erroneous ways**. In order to recover his lost grounds, he once again violated the same precept by adopting the method of borrowing more money to further satisfy his desires. The result was another failure which would have affected the psychological conditions and the quality of living of both himself and all his family members, and there was no way for his further retreat. All these results have put **great pressures** upon both himself and his family, and thus this is known as “**great desires**” and “speculation”.

If this Dharma practitioner can adopt the method of “thinking quietly over his own faults” in order to reduce his desires, and to identify his own mistakes, he could



have not continued to put in his money into the stock market. He could also have planned for its aftermaths by trying to **balance** out the **psychological traumas** of this failure for both himself and his family members. If he had been cautious of the trap for the “subprime mortgage”, he would have preserved his remaining resources, and would not be too bother of the fact that he had failed this time. This can be considered as **“small desires”, by observing the “precepts” for one’s Dharma practices.**

Unfortunately, this Dharma practitioner did not “quietly thought through his own mistakes”. He continued to violate one of the Bodhisattvas’ precepts, that is “when one’s mind has been swayed by great desires”. With his **honest and trustworthy image**, and **his eloquence in speech** that could **fool others, as well as himself**, he had successfully earned the trusts of his kind-hearted and honest family members who had supported him whole-heartedly by emptying all they had in order to help him out. This kind of **dreadful behaviours** of putting the consequences of his own “desires, ventures and crises” onto others showed that he had reached the stage of totally **losing all his rationality**. The result was his further failure, and can thus be known as the **“great desires” and “speculation”**. Irrespective of whether one would succeed or fail, this is still to be considered as **“great desires” and “speculation”**.

If this Dharma practitioner could adopt the method of “thinking quietly over his own faults and **be courageous enough to take all the consequences upon himself**” so as to reduce his desires, he should be able to get through the difficult situations, even though faced with great mishaps. If such, he would not have attempted any move that **would possibly** involve his family members and those who were very closed and dear to him. This is considered as **“small desires”, while keeping one’s “precepts” for one’s “Dharma practice”**. To be considerate of all others and his family members, one would not have put them on the verge of a dangerous position. Even though one was in a desperate position, **one would still choose only to sacrifice oneself** without the making use of others (including his own family members) to “stake everything on one very risky venture”. This is, indeed, what is meant by **“small desires”, while keeping one’s “precepts” for one’s “Dharma practice”**.

When one has the spirit of sacrificing oneself, the **clarity** of one’s **“mental state”** would **be restored** and thus the “precepts” could be kept. The function of “precepts” is to ensure that the **“mental state”** for one’s “Dharma practice” **would not be disturbed**. The clarity of one’s **“mental state”** would help to **give rise to wisdom**. When one can see clearly the intricacies of adversities, the road for getting out from the plight **would automatically**

be shown. One can then re-organise the remaining strength, such that one would then be able to break through from the plight. That is, indeed, the “way to plan ahead and to seek a way out before taking any actions”. When the road for getting out from the plight had not yet been shown, one should not try to break through it by replying solely on one’s so-called “courage”. Instead, one should **“guard against being rush and be patient”**. This is because the meaning for “plan” included identifying the “direction for getting out from the plight”.

The **essence** of “precepts” lies in the spirit of being able to bear the consequences and scarifying oneself. This is also **the essential “formula” for one’s “Dharma practice”**, simply because this formula can **cut off the vicious circle of adversities** and will show **the road for getting out from the plight**. Why is it so? “To empty all one has” in order to make a bigger profit is **the “greediness of the great desire”**. To borrow other’s strengths in order to get back one’s lost resources is one type of **“greediness”**. In order to gain back one’s lost interests, one has used others’ interests as the capital for the risky ventures, and this is “greediness”. This kind of mindset and formula for **“going to extremes”** would **continue to repeat itself**. As such, adversities would appear continuously.

The meaning of **“going to extremes”** is that one would not have any considerations as to whether the interests of others would be hurt **excessively** or not. For the individual, one would exhaust all of the strengths and resources for **the present and that of the future**, including exhausting all the strengths and resources of the others, just only for one’s own interests and feelings without any considerations of leaving some margins or a fallback. In other words, one would adopt **an extremely greedy mindset and formula for whatever one does**, of “using things to the most, earn the most, tramp the most and fight the most”. This is similar to the Chinese saying that: “if one is greedy, one would end up in being poor”; or that “a thing will reverse to its opposite when it is put to extremes”.

Even if one prayed to all the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, those “Dharma protectors” (or **“Dharmapalas” in Sanskrit**) would not protect people with such kind of a mindset. What is more is because they had **violated the “precepts”**, and so for those who are more close to them (**and with more honesty**) would be harmed more seriously by them. Hence, the “Dharma protectors” would not protect those whose prayers lacked the genuine sincerity, and the strength of their vows was made on **an “exchange” basis**. If this Dharma practitioner had the real heart for making offerings for the propagation of the “Buddhist teachings”, he would not have used his father’s money as the stakes.

Instead, he would have directly offered the money for the propagation of the “Buddhist teachings”. If this Dharma practitioner really wants to be successful in his Dharma practice, he must have to **change the formula and mindset of “having great desires, and being sparing and greedy”**. He should have instead nurtured a “spirit of being able to bear the consequences and in scarifying oneself”.

The Repetitive Nature of “Adversities”

One would ask: whether there are more concrete examples (for our reference) as illustrations on the formation of the “repetitive nature of adversities” due to **the repetitiveness of the formula and mindset?**

The Lord Buddha had described a true and concrete example in the **“Sutra of a Hundred Actions”** (or “Karmasataka-sutra” in Sanskrit, or “mdo sde las brgya pa” in Tibetan). “At a time when the Lord Buddha was in Sravasti, there was a sentient being who was suffering in the hell realm. He had a huge body with no eyes. His body was rotten and decayed, and there were worms which kept on biting upon his body. He was in such a great pain that he kept on dashing everywhere and shouting erratically. When he ran to the plain, there were many fierce animals, such as lions, tigers, jackals and bears, using their iron mouths to tear his body into pieces. The pain was so unbearable that he ran into the river where giant turtles and big sea monsters with iron mouths kept on chasing after him as they wanted to eat him. He found this intolerable and fled to the sky. Flocks of birds like eagles, crows and bustards with iron mouths were trying to bite on him, which he had found unbearable to tolerate. He then fled into the forest. Upon his entry, the forest became a forest of iron thorns. There were all sorts of weapons like swords, spears, bows and arrows, wide-mouth spears and one-pronged vajra. They were all pointing at him to harm him. His whole body was in wounds, and was in great pains. He then ran into wall corners, or into mountain caves. People of karmic forces all appeared holding all kinds of weapons to attack him. He could not find a place to settle. In this way, no matter where he ran, he would be hurt and both his mind and body would be in great pains. He cried loudly and sadly.”

In order to use this example **to teach the sentient beings**, the Lord Buddha used his supernatural power to call upon the spirit of this sentient being to the River Kongden by the side of Sravasti. This sentient being jumped out of the river and dashed everywhere. When he arrived on the plain, there were many fierce animals, like many lions, tigers, jackals and bears, using their iron mouths to tear his body into pieces.

The pain was so unbearable that he ran into the river where giant turtles and big sea monsters with iron mouths kept on chasing after him as they wanted to eat him. He found this intolerable and fled to the sky. Flocks of birds like eagles, crows and bustards with iron mouths were trying to bite on him, which he had found unbearable to tolerate. He then fled into the forest. Upon his entry, the forest became a forest of iron thorns. There were all sorts of weapons like swords, spears, bows and arrows, wide-mouth spears and one-pronged vajra. They were all pointing at him to harm him. His whole body was in wounds, and was in great pains. He then ran into wall corners, or into mountain caves. People of karmic forces all appeared holding all kinds of weapons to attack him. No matter where he ran or stayed, there would be all kinds of animals fighting to chase after him in order to eat him, and all kinds of weapons trying to kill him. He could not find a place to settle. He ran everywhere but was hurt everywhere. Both his mind and body were in great pains. He cried loudly and sadly. The sound of his crying was so loud that **all the people** in Sravasti, **no matter they were young and old, men and women, could hear his screaming voice.**

At this time, the Lord Buddha told Ananda to gather all the monks, and so they all came to the river side of River Kongden. The Lord Buddha then entered into the state of meditation, and then made that particular sentient being **to remember all the things of the past**. The Lord Buddha had asked him kindly: “Are you Gonpo?” Upon which, he cried and replied the Lord Buddha by saying: “The Most Honored and Noble Being in this world, I am Gonpo.” The Lord Buddha further asked him: “Are there any retributions for all the karmas that were created through your body, speech and mind?” This sentient being said: “Yes, there were retributions.” The Lord Buddha further asked: “Do you feel pains for all your retributions?” This sentient being replied: “Yes, painful, very painful !” The Lord Buddha further asked him again: “Who were those wrong persons that you have taken refuge in the past that had resulted in your present state?” He replied by saying: “It was not for any other reasons, but only because **I could not tame my own mind.**”

Ananda bowed respectfully, knelt down, held his palms together and asked the Lord Buddha: “The Most Honored and Noble Being in this world, who was that sentient being? What were the bad karmas that he had created that resulted in his great pains? We sincerely hope that the Lord Buddha could explain this to us, and we are ready to listen.”

The Lord Buddha told Ananda that: “Many innumerable kalpas ago, there was the birth of the “Possessing Light Buddha”. There were 500 arhats that had

matured under his teachings. One day, these 500 arhats went out. After begging for food in the palace, they went to the garden nearby, sat under the trees in lotus positions and entered into “**Nirodha Sampatti**” (“**Nirodha Sampatti**”: a type of meditation which is non-defilement and thought-free. It is the highest level of meditation that an arhat could reach). The next morning, King Gonpo brought with him his imperial concubines and family members to come to this garden to play. King Gonpo sat by himself at a spot to appreciate the scenery. The imperial concubines and family member went everywhere to pick flowers and fruits, and thus played freely in the garden. When they saw the Elders of arhats that had entered into meditation, they had come up with an incomparable sense of joy and happiness. They then put their hands together and respectfully requested the Elders of arhats to transmit the Holy Dharma to them.

One of the Elders then taught them some Buddhist teachings. At that time, King Gonpo heard that there was the voice of a man and saw that all of his imperial concubines and family members respectfully worshiped all these Elders. Because of jealousy, great anger and hatred that had risen in him, he immediately took out his sword and angrily dashed it onto the Elders of arhats. He used his whip to lash at them, causing bodily wounds all over their bodies, and all of them were almost near to death. He then asked his soldiers to use all kinds of weapons, like swords, arrows, spears, etc. to pierce through them and cut their bodies. They also used sword and knives to cut their bodies into pieces. King Gonpo then looked at the Elders of arhats with slanted eyes and ordered his soldiers to throw the pieces of meat from the bodies of Elders to feed the dogs. In this way, he had killed all of the 500 Elders of arhats.

The then King Gonpo was this sentient being who has now been suffering from the great pains. At that time, King Gonpo had **given rise to great hatred** and used to look at the Elders of arhats through slanted eyes, and so he was **without eyes** for this life. As the King’s order of his soldiers to whip at the bodies of the Elders, hence his own body for the present life **was rotten**. Since the evil act of killing the 500 arhats was brought to maturity, ever since the time from the “Possessing Light Buddha” up till now, he has been **suffering great pains in the “Avici Hell”**. [The “Avici Hell”: For those who have committed the five kinds of evil acts (that is: the five heinous crimes of killing father, killing mother, killing arhats, broke the harmony for the gathering of the sangha community, causing bodily injury and harm on the Buddha), they would be reborn into this hell and would suffer great pains which are **continuous without any interruptions**. They would be subjected to those pains which are difficult

to mention for innumerable kalpas.]

All of the monks then followed on to ask the Lord Buddha: “If it was like that, how long would King Gonpo be subjected to these kinds of sufferings?” The Lord Buddha then replied: “In the **future** Bhadrakalpa, (**Bhadrakalpa means the present time-space where there will be the births of 1000 Buddhas, and the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni was the Fourth Buddha**), after the birth of the 500th Buddha, Gonpo would **be liberated from such sufferings**, and would then be reborn in a poor family to become a hunter. One day, he went to a piece of grassland in the forest thinking that there would be animals coming to this beautiful environment. He then set up some traps and was prepared to come and collect his quarry the next day. On this day, there was a “Sage of Solitary Realization” who had entered into “meditation” in this place. Because of this, the animals dared not come near him. The next day, Gonpo came back full of hope, but he only saw this “Sage of Solitary Realization” in “meditation”. As there was nothing there, he had **given rise to hatred**. He thought that if this “Sage of Solitary Realization” had not been there, there would definitely be a quarry. He got so **angry at this thought** and thus he killed this “Sage of Solitary Realization”. Because of this, he had once again fallen into the “Avici Hell”. After the **completion of the retributions of this karma**, he would meet the “Perfect Awakening Master Buddha” and practiced under him, and was able to attain the final fruit of Arhat. After his attainment, he would then appear as a monk and went out for begging. One day, after he had gone begging for food near the palace, he was in “meditation” in the garden near the palace. At that time, the King there brought along his imperial concubines to play in the garden. The imperial concubines went picking flowers and fruits, and so they had incidentally met this monk. With full confidence in him, they requested him to transmit the “Dharma teachings” to them. While they were in the middle of the transmission, the King heard the voice of a man. He immediately ran to him and used his whip to lash at him. He also ordered his soldiers to use various kinds of weapons, like knives, swords, spear and arrows, and so on to beat and lash at him. They also cut his body into pieces to feed the dogs. He had to be subjected to all these sufferings before he **could finish repaying all his retributions for his wrongdoings**.”

From the descriptions by the Lord Buddha Himself on this case, one can find **the repetitiveness of “karmas”**. It is because the “minds” of people do not change and so they can still retain their memories. When the common **consciousness and memories** met together in the same space, then history will repeat itself. The first time that it re-appeared was when the “consciousness” of Gonpo had not changed, such that

he still gave rise to the “great desire of greediness” and would like to “go to extremes”. Though he had **killed all** of the 500 arhats, it still could not satisfy his “mind of anger and hatred”. He had to **cut** the bodies of the 500 arhats **into pieces** and to feed the dogs piece by piece. This is **extremely dreadful**. Hence, all adversities had continued to come. He had to go to the “Avici Hell” again to suffer great pains and thus forming his “predestined fate”.

For the Dharma practitioner who had invested in the stock market, it was due to **the repetitiveness of the bad formula** that had resulted **three times in his having “great desire of being sparing and greedy”**, resulting in his being sunk deeply into the mire and being put in great debts. Similar to the case of Gonpo, they were suffering great pains. If he still could not be awakened, it would be difficult for him to **escape from the punishments of his “predestined fate”**.

Hence, the “moral disciplines” or “precepts” are not ropes used to bind people but they are, in fact, **a protective net** to prevent Dharma practitioners to fall into the “repetitive abysses that are **continuous without any interruptions**”. The meaning of “when one’s mind is full of great desires and being swayed by them” is that when one would “use desires as one’s standards, such that one’s mind would be swayed in accordance with one’s desires. In this way, one would not use one’s “awareness” as one’s standards in order to give rise to wisdom”. Hence, to certain extent, due to one’s “greediness”, one would not make any “acts of generosity”. One would even make use of other people’s “blessed rewards”, and thus this would make it difficult for one to accumulate the “blessed rewards” for oneself. Hence, this precept is regarded as one of those precepts upon the violation of which it would no longer help to assimilate all the good practices for the Dharma practitioner. It would also block the path **for dealing with greediness**, as well as for the blocking of one’s mind in having “generosity”. Hence, it would make it **difficult for one to accumulate merits**.

For those who have not received the “precepts of bodhisattvas”, it would be **difficult for them to be protected by this protective net**. They would not know even if they had gone against the Natural Law of circulation and would not be able to understand the mystery of it and be saved. As a result, they would continue to repeat the same mistakes over and over again, but then they would not know what they had gone wrong even when they died. When they die, they would not feel contented for not knowing the reason for their failure. As for Gonpo, since he had accumulated some merits before, and so after he had suffered all the pains due to him, he would be able to receive teachings that would enable him to cut off the



Law of circulation and to become liberated from the ocean of sufferings. Hence, the protective function of “precepts” could enable one to accumulate the **causes and conditions of liberation** and to **retain a series of hopes** for all those sentient beings who are in the ocean of sufferings.

The meaning of “acting within one’s capabilities” is that when one is “in times of **favourable conditions**, one should not **indiscriminately exhaust** all of one’s capabilities and resources. Instead, one should make good use of them and to **retain a road for retreat** when necessary”. When one is “in times of **adversities**, one should not be too eager to advance and should not blindly spend the remaining capabilities and resources. Instead, one should be able to study and consider the situations, to recuperate and rest, so as build up one’s strength and to **calmly** wait for the right moment to break through”. The **essence** of “acting within one’s capabilities” is that “one should remain **calm**, **re-organise** everything to the **best** of one’s capabilities, consider when will be the **most appropriate** time to either advance, retreat, or continue to recuperate and rest so as to build up one’s strength, **be brave enough to face reality, and be willing to bear the loss**. No matter under what circumstances, one should not “go to extremes”. One should consider one’s capabilities at that time, plan the resources, devise the plans, estimate **the time and effectiveness** that one should spent on each plan. Also, one should

choose a plan that would ensure that **the whole troop can retreat** when necessary. When one implement this at the most appropriate time, adversities would be relieved, or even vanished. "If one can keep one's strength and resources, there would definitely be opportunities for one to make use of". If **one can retain a road for retreat or a fallback**, then **one will be able to "stage a comeback"** later on. The key to success is normally dependent upon one's "patience". If one can be "patient" and wait for the right moment before taking "swift actions", this can be considered as a "wise person". If one can **naturally transform one's "patience" into one's "mind" for "meditation"**, that is known as "Dharma practice".

For the next issue of the "Lake of Lotus", we can further explore on the remaining **criteria** and **the flexible use of the "mindset" for one's practice methods.**

..... (To be Continued)

Great desire, why am I always bogged down by it?

Adversity, why does it always appear repeatedly?

All Buddhas, why are they always far away from me?

Oh! Child! **Big desires** are **mirages** which always bogged you down in the ocean of sufferings of the "cycle of karmic existence". It seems that they can be got hold of easily, but, in fact, they are traps with numerous locks. You would try to get hold of it at all costs, and after you were in possession of them, success would have gone into your head and would thus **exhaust all merits** before dying. When you try to get hold of it at all cost but fail, you will **not reconcile yourself to your loss** which would then lead you further down into the mire. You will also exhaust all merits and die. Please do not infatuate with these great desires like lovers, as they would only let you sink into depravity forever. **Please give rise to the boundless wisdom that you originally have, and put down the mind of greediness. You will then be able to regain your freedom!** Please let go! Wish you can remember this by heart!

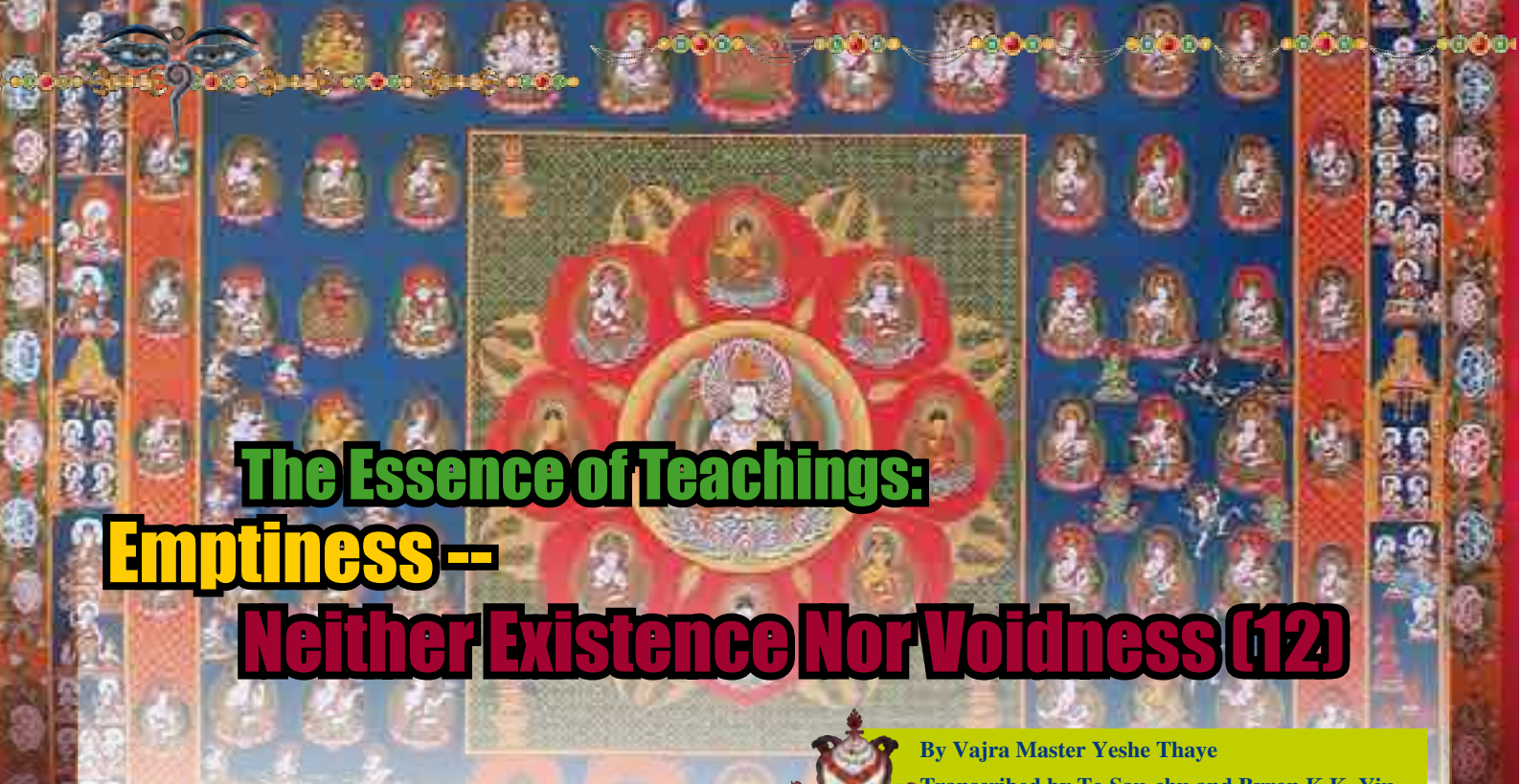
Oh! Child! **Adversities**, like its name, will

make both your body and mind to change for the worse such that it is difficult to tolerate even for just a moment. Do you want to be far away from it? Do you want to be liberated from it? Please train your mind, and **correct the wrong formulae** that had been deeply ingrained in your mind. It was because of these that you have repeatedly been bogged down in adversities. It was because of these that it is impossible for you to escape from the retributions of predestined fate. Please let **the essence of the Buddhist teachings** to fill your whole body and mind. Please let the **essence of precepts** to support your whole body and mind such that both your **body and mind can be put into the "formula of enlightenment"**. In this way, **you can definitely be able to become liberated from the adversities!** Please practice! Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! **All the Buddhas** are the sunlight that can dispel the darkness and they are always on your side. When your mind is filled with the Buddhist teachings and follow them by putting them into practice, you will find that the sunlight has already filled the whole plain gracefully and is **guiding** your life. When you are down and are miserable, first of all please try to put down the entanglements of feelings, and try to fill your whole body and mind with the thought that "I will be most willing to take up the responsibility without a single word, and I will be ready to sacrifice". In this way, the "path of bright light" that you **would naturally face** would give rise to the dazzling bright light of wisdom. **All the Buddhas are now opening up a road for you!** Please believe in it! Wish you can remember this by heart!

Oh! Child! Wish the Lord Buddha will guide you! And enable you to **give rise to the bright intrinsic nature of Enlightenment!**

(Note: The newly released book on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (1)" has already been published. Its contents include the articles on "The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice" from Issues 1 to 10.)



The Essence of Teachings: Emptiness -- Neither Existence Nor Voidness (12)



By Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye

Transcribed by To Sau-chu and Byron K.K. Yiu

(Lecture delivered : July 10, 2003)

In Conclusion for the First Part

So in reality, there is the non-existence of “time” as we know it, and of course this is from the scientific perspective. But again, we can see this is exactly what is happening and is quite cognate to the Buddhist perspective. So after we have gone through the discussion on the concepts of “space” and “time”, and also on the important concept of “Emptiness”, let us now try to draw some conclusions from today.

The first hint and conclusion: The whole universe has **no beginning and no ending** to it. It originally exists, and it has never **been born** and without **ending**. In terms of **quantity**, it is boundless and countless. And in terms of its **spatial** element, it is also boundless and countless. And even in terms of its **size**, it also has **no limits**. While in terms of its **temporal** element, it is considered as **“without time”**. All our numerous concepts and things are generated from **Emptiness**, and can thus be described as **“Emptiness generates all aspects, and all aspects also come back to Emptiness”**. This is the idea of the universe that the Lord Buddha has given us, and this is, indeed, **the reality which is true and not a false one**.

However, the most important thing that we want you to understand is what is meant by **“Emptiness”**, and what does it mean by **“Emptiness—Neither Existence Nor Voidness”**? If you can understand these important concepts, then it will be much easier for you to get rid of the **grasping** of your ego, which actually is the key to get rid of the **tractions** that **tie** you **up** with this ocean of sufferings in the “cycle of karmic existence” (or “Samsara” in Sanskrit).

The second hint and conclusion: Science can be used as the **footnote to explain the Holy Dharma** (**that is, the Buddhist teachings**), so that it can help people to better understand what is the Truth, as well as the real wisdom of the Lord Buddha which is really beyond the comprehension of common people. While science can help us to better understand the Holy Dharma and its practice of trying to liberate ourselves from the “cycle of karmic existence”, we have to know that science is only auxiliary for our better understanding of the Holy Dharma and its practice. So one should not misplace the importance of the Holy Dharma, by wasting one’s own precious time in the studying of science only, and not trying to practice the Holy Dharma diligently.

Indeed, we common peoples are very difficult to comprehend the real **Truth** of all things. The reason why the Lord Buddha also has another name known as the **“Perfectly-Enlightened One”** (**Sanskrit: “Samyak-sambuddha”**), which basically means that He is the One who Knows all things in a “Perfect and Comprehensive Way”. For instance, the Lord Buddha knows how many universes altogether are there in this whole world, and that He also knows how many drops of rains had fallen in each of the universes. Furthermore, the Lord Buddha’s knowledge is absolutely correct and not fake at all, and that is why it is so **perfect and absolute**. Therefore, the Lord Buddha has been named as the **“Perfectly-Enlightened One”**.

We should **rely upon the “Holy Dharma” as the main core** substance, while we should treat science as only a **supplementary** aid to help us to better understand



the “Holy Dharma”. Why do we say so? It is because many people have thought that Buddhism has guided others to superstitions, why so? The reason why Buddhism has given the general population an impression of superstitions is because some people have mixed up Buddhism with the worldly religions of “god-worshipping”, as well as to mix up the worldly superstitious beliefs with that of the Lord Buddha’s teachings. Furthermore, many peoples even mix up “fortune-telling, eight characters and even feng shui” as part of the “Holy Dharma”(Buddhist teachings) , but in fact all these are not the “Holy Dharma” at all, which is most unfortunate.

As Buddhism is the ultimate Truth and is most scientific in terms of its nature, and so science is only a footnote for explaining the “Holy Dharma” (Buddhist teachings). This is exactly what we are doing here, that is, to use science in helping you to better understand the “Holy Dharma”. When people have mixed these up, and have misunderstood that these are the “Holy Dharma”, then it is similar to the fact that many people might have misunderstood that science is a part of the “Holy Dharma”, such that they will rather go to learn science. This is having the order reversed of taking the “unimportant part” as the “important” one, which will only **waste our time**. Hence, it is really most important that we should not reverse our main goal by studying “science” instead, which is indeed a waste of time.

The third hint and conclusion: The actual objective of our learning of the “Holy Dharma” must be for the sake of “liberation from samsara”, until its final “attainment of enlightenment” (i.e. “**Buddhahood**”) as the ultimate goal. We must endeavor for the “Dharma practice” in our actual deeds before we can actually and deeply comprehend and realize the **profundities, sophistications and the benefits** of the “Holy Dharma”. If one only treats the “Holy Dharma” as either **academic**

study, or as intellectual know-how, or either as praying for wealth or for fortune-telling in a worldly way, then one would definitely result in the **wrong direction and pitfalls**, while not being able to enter into the genuine “Holy Dharma”.

You think that, if by learning and practising “Vajrayana Buddhism”, you will be able to receive “blessings”, such that if you practice a certain teaching, then you will be able to get a certain kind of benefits. With such kind of a motivation as your mindset, it is inevitable that you will be **heading towards the wrong direction and with pitfalls**, simply because the genuine “Holy Dharma” is not like that at all. The genuine “Holy Dharma” is that if you want to become liberated from “Samsara”, and even to “attain Buddhahood”, then you should have a **positive and correct understanding** of the “Holy Dharma”, and then you should solidly put your feet on the ground by truly **practising it**, and **not by practicing “superstitions”**.

The fourth hint and conclusion: The main objective of studying Buddhism is to **reveal one’s own wisdom** from within ourselves. The “**Eight Negations**” in Buddhism, which come from the Great Bodhisattva Nagarjuna’s “Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way”, are being considered as a means to break down the dichotomy among various dualisms. If we can have a full understanding and realization of them through various processes, then it will be quite possible for us to **reveal our own wisdom**. These “Eight Negations” are:

1. “Neither Creation nor Destruction”
2. “Neither Eternalism nor Nihilism”
3. “Neither Identicalness nor Differentiation”
4. “Neither Coming nor Going” 

..... (To be Continued)



EPILOGUE

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

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

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OR

- ☐ Deposit to Bank (Hong Kong Bank A/C No : 004-579-2-006529).

After which, please send the deposit slip and the filled-in form to our address, or fax them to (852) 31571144. Phone for enquiry: (852) 25583680. Or Email to info@dudjomba.org.hk. For remittance of donations through banks, use the Swift Code : "HSBCHKHHHKH" Bank Address : The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, Headquarter, Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong. A/C Name: Dudjom Buddhist Association International Limited.

(2) Taiwan

Please remit the amounts to the "Taipei Fubon Bank" (Bank Code No. 012) in the name of "Law Mei Ling" with Account No. 704210605166. Photocopies of remittance slips, together with the "Form for Donations, Subscriptions & Mail Orders" can either be mailed directly to "12F - 4, No.171, Nan Jing East Road, Sec.4, Taipei, Taiwan." of the Dudjom Buddhist Association, or be faxed to (02) 6601-4880. If there are any enquiries, please send your emails to info@dudjomba.org.hk Tel : 0989273163. For calculation purpose, HK\$1 is equivalent to NT\$4.

Form for Donations, Subscriptions & Mail Orders

Items	Descriptions	Options	Amount	Total
1	Donations to the "Lake of Lotus" Bimonthly	☐		
2	Subscription to the "Lake of Lotus" Bimonthly (including postage) Hong Kong	☐ One Year (HK\$100) Start from ____ issue	____ Copy(ies) x HKD ____	
	One year (including postage) Mainland China, Taiwan, Macau (surface mail for Macau)	☐ Surface mail HK\$180 Start from ____ issue NT\$720		
	Areas outside Hong Kong (include other parts of Asia, Europe & America)	☐ Surface mail HK\$300 Start from ____ issue ☐ Airmail HK\$450		
3	To order for the back issues : Issue(s) No. _____, No. of copies ____. Hong Kong : ____ copies x HK\$20 (including postage) Taiwan : ____ copies x NT\$150 (including seaimail postage) Overseas : ____ copies x HK\$50 (including seaimail postage), ____ copies x HK\$80 (including airmail postage)			
4	Charity Donations to Dudjom Buddhist Association International Limited	☐		
5	Mail Orders for Other Products of the Association			
(1)		_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
(2)		_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
(3)		_____ In Chinese _____ In English	_____ x \$ _____	
Name	Phone	Total Amount		
Address				

*This form can be photocopied for use.