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But there is no other way of stopping it, nor
having a place of hope,
Other than you -- the undeceiving Three
Jewels and Three Roots.
If we cry to you like children calling to their
mother and father,
If we earnestly request you with this prayer,
Do not act in hesitation on your vows of the
ancient past !
Stretch out your lightning hands of
compassion !
Protect and shelter us, defenseless beings,
and free us from fears !



When the mighty barbarians sit in a Council
of War --
Barbarians who rob the world of joy and
happiness,
Barbarians who have erring, violent and
poisonous thoughts --
Bend their chiefs and lieutenants,
To the side of peace and happiness!



Pacify the armed struggles that obstruct us
on the spot !
Turn away and defeat the nuclear weapons
Of the demons' messengers,
And by that power, make long the lives of
the Righteous Ones,
And spread the study and practice of the
Holy Doctrine
To the Four Corners of this great world !



Eliminate the roots, branches and leaves--
even their names --
Of all those dark forces, both human and
non-human ones,
Who hate others and the Holy Teaching !
Spread immense happiness and goodness,
Over this fragile earth !

Elevate it truly with the four kinds of glory !
And, as in the Golden Age, with all conflicts
gone,
Let us be busy only with the dance of
happiness --
The Dance of Joy !
We pray with pure thoughts,
By the ocean of compassion of the Three
Supreme Refuges,
And the power of the Realm of Truth--
The complete Sublime Truth--
Achieve this very goal of our prayer
Magically, just as what we have hoped for
and dreamed of !

**Tadya thà! Pañca driya ava
bhodha na ye svàhà!**

The Conquerors' Teachings and the lifespan (and
life-force of the beings who dwell upon this great (world of)
Jambudvīpa, (as well as) all the goodness of the universe
and its living creatures, are threatened by the employment
of poisonous nuclear weapons which have the ability to
demolish them all instantaneously. On account of (such)
unprecedented terrible warfare as though to sweep
humanity away in little time, coming closer and closer,
and the bad signs growing ever stronger day and night,
with unbearable misery and intense terror, (my) mind is
compelled to call upon (you). Just as a small child cries
out to (his) mother, or the way (we call on) **Orgyan Padma**
(when we are walking on) a narrow cliff pathway, so this
supplication is a crucially necessary enjoining of the heart
vows of the oceanic Refuges, the (Three) Jewels, made
for regular recitation by everyone today. (It can) be printed
on material for flags, and hoisted up on mountain summits
and on bridges, etc. If (this is done, I) think it will have great
purpose and benefits. All those who have faith in me should
accept (this) in their hearts. These ramblings of the humble
practitioner **Buddha Vajra** (Tibetan: **Sangye Dorje**) were
written as a virtuous act, on the 13th day of the waxing
moon (of the) nag-pa (constellation) of the female water
pig year, the rab-tshes (year of the sixty year cycle). Since
the Barbarians have been contracting this last period of the
(Buddha's) Teachings, may this (composition) become a
cause for prolonging it instead.

Series of Talks on "Science, Life and Death, Reincarnation" - (1)

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- Can we trust memories of past lives?
- What is meant by "good death"?
- Is there reincarnation after death?
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The Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death :

The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences (26)

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

- The Interrelationship Between “Emotions at the Moment of Death” and “Rebirth Into the Animal Realm”
- The “High-Risk” Category of Easily Falling Into the “Hell Realm”
- The “Detonator” that Ignites the “Karmic Forces” in Generating “Karmic Consequences”

Excerpt of Last Chapter: Various Reasons on the Formation of Different Scenes at the “Moment of Death”

The “scenes at the moment of death” can be roughly classified in the following categories in accord with the varieties of the “**main causes**” and “**auxiliary conditions**”:

1. The “**Separation of the Four Elements**” – the “**main cause**” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”, including all kinds of memories) conjoins with the “**auxiliary conditions**” (the ‘**Separation of the Four Elements**’ in the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the articles on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issues 8 and 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).
2. The “**Endorphins Inside the Brain**” – the “**main cause**” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “**auxiliary conditions**” (the “**endorphins inside the brain**” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death” (please refer to the article on “The Meaning

of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

3. The “Karmic Forces” – the “main cause” (the internal “consciousness” and “sub-consciousness”) conjoins with the “auxiliary conditions” (the “karmic forces” of the external circumstances) in forming the “scenes at the moment of death”. This can be further classified into the following two kinds:

- i. **Wholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) virtuous retributions (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 21 of the “Lake of Lotus”); and (b) the efforts of one’s Dharma practice (the main theme of this article in this issue).
- ii. **Unwholesome Ones** – arising from: (a) vicious retributions; and (b) the forces of karmic creditors in seeking compensations on one’s karmic debts.

According to the records of different surveys, most of the dying people had seen the following scenes:

1. **Protectors or avengers:** (i) **good ones** – saw kith and kin who had passed away, unknown protectors, deities or Buddhas coming to fetch for oneself.

(ii) **bad ones** – being besieged by a crowd of ferocious persons or beasts, and going along in company with groups of people who looked confused.
2. **Strange places:** (i) **good ones** – saw pavilions, balconies, buildings, flower fields, rivers, light zones, towns or cities.

(ii) **bad ones** – saw wilderness, forests, darkness, caverns, hells.
3. **Messy Issues that cannot be recalled clearly.**

How would the Buddhist point of view comment on these phenomena? According to the Buddhist teachings, it was said that rebirth would take place within forty-nine days after a person has passed away, then why would

a dying person see the kith and kin who **had passed away long time ago** still coming to fetch for him or her? Why had not the kith and kin taken rebirths after so many years posthumously? Are the appearances of these deceased persons merely the illusions of the person who is going to die? Or were they really true? Are there any other reasons? Are those strange places the destinations where they are going to be reborn into? Under what circumstances would the normal rebirth of a dying person be negatively encumbered? Is there any way to help a deceased person to avert sufferings and elevate to a better place of rebirth?

The Interrelationship Between “Emotions at the Moment of Death” and “Rebirth Into the Animal Realm”

How significant are the influences of one’s “emotions at the moment of death”, as well as the visions and sounds that were experienced by a dying person, upon the environment that this individual is about to be reborn into thereafter? Even our contemporary society **does not really care too much about the dying process of a deceased**. Neither do they have any ideas about whether the deceased person has the capability to deal with the “ever-changing posthumous world, which is unpredictable and full of dangers”. They unilaterally deem that, once a person has a religious belief, then all the spiritual problems would be automatically resolved (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 24 of the “Lake of Lotus”). Nonetheless, the various elements on the processes of natural evolution, such as the conditions of the deceased person’s “mind”, and the various “karmic forces” that were involved, could not be resolved simply by the strength generated from the usual religious faiths. (Karmic force is a sort of traction, “Karmic network”: the network of tractions formed by the “power of the mind” due to virtuous and non-virtuous deeds amassed over **countless previous lifetimes**. These karmic forces would affect the “mental strength” of one’s inner self as well as that of other sentient beings, and are so much mutually intertwining

and influencing with each other, that it forms the network of tractions known as the “karmic network”. Please refer to the VCD on the “Inconceivable Law of Karma”, published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association).

The “emotions and the scenes at the moment of death” are also the function of the “karmic forces”, as if the **ignition** in the storage of explosives, which could trigger the explosion on the storage of “virtuous or vicious karma”, which could then rapidly induce the effects of “karmic forces”. Therefore, whether the deceased person was peaceful or vexed upon the dying process, as well as whether the “scenes at the moment of death” were good or bad, would **significantly influence the outcomes**. The last case study on Adolf Hitler could be used an indicative instance of proof (please refer to the article on “The Meaning of Near-death Experiences” in Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”). Now, we can use the following case study to be taken as another admonition.

Case 32

During the period of the “Southern and Northern Dynasties” (“[Nanbeichao](#)”) in the ancient Chinese history, there was an emperor by the name of Liang Wu Di ([that is, King Wu of the Liang Dynasty](#)), whose wife was Queen Xi. Queen Xi was seriously ill and was lying in bed at her last moment. It was at the peak of the hot summer, and a maid-of-honor had kept on fanning the Queen in order to make her more comfortable under the extreme heat. Since the maid was very tired and was lack of concentration, the fan slipped from her hand and fell onto to the Queen’s body. It made her felt extremely painful. Great anger **arose immediately** from Queen Xi that had never been happened before. However, she could not speak out and that further added to her wrath and fury.

Her great anger had caused the frail Queen to **die immediately**. Her “mind” was reined by the strong emotions of “anger”, and as such the “vicious causes” amassed through numerous past lifetimes were evoked, and hence the “occurrence” of events were provoked ([coming into immediate effect](#)). Immediately, she was



dragged into rebirth as a huge python. Since Queen Xi had also done “virtuous deeds” in her past lifetimes, and though she had been turned into a python, she could still remember her status of a queen. Hence, the python entwined and scrambled along the columns inside the palace and did not want to leave, expecting Liang Wu Di, who had been her former husband, to help her out of this extreme difficult predicament.

When Liang Wu Di attended the assembly of the liege lords inside the palace, he had found the big python on the pillar, while the officials were extremely frightened about it. Liang Wu Di then enquired to the Zen Master Boa Zhi, who was being honored as the Religious Master of the Dynasty. Boa Zhi Zen Master explained to Liang Wu Di about the causes and results of this episode, and accepted the request by the King to resolve the predicament of his Queen. Hence, Zen Master Boa Zhi had drafted an article on the “verses of repentance”, and elaborated it thoroughly to Queen Xi, urging her to **repent her sins and obstacles** with the **utmost sincerity of heart** by reciting the “verses of repentance” accordingly.

Not long afterwards, during a night of big thunders and lightning, the python was found dead on a hill at the back of the palace,

due to its being struck by the thunders and lightning. Queen Xi was finally **disengaged from an “animal’s body”** and was later reborn into the “three higher realms” (of “deva, asura and/or humans”). Thereafter, this “verses of repentance” became the famous **“Noble Verses of Repentance of King Liang”** in China. (Please refer to the article, “The Drop of Wisdom – Significance at the Moment of Death”, in Issue 3 of the journal “The Light of Lotus”, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association in June 2000, pages 46 –50).

In the Case 30 in the article “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences”, in Issue 23 of “The Lake of Lotus”, there was a description about the situations and characteristics when a deceased person enters into the **“Realm of Specters”**. On the other hand, the Case 31 in the article “The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences”, in Issue 25 of “The Lake of Lotus”, there was another description about the situations and characteristics when a deceased person enters into the **“Hell Realm”**. Here, this current Case 32 is a description on the situations and characteristics when a deceased person enters into the **“Animal Realm”**. It is, indeed, **very easy** for one to **fall into the “three kinds of lower realms”**. As sentient beings, we **should not ignore this point**.

Many people would believe that, unless the individuals have committed **serious crimes and sins** such as slaughtering or setting fire, they would not have to go into those “three kinds of lower realms” after deaths. As most ordinary people, **while asking themselves about it**, would think and believe that they have not committed any “such serious crimes and sins” during their current lifetimes, and so they would deem it that “they would not transmigrate into these three ‘lower realms’”. This was, indeed, the same kind of thinking that Queen Xi had, as she used to “make a lot of offerings to the monks and did a lot of philanthropic activities”. Yet, **how come** that Queen Xi had **ended up with such a miserable fate?** Those people who understand the Buddhist teachings would have said: “It was because Queen Xi had committed serious crimes in her numerous past lifetimes, and thus when the causes and conditions of its formation arose, she was led

to transmigrate into the ‘Animal Realm’. Later on, it was also because Queen Xi had done a lot of philanthropic activities and had repented her sins, and thus she was able to disengage from the ‘Animal Realm’”. Anyhow, **are there any other kinds of explanations on this?**

It was mentioned by the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni, in Chapter 9 of the **“Trayastimsas of the Loka-sthana Sutra”** (Volume one, No. 23 electronic edition of The Taisho Revised Tripitaka), that if an individual **performs vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts**, when the person has expired his/her longevity in the human world, he/she would then fall into the **‘Hell Realm’**, and started to exist with relevant thoughts and form (body). The six entrances (sensational organs) would then be acquired. If an individual **performs vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts**, when the person has expired his/her longevity in the human world, he/she would then fall into the **‘Animal Realm’**, and started to exist with relevant thoughts and form (body). The six entrances (sensational organs) would be acquired. If an individual **performs vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts**, when the person has expired his/her longevity in the human world, he/she would then fall into the **‘Realm of Hungry Specters’**, and started to exist with relevant thoughts and form (body). The six entrances (sensational organs) would then be acquired. [A. “Thoughts and forms”: “thoughts” belong to the “domain of the mind”, while “forms” belong to the “domain of materials”. In the ‘Human Realm’, these two types of ‘thoughts and forms’ would only be formed 49 days after the ‘conception in the mother’s womb’ took place. B. “Six entrances” refer to the “six organs”, namely: the “organs of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mental consciousness”. In the ‘Human Realm’, the ‘six organs’ would only be formed after 133 days, that is, the nineteenth cycle of the seven-days after the ‘conception in the mother’s womb’ took place. C. “Niraja” or “Naraka” are Sanskrit words meaning “Hell”, which carries the meaning of “None”, which is referring to a “place without happiness and enjoyment of fortune.”]

If individuals **perform vicious deeds and**

vicious speeches with vicious thoughts, what makes it so different for different people to be reborn into various levels of the “lower realms”? Sporadically, many people would have unintentionally been involved in various vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts, hence would they all be reborn into these “three lower realms”, as according to the Sutras? How can they avert such disastrous transmigration?

The “High-Risk” Category of Easily Falling Into the “Hell Realm”

“Vicious deeds and speeches of the body” come from “vicious thoughts of the mind”, which are deep-rooted in the quality of the “mind”. When the quality of the “mind” is “vicious”, and if the proportion of vicious thoughts in one’s “mind” is **always over and above 80%**, this group of sentient beings would then belong to the **“high-risk” category (to be reborn into the “Hell Realm”)**. The behaviors of such “high-risk” group of sentient beings resemble the act of “walking along a steel wire at high altitudes”, and that they are in life-threatening dangers at any moment. Their behaviors would not only hurt other sentient beings, but would also hurt themselves as well. Especially at the “critical



moments”, such as the **“critical moments of life and death, crucial moment of decision on one’s direction of rebirth, and the unstable period of life formation”**, etc. This group of “high-risk” sentient beings would mostly be reborn into the “Hell Realm”. The main cause of which is that their “minds” are **most often** being filled with “vicious thoughts”. In this way, a **“vicious cycle”** of “vicious minds generate vicious thoughts” will **continue to repeat and recycle itself** through the process. Thus, the “viciousness” of those “evil thoughts” would be further enhanced day by day. As such, this category of people would mostly likely to be reborn directly into the “Hell Realm”, the worst of the “three lower realms”.

Guru Pemasambhava, the Founding Father of Tibetan Buddhism, **has given us an important Spiritual Advice** that the danger in practicing the “wrathful deities” of “Tantrayana” is like “the situation of a snake inside a bamboo shoot, for there is no other option but only to go either up or down”. Hence, if a person who practices the “wrathful deities” but pays no attention to the “quality of one’s own mind-training”, it would be as foolish as “digging one’s own grave”.

In order to manifest the mightiness of the “wrathful deities” of their own sects, some of the so-called Tantric “masters” and books spare nothing in **twisting the history** and telling ridiculous fantasy stories on the “supernatural powers of their own patriarchs”. They propagated evil stories of how their “wrathful deities” and patriarchs could “kill people invisibly”, highlighting their so-called “nobleness due to their ability of killing”, exaggerating “how the **‘Dharma protectors’** were being dispatched to take others’ hearts at an instant”, so as to lure for the worship and refuge of **naïve** congregation to their own sects and “masters”. This is, indeed, really a **“great shame, abuse and twist”** on “Tantrayana”. They took the Dharma practices of “Tantrayana” as masquerade, and mingle them with “magic, witchcraft and sorceries”. All these are in direct opposition and diagonal contradiction to the genuine meanings of the “Buddhist teachings”. The rules and protocols of Mother Nature are based upon **the quality of “mind”**, that is, “birds of a feather flock together”. From the very beginning, the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni

had revealed this truth: “vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts definitely will bring about the falling of oneself into the ‘three lower realms’”.

Thus, members of those congregations which follow such sorts of “masters” or sects **must “be awakened”**, and **leave them immediately**, since they have already put themselves in very dangerous situations, and they belong to the “high-risk” category since they are already proceeding towards the gate of the “Hell Realm”. They should no longer be obsessed with the “parade of mightiness and of self-pride in having practiced the wrathful deities, believing that they can beat all others, so as to feel glory and dignified”. Instead, they should be awakened as to “how serious this danger is, and how high are the odds of being reborn into the ‘Hell Realm’”.

When the quality of one’s “mind” is “vicious”, and the proportion of “vicious thoughts” in one’s “mind” is **always at around 50%**, this sort of sentient beings belongs to the **category of “medium-risk”**. The behaviors of this kind of sentient beings are analogous to an act of “walking on stilts”, and at any time they might miss their steps resulting in the possibilities of fatal wounds. Their behaviors are not only detrimental to themselves, but also harmful to other sentient beings. At the above-mentioned “critical moments”, sentient beings of this category of “medium-risk” would be mostly likely to be reborn into either the “Hell Realm”, or the “Realm of Hungry Specters”.

When the quality of the “mind” is “vicious”, and the proportion of “vicious thoughts” in one’s “mind” is **always at around 30%**, this sort of sentient beings belongs to the **“risky” category**. At the above-mentioned “critical moments”, it resembles the scenario of throwing dices such that 30% of their odds would be mostly likely to be reborn into one of the “three lower realms”, namely: “the Hell Realm, the Realm of Hungry Specters, or the Animal Realm”.

There was a near-death experience survivor who had recalled his past memories in the following situations: “I had been pugnacious since I was small, and had joined in the Triad

Society later on. I often slashed the opponents with knives and pointed weapons, and the name of the game is whoever wins would become the ‘Big Brother’. It was in a massive clash that I got so wild and mad that I just hacked at anyone who was on my way. The blood-stains that spilled all over had blurred my eyesight. All of a sudden without warning, I was fatally slashed a few times by others’ knives. It was so painful that I simply collapsed and fell to the ground. At the moment when I fell down, I found myself situated in an inexpressibly horrible place.

I considered myself as an extremely audacious person, but nonetheless I **could not stand** those horrifying feelings. Surrounding me were monsters, partly resembling humans but partly resembling beasts, which were trying to tear me into pieces. Madly, I tried my best in order to break through their barricades. I believed that this was the place they called hell in the legends. I totally disbelieved it in the past, but only believed in myself. So long that a person has power and money, he/she could have everything, then what else should this person be afraid of? Being poor was considered to be my utmost fear in the past – these were all my beliefs. But, at that very moment, I knew my utmost fear was being stuck over there. I must work out some ideas to leave that place as soon as possible, otherwise **the chance of leaving would be lesser and lesser when time drifted on**.

I yelled and screamed, and was merely thinking to leave that place immediately. In the frenzy, I found myself to have returned to the human world, and was lying in bed in the hospital. Even though I had severe physical pains, I had an unspeakable joy deep down inside. From then onwards, I decided to **turn over a new leaf**. Later on, I had left the Triad Society, and since then I have only **carried out works that are beneficial to others**. I just could not forget those horrible feelings inside hell, and I never want to be there again.”

This case has elaborated a key point: when the quality of the “mind” is “vicious”, and the proportion of “evilness” in the “thoughts” is **very often** as high as 80% and/or **more**, in conjunction with its occurrence at a “critical”

timing, such as the “**crucial moment of life and death**”, the “karmic consequence” of “evil deeds” would immediately arise. The individual would not have to go through the intermediate period of the “Bardo state” before one’s rebirth. This NDE survivor in Taiwan, while having the arisen of the “vicious thoughts” of massacre, had entered into the “critical moment of life and death”, and so he immediately fell onto the “Hell Realm”. This incident has further verified what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said in Chapter 9 of the “**Trayastimsas of the Loka-sthana Sutra**”: “that if someone had performed vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts, when this person dies, he or she would be reborn into the ‘Hell Realm’, and acquire a ‘body belonging to the beings in the hell’.” This is, indeed, a genuine situation and not a faked one, and would occur **at the end of one’s life**.

The “Detonator” that Ignites the “Karmic Forces” in Generating “Karmic Consequences”

The afore-mentioned Case 32 on the story of Queen Xi, had been published in the article “The Drop of Wisdom-3”, which was collected in the Combined Volume of the “**Light of Lotus**” (which was different from the “Lake of Lotus”, and was published in 2000 by the **Dudjom Buddhist Association**), and was also cited as an example in the Set of 10 CDs on the “**Mind Training and Dharma Practice**”, also published by the Dudjom Buddhist Association in 1999. The key point of this case study has verified that “the moment of death” is an extremely important “critical moment of great transformation”. The “nature of one’s emotions and thoughts” at this very instant will become the main “detonator” in igniting either the “virtuous or vicious karma” amassed through numerous past lifetimes for the immediate arising of one’s “karmic consequences”.

Many people could realize the reason why the aforesaid NDE survivor in Taiwan would be reborn into the “Hell Realm”, because he had often “slaughtered people” and “bore evil thoughts in his mind”. Yet, Queen Xi had performed many philanthropic activities and



made offerings to monks before her death, why on earth that she had only committed some minor “negative karmas” and bore with hatred at the moment of death, would have derived the karmic consequence of being reborn into the “Animal Realm”? It seems to be very unfair! Does it conform to what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had proclaimed in Chapter 9 of the “**Trayastimsas of the Loka-sthana Sutra**”? Many people would have **unintentionally** committed the karmas of “vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts” **sporadically**, and so would they all be reborn into those three kinds of “lower realms”, as according to what were recorded in the sutras? What would be the means to avert such kinds of **disastrous rebirths**?

The key point lies in whether the “evil thoughts of one’s mind” have arisen or not during the most important “**critical moments of life and death, and the changing modes of transformation**”. There are great deals of “virtuous or vicious karmas” amassed through numerous past lifetimes. The question is what sort of “retribution” would be **ignited first** for the arising of its effectiveness. According to the Law of Mother Nature, the taking up of what form of life existence in the forthcoming rebirth will have to depend upon what is the nature of one’s “karmic consequence” (**either**

good or evil) which has first been ignited by the “detonator” as the “main cause”. As to which of the “karmic consequences” will be first ignited will also have to depend upon the nature of one’s “detonator”, which is simply the “thoughts of one’s own mind”. That was why the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni’s teachings in Chapter 9 of the **“Trayastimsas of the Loka-sthana Sutra”** have all focused on the “thoughts of the mind”. No matter whether the rebirth will take place either in the “Realms of Hells, Hungry Specters or Animals”, it all concluded in the same phrase (without a slight change of even just one word) as the “cardinal cause”: vicious deeds, vicious speeches, vicious thoughts. And the time period for its effectiveness have all been set at “the moment of death”.

Those who do not really understand the natural laws of Mother Nature would say that the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni “simply wanted to scare people off”. Since those people who have already passed away after “the moment of death”, it is impossible for us to verify on anything at all, and so you can claim on anything as you want. On the other hand, those people who understand the natural laws of Mother Nature would know that what the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni had said is conforming to logical reasoning. Regardless of which of the “Realms of Hells, Hungry Specters or Animals”, these are the “habitats” and “dwelling places” of all those people with “evil thoughts”. Thus, if any individual who fits in the situation of vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts, this person will be bound to be reborn into those “lower realms”. The “moment of death” is the beginning point of “zero” at the “critical moment of changing transformation”. Thus, the “periods of effectiveness” will all occur at the “moment of death”. Hence, it is not because the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni wanted to scare people off with those “unforeseeable posthumous situations”, in order that people will involve themselves in philanthropic activities to accumulate more merits, but simply because this is actually an “authentic law of transformation”, and so the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni simply had to repeat the sentence again and again without altering a single word.

The status of the “thoughts of one’s mind” at

the “moment of death” is, indeed, most critical, and is the “determining factor” on the “main cause” of where one’s rebirth will take place. Hence, even though Queen Xi had performed philanthropic activities and made offerings to monks while she was still alive, her “virtuous deeds” would only be kept amassed for accumulation, and would not be applied for the immediate ignition for its positive “karmic consequence” at the “moment of death”. On the contrary, Queen Xi was conceited and self-esteemed on her status as a queen during her life, and so she did not allow a junior maid to make any mistakes. For any mistakes, she would be upset and will punish the offender immediately. This had become her “habitual formatting” in dealing with her everyday issues, and so consequentially she could not tolerate a small offense made by a junior maid and “got real angry” even at her death bed. Thus, the “negative retributions” of “anger” was then ignited, and as a result, she was dragged to be reborn as a “snake” which is being notorious for its “wrathfulness”. Luckily, the Queen was only thinking of punishing the junior maid, and not trying to “slaughter” her, otherwise she might have immediately reborn into the “Hell Realm”.

The case of Queen Xi has revealed the following few key points about “human life”:

1. Even if a great deal of “virtuous causes” has been amassed during one’s lifetime, or in numerous past lifetimes, one’s future destiny would still have to be governed by that “one instantaneous thought” at “the very moment of death”.
2. Even though no “evil causes” has been made in one’s present lifetime, and even if a great deal of “virtuous causes” has been accumulated in the present lifetime, the “evil causes” amassed in one’s numerous past lifetimes (known as the “amassed karmas” from countless past lifetimes) could not be estimated and which resembles that of a “time-bomb”. It would be detonated and triggered off when a suitable situation where “main causes and auxiliary conditions” fit each other, upon which the incumbent would be caught unaware.
3. Queen Xi had made offerings to monks and

worshipped the Buddhas while she was still alive, so she had accumulated some “virtuous main causes” and that was why she had not forgotten what had happened in her immediate past lifetime. Together with the help of Zen Master Boa Zhi, which was an “auxiliary condition”, she was eventually being able to get out of her predicament of being a snake.

4. Although Queen Xi had gotten the “auxiliary condition” of spiritual help from Zen Master Boa Zhi, it actually depended upon whether she would take the admonition of Zen Master Boa Zhi by **repenting her sins with utmost sincerity**. As a result, the “seeds of virtuous causes” in her “mind” had been aroused, and thus derived immediate effectiveness for her to be able to disengage herself from the ‘physical body of the animal’ in order to be reborn again into the “three higher realms”.
5. If Queen Xi had not accumulated any “virtuous causes” either in her current or past lifetimes, even with the help of Zen Master Boa Zhi, the rescue would still be in vain since there was no “virtuous cause” inside her “mind” to be ignited. In other words, Queen Xi herself was the **“main cause”** for her own rescue, while Zen Master Boa Zhi was only an **“auxiliary condition”**.
6. As the quantities and proportions of “virtuous causes” versus “vicious causes” in our numerous past lifetimes are simply **unknown**, and so whether the “virtuous causes” or “vicious causes” would first be ignited at the “moment of death” is simply **intangible**. It resembles the functioning of one’s own “mind”, which is always drifting away and is **unpredictable**. “Life and death is a serious matter and a grave concern” for all of us, and that is the “main cause” and reason why all genuine Buddhists should put in all their efforts on “Dharma practices”. It is also the source of motivation for one’s “Dharma practice”.

If the significance at the “moment of death” is being ignored, and no efforts have been put on “Dharma practice”, such that nothing is being

endeavored to enforce a steadfast course of navigation at the “moment of death”, the consequence for oneself could be extremely miserable. **“Dharma practice” is the only way to turn around one’s own destiny.**

It is wise to grip on the key points in the resolution of problems. Therefore, the priority task on “Dharma practice” is to **alter** those “natural responses” of one’s own “greed, anger and ignorance” by conforming to the instructions of the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni on “virtuous thoughts and virtuous deeds”. Such kind of “mind-trainings” could enhance the certainty of one’s “virtuous thoughts” to be engaged at the “moment of death”, and thus to make the **trend of one’s own destiny** to be inclined towards rebirth into the “three higher realms”. This objective is the **minimum requirement**, among the different objectives of “Dharma practices”. Another main objective of the “Dharma practices” is to disengage oneself from the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence” (**“Samsara” in Sanskrit**), and no longer to be reined by the natural laws.

Take for example the “Dharma practices” of “Tantrayana”, if a Dharma practitioner could clearly “contemplate” oneself as an “illusory body” of the “deity”, and in conjunction with the foundation of “mind-training”, the individual can then disengage oneself by one’s “mental strength” from the natural tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence” (**“Samsara” in Sanskrit**), and can help to levitate directly to the Deity’s Buddha-field. Hence, a Dharma practitioner **must always remember** that if one **lacks of** “mind-training” in the process, and simply relies on clear “contemplation” of oneself as the body of the “deity”, the action of disengagement from one’s predicament would definitely be **doomed to failure**, and would fall into the “three lower realms”. The story of the **“Yamantaka in Hell”** is such an obvious example. The ultimate objective of “Dharma practice” is to attain “complete enlightenment” (**“Buddhahood”**), an achievement of the highest freedom and thus one can become the real determinant of one’s own “destiny”.

One **must always keep this firmly in mind**: even though it may be in the same situation

of **vicious deeds, vicious speeches and vicious thoughts**, the generation of the different levels of “vicious thoughts” could have different levels of severity, and would thus end up to be reborn into the different levels of the “lower realms”. Many people would have “vicious speeches and vicious thoughts” **unintentionally** and may happen **sporadically**. Hence, as according to the sutras, if a person does not rectify those situations through the practice of one’s own “mind, and does not keep on practicing this even during the “moment of death”, this person would most likely to be reborn into the three “lower realms”. Only those people who have practiced “mind-training” all through their lives could be able to avert such kinds of **disastrous rebirths**.

“Lip services are always much easier than the actual delivering of things”. Hence, in order to avert the aforesaid **disastrous rebirth**, a person should have a long-term plan **starting with the basic “mind-training” practice, and with special considerations when dealing with some critical moments**. For instance, a person who is about to die should **be ensured** to have “stable emotions and virtuous thoughts” at the “moment of death”. How to **ensure** this? In the

contemporary medical structures and systems, the “emotions and thoughts” of a dying person are often not being dealt with. Even if a person has a religious belief, it would not suffice. It cannot address the needs of a dying person **in full facets**. (Please refer to the article on “The Ultimate Love and Care of Life: End-of-Life Care (2)” in the Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

In fact, what are the **actual needs** of a dying person? The “direction of one’s rebirth” is the **greatest turning point of one’s own destiny**, which is also the pivotal point upon which a person’s “spiritual development” would either be **further elevated** or to be **continuously degenerated**. In fact, how should human beings make certain dispositions and planning in order to go for the continuous evolution, elevation and uplifting of the “human spiritual civilization”? In the next issue of the “Lake of Lotus”, we will continue to explore this important question of **holistic care** that all human beings have been lacking of all along our human history.

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



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- The Truth of Life
- “Near-Death Experiences” (NDEs)
- History of Research on “Near-Death Experiences”
- Special Common Features of “Near-Death Experiences”
- Points of Arguments About “Near-Death Experiences”

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- The “Energy Thread” Between Life and Death
- The Profound Secrets of the “Energy Thread”
- Five “Supernatural Powers”

Issue 3

- The Mystery of “Light”
- The Mysteries on the “Entrance and Exit Doors” of Life and Death
- The Origin on the Linkage of Life and Death

Issue 4

- The “Almighty Light” at the Moment of Death
- The Origin of “Light”
- The Application of “Light”
- “Super Abilities”, “Supernatural Powers” and “Levels of Realization”

Issue 5

- Reasons for the Generation of the “Light of Life and Death”
- Illusions of the “Mind”
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Issue 6

- "Omniscience" and "Flash Foreword"
- The Truth of "Predictions" and "Future"
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- "Near-Death Experience" is Beyond Doubt
- The "Near-Death Experience" of the Unification with "God"
- A "Universal Religion" that Embraces, and is Suitable for all Mankind
- Real "Death": A "Highly Risky Turning Point" of Life

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- The Different Phases of "Death"
- The Phase of Separation between the "Physical Body" and the "Spiritual Body"
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- "Transitional Period" and the Phase of Standby for Rebirth
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- One Out of Seven "Near-Death Experiences" is Negative
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- The Damaging Power of Horrible Scenes
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- "Scenes at the Moment of Death" formed by "One's Own Forces of Dharma Practice"
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- The Using of Dharma Practice to Enter into "Near-Death Experiences"
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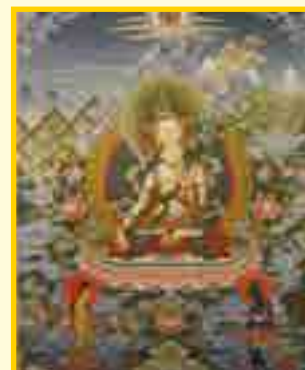
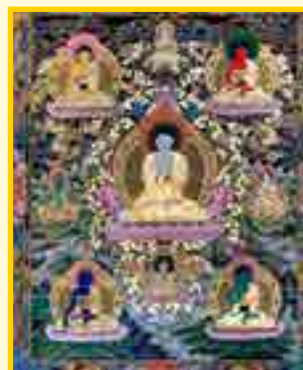
- "Scenes at the Moment of Death" and "Rebirth Consequences"
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- The Influences of "Emotions at the Moment of Death" on the "Scenes at the Moment of Death"
- Does "Hell" Really Exist?
- "Scientific Nature" on the Settings of "Hell"
- In What Way Do the "Buddhist Scriptures" Mutually Confirm with "Sciences"?
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The Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practice (26)

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

- The Mysterious Rationale of “Mantras” within the Hundred Types of “Right Concentrations” (Samadhibala)
- Should “Mantras” be Translated?
- The Interrelationship Between the Different Levels of Mantras and “Right Concentration”
- Which is More Important in the Recitation of “Mantras”: “Quantity” VS “Quality”?

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): 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. This is 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 (please refer to the Issue 17 of the “Lake of Lotus”)?

(xiv) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (11): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (4) – Making use of the Circumstances: The characteristics for being in adversities are that one would be beset with difficulties and will be unable to cope with the situations. If one has to make use of the circumstances of that particular situation and time so as to break through the obstacles is basically an extremely difficult matter to achieve. Since it is all that difficult, the conditions that one would have to consider in order to complement the whole situation would be particularly even more so. There is an old Chinese saying that “Hero makes the trend of his time, and the trend of the time makes its own Hero”. After all, ‘the trend of the time and the environment’ together is one of the major elements for one’s success

and failure. Hence, it is also a necessary element for one to get out from the plight by making use of the circumstances to break away from adversities. If one is to make use of the circumstances, one would adopt one of the following situations: (1) to quietly wait for the favourable circumstances to arise; (2) to make use of the existing circumstances; and (3) to build up favourable circumstances (please refer to the Issue 18 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

- (xv) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (12): Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities”(5) -- Learn One’s Lessons from Past Experiences: Failure is not necessarily a miserable thing. It can only be said as a blueprint which reflects on a series of merits and weaknesses. If one can learn one’s lessons well from past experiences in finding out the “reasons for one’s failures, as well as the personal behavioral formulae that led to such failures”, one’s “wisdom of self-enhancement” will be elevated by applying proper remedies to revise these extremely concealed and improper formulae, this would help to bring about one’s success in the next occasion. During this process of “self-enhancement”, it would enable one to live more happily and to have a direction, to have more meanings and values, and to be more proactive. In this way, what one would regard as failures have, in fact, now been changed into successes, and have brought about the essential elements for one’s future successes. The “state of invincibility” is the most lonely and painful experience. Too many successes and for too long will only make one to lose one’s sense of direction, and to easily lose oneself in one’s own “ego”. As such, one would not be able to find out and revise the poor formulae, and oneself would thus be easily bogged down in the mire of having too much “self-pride” and strong “arrogance” within one’s own “ego”, never being able to see the real world in its totality. In this regard, such kind of continuous successes can only be said to be an extremely big failure (please refer to the Issue 19 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

- (xvi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (13):

Criteria for “Dharma Practices in Times of Adversities” (6) – Enhancing One’s Awareness: Many a times the formation of one’s mistakes and failures are due to the inadequacy of one’s own “awareness”. The biggest drawback was one’s own failure lied in not “being aware” of what and where had gone wrong in one’s own “behavioral formulae”. This would result in one’s repeating, or even expanding, of one’s mistakes and failures endlessly. Being faulty or carelessness for a short while is not the main cause for one’s mistakes and failures. The main and real cause is the existence of deviations and defects in both the consciousness and the subconscious of one’s own “behavioral formulae”. This would lead to a chain of wrong behaviors, which would form an orbit which would lead to further failures, and that one would find it hard to depart from it. Along with this orbit of failures, it would further extend to many more faults and carelessness, and the end result would be more and greater failures. Hence, to “enhance one’s awareness” is not only to elevate one’s attentiveness, such that the frequency of one’s making mistakes due to carelessness would be reduced, but the more important aspect is whether to have the ability for one’s “self-reflection”, for observing the minute details, and to carefully find out the deviations and defects in one’s own “behavioral formulae” (please refer to the Issue 20 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

- (xvii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (14): Simplifying the Complexities, Finding the Keys - Due to the fact that one’s life span is temporary and impermanent, and so when one design and draw up a plan for one’s own Dharma practice, one should need to include the “factor of time and effectiveness”, all the more, as the primary important point for one’s consideration. Apart from having the “right mindset and criteria” in handling periods of “adversities or prosperities” so that one would be able to “master the factor of time” more accurately and to have an edge, what other principles that one should need to pay attention to? No matter what kinds of the “planning of time” that one has, they are bound to

have both strengths and weaknesses. It is unavoidable that there will be some faults. However, the appropriate “planning of time” should be able to reduce or lighten all kinds of faults and be able to speed up the process in the showing of “success”. An appropriate “planning of time” must make use of the following principles in its design: 1. Linking up by the Main theme, and getting through the sequences of events – target: daily living before one’s death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”); 2. Simplifying the complexities, finding the keys – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death; 3. Differentiation on the order of importance, Proper handling of the interferences – target: the wrestling ground of energies after one’s death (please refer to Issue 21 of “Lake of Lotus”).

(xviii) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (15): Mastering of Time and Choice of Methods – Irrespective of the objectives of one’s Dharma practice, one must choose the appropriate “methods of Dharma practice” that correspond with one’s objectives. The amount of time spent on these “methods of Dharma practice”, and the effects that one can achieve through them, are the key and critical points as to whether or not one can achieve the objectives, and so one should analyze them in more details. In order to have a quick and accurate way to analyze and measure the various “methods of Dharma practice”, one must first “bring out the chief points” on the “objectives” of the various practices, as well as the effective elements of the “methods of Dharma practice”, before one can correspondingly discuss and analyze the issues (please refer to Issue 22 of “Lake of Lotus”).

(xix) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (16): The Highest Objective that “Prayers” can Achieve – On the side of effectiveness, even though they consist the element of one’s “mental strength”, but since “prayers” do not involve any practice on “Emptiness”, and so they are neither direct enough, nor have they included any programming for the practicing of “Emptiness” that could counter-act the tractional forces of the “cycle

of karmic exercise”. Hence, though prayers can produce some effects, the highest level that they can achieve would only be limited to the “materialization of requests for worldly desires”, or for the “rebirths in some virtuous realms”. One would not be able to achieve the two objectives of: (1) liberation from the tractional forces of the “cycle of karmic existence”; and (2) the attainment of “Complete Enlightenment” (“Buddhahood”). Hence, “prayers” will not be able to become the major item of Dharma practice in Buddhism, and that it can only be a supplementary method of Dharma practice. (Please refer to Issue 23 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xx) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (17): The Mystery of the Blessings of the Sound in the Recitations of “Mantras, Buddhas’ Names or Sutras” – The practice method of using sound to recite “mantras, names of Holy Deities, and scriptures” is one of the practice methods that have been adopted by most religions and ceremonies in this secular world. Does it consist of other deeper meanings? What are some of the effects that will be produced from this kind of practice methods? What are the degrees of influence that this has upon one’s own “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that it can achieve? What is the length of time that it will take up in order to achieve the objective? (Please refer to Issue 24 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

(xxi) The Factors of Time and Effectiveness (18): How to Make Different Mantras to Produce Effects – the effects and energies that are produced from the “resonance” of sound can make the “electrons” at the outer layer of the “atom” to move over to the other “atom” next to it, or else the two “atoms” can share the same “electrons”. This kind of mechanism can help make “atoms” to become bondings in forming “molecules”, or other types of “compounds”. Through this process, different types of materials can then be connected, consolidated and formed. Yet, what types of pronunciation of “sounds” could match such particular effects? (Please refer to Issue 25 of the “Lake of Lotus”).

Excerpt of Last Issue

For the general populace, and even up to the great Dharma practitioners, their objectives of Dharma practice should be more or less of the following types:

1. **Praying for worldly desires** – For example: to seek for oneself and one's own relatives to have "longevity, recovery from illness, success in one's career, good marriage, wealth increase, averting disasters and relief from sufferings, as well as reunion with those deceased loved ones". Also, there are those who hope to get the "ease of heart and security at the present life", etc.; or for "fame, wealth, respect" in order to study Buddhism; as well as for those who put in efforts to practice the Dharma.
2. **Rebirth in the good realms** – For example: to hope and pray for rebirth in the heavenly realm, or in the human realm, and not to fall into the evil realms (of animals, hungry ghosts and hells).
3. **Liberation from the tractions of the "cycle of karmic existence"** – to hope and pray for the freedom in deciding for oneself as to whether one would be reborn into the six realms (of heavens, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hells), or whether to remain in the highest level of the "Realm of Form", such as the "Akanistha" (the "Heaven at the End-of-Form-Realm"), which is beyond the control of the tractions. (Please refer to the explanations on the "Three Realms" in the article on the "Profound Abstruseness of Life and Death: The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences" in Issue 17 of the "Lake of Lotus").
4. **Attainment of Buddhahood** – The recovery of one's "Primordial Nature" and the originally possessed and boundless capabilities, which are free from any bondages and to remain in the "Dharma Realm". (The "Nature of the Mind", also known as the "Buddha Nature", or the "Primordial Nature", refers to the original possession of that most crystal clarity of awareness. Please refer to the articles on "The Meaning of Near-Death Experiences"

in Issues 4 & 5 of the "Lake of Lotus").

What are the methods that one can choose in order to achieve these four types of objectives? What will be their effects? What are the critical key points that one should pay attention to when judging upon and in choosing those methods of Dharma practice? Regardless of what kinds of religions, the practice methods can be broadly divided into the following types:

1. **Prayers** – Including confessions, repentance of one's conducts, and in the making of aspirations and wishes;
2. **Recitations** – mantras, Buddhas' Holy Names, or sutras
3. **Visualizations** – themes include the formulae for different types of "meditation", or even the making use of the internal functions of one's body for coordination.

Irrespective of which types of practice methods, it must include the training of one's "mental strength". Otherwise, it would not be able to produce any effects. One of the important points for judging which of the practice methods are the most effective ones is the degree of influence that these can have on one's "mental strength"? What percentage will they constitute?

The last chapter has clearly explained the effect and mystery that the sound has produced on people. (Please refer to the article of the Wisdom in Directing One's Dharma Practices of Issue 24 of the Lake of Lotus) The part on the rationale for the "resonance" and "operation" is one of the functions of recitation of mantra. Since the sound of mantra does not necessarily have to be words that could be translated or understood, particularly those mantra which are meant for the following purposes:

1. linkage or condensation;
2. cutting off the linkage or condensation
3. taming and shattering

The Mysterious Rationale of "Mantras" within the Hundred Types of "Right Concentrations" (Samadhibala)

The last chapter has mentioned that if one can

receive the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras, the merits would be remarkable and vast, particularly in the enhancement of one’s own wisdom which would be very significant, and would not be lost in one’s numerous lifetimes. What exactly is the meaning of having received the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras? There are numerous mentions of the “Dharani Samadhi”, the “Dharani Seal Samadhi” and the “one hundred and eight kinds of “Samadhis” in the different “Buddhist Sutras”, and so what are they? It seems that they are referring to the different “Mantras” within the hundred types of “Right Concentrations” (“Samadhibala” in Sanskrit), and so what is the mysterious rationale behind them? [The word “Mantra” has been translated as the “True Words” (“Shingon” in Japanese), or as “Light” or “Wisdom” (“Vidya” in Sanskrit). In Sanskrit, it is most commonly known as the “Mantra” or as the “Dharani”].

The meaning of having received the “relevant teachings” in the recitation of mantras is that one would have “received the correct ‘sound frequency’ of the mantra and its practice method, as well as its ‘spiritual guidance’ (Tri) and ‘oral-pith instructions’ (Man-ngan)”. Apart from the proper recitation of the “mantra”, the skill of reciting mantras would have to reach a deeper level of the “Dharani Samadhi” before one could be able to give rise to the above-mentioned effects. The meaning of “Samadhi” is the “Right Concentration” (“Samadhibala” in Sanskrit), which means that when one recites the mantra, one’s “mind” would not have any disturbance, and one’s degree of clarity would enable oneself to enter into the “Right Concentration” without any deviations, before one can give rise to the above-mentioned effects.

In order for one to be skillful in the recitation of the mantras in reaching the level of the “Dharani Samadhi”, it would mean that one has already recited the concerned mantra for a very considerable long period of time. For those city dwellers who are always very much “upset and confused”, and lack of “mental concentration”, it would seem quite impossible if they have to spend such long periods of time in the reciting of mantras without knowing when they will be successful. Even if they have the time to do so, they may not be able to know the

“methods, ‘spiritual guidance’ (Tri) and ‘oral-pith instructions’ (Man-ngan)” of mantra-recitation. Due to the various kinds of difficulties, it would not be easy at all for anyone to have received the “relevant trainings” in the recitation of mantras. Hence, it would, indeed, be extremely rare to find someone who will really be able to give rise to such merits in the recitation of “mantras”.

The “Dharani Seal Samadhi” is an even higher level of “Samadhi” than that of the “Dharani Samadhi”. The word “seal” has the meaning of “acceptance, approval, verification, and contrasting”, that is, to “contrast and verify” by the practical experiences of Dharma practice”. For those Dharma practitioners who are able to enter into such kind of “Right Concentration”, they can clearly differentiate and “verify” that there are different “Dharanis” in the various types of “Right Concentrations”. They can also master which types of the “Right Concentrations” in order to match with the different “vibration frequencies” of sounds. As such, what kinds of “Right Concentrations” belong to which levels of “conscious condition” of human beings?

Human beings possess four types of “conscious condition”, and they are:

1. Beta (β) waves - the “conscious condition” of daily living;
2. Alpha (α) waves - the relaxed “conscious condition” of having entered into the elementary stage of “visualization”, or at the “first stage of mental concentration”.
3. Theta (θ) waves - the peaceful “conscious condition” of having entered into the higher levels of “visualization”, or at the “deeper levels of mental concentration”;
4. Delta (δ) waves - slow “conscious condition” of not having any dreams, and in a stage of slow-wave deep sleep.

As the rhythms of the “wave forms” (counted in terms of the frequency of the number of cycles per second) are gradually getting “smaller”, the ability of the one’s “mind” is gradually increasing, and so one would become more sensitive through one’s own “intuition”, even to the point of having “supernatural powers”. When one has entered into the different levels of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit), one would be able to feel the “vibration frequencies”

of the different “waves”, and thus realize the different “sounds” coming from them. Hence, the different Buddhist Sutras and the **“Great Prajna-paramita Sastra”** have described them as the **“one hundred and eight kinds of ‘samadhis’”**, that is, in describing **the over hundred levels of different “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit) and their merits**. Hence, there were mentions, in the Buddhist Sutras and in the **“Great Prajna-paramita Sastra”**, of the different types of “Dharanis” in the different “Right Concentrations” **(or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit)**, which is most genuine and true, and has not been made up or exaggerated.

For those Dharma practitioners who can enter into these types of “Right Concentrations” **(or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit)**, they would be able to know the “vibration frequencies” of the different “Dharanis”. Similarly, if a realized Guru can teach such kinds of “Dharanis” with their **‘spiritual guidance’ (Tri) and ‘oral-pith instructions’ (Man-ngan)** to their students, and if such Dharma practitioners can **practice them diligently and strictly in accordance to the instructions**, they would be able to enter into that particular level of “Right Concentration” **(or “Samadhi” in Sanskrit)**, through **the help of “resonance”**. Through the Dharma practices in their whole lives, some Dharma practitioners would have sat dully in meditation for years and decades, but without being able to enter from one lower level of “Right Concentration” **(or “Samadhi” in Sanskrit) to a slightly higher level of “Right Concentration” (or “Samadhi” in Sanskrit)**. Indeed, one can see that it **can be extremely difficult for one’s elevation of one’s “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit)**.

The “Vajrayana” practice methods are, indeed, quite unique and are totally in line with modern scientific reasons, and are thus not “something that related to gods and spirits”. That is also the reason why **“Vajrayana” practice methods can be so efficacious within a short period of time, and can be said to be the “shortcut of practical methods”, as well as a “treasure of wisdom” which has incorporated the almighty power of Nature within it, and thus cannot be compared by other teachings**. Hence, those who are ignorant about this should not, basing upon their limited knowledge and practical experiences, try to defame or belittle the “Vajrayana” teachings,

resulting in their breaking of the “serious precepts” and leading to their own downfall to the “evil realms” **(of animals, hungry ghosts and hell)**. This is because all the highest teachings of “Vajrayana”, which were mainly handed-down from the “Dharmakaya Buddha Samantabhadra”, are regarded as the highest levels of teachings and thus should not be humiliated. The fact that such kind of people would insult these teachings would only show that they are in fact **“ignorant, arrogant and mean”**, and they are like those who only know about the “stars” but never know about the “sun”.

Should “Mantras” be Translated?

The Master Hsuan-tsang of the Tang Dynasty was a world-famous Buddhist philosopher and a great translator of the Buddhist Sutras. He had, indeed, made great and significant contributions in many different ways towards Chinese Buddhism, Chinese culture and even to the whole of the Asian cultures and civilization. Mr. Lu Xun has highly regarded Master Hsuan-tsang as an excellent figure who has served as the **backbone of the Chinese civilization**. While doing his translation, Master Hsuan-tsang had adopted the important principle of “not translating the five categories” to ensure that the essences and the spirits of the various Buddhist Sutras would not be omitted. This practice had, indeed, reflected upon his **extraordinary character and personality of being extremely cautious, and yet with profound knowledge and wisdom**. Unfortunately, he was now being criticized by some people, who are **“ignorant, arrogant and mean”**, saying sarcastically that his adoption of the principle of “not translating the five categories” was due



to the fact that he did “not know about the five issues”, and so he did not know how to translate at all.

Ven. Sik Zan Ning of the Sung Dynasty has mentioned, in Volume 3 of his own writing “**Gao Zeng Zhuan of the Sung Dynasty**”, about the “five categories that should not be translated”. As according to Volume 1 of the “**Fan Yi Ming Yi Ji**” of the “**Da Zheng Zang**”, Ven. Fa Yun of the South Sung Dynasty has recorded these “five categories that should not be translated” as follows:

There are the five categories that the Master Hsuan-tsang of the Tang Dynasty would not have translated, namely:

- 1) the secret words should not be translated, such as the word “Dharani”.
- 2) the words consisting of several meanings should not be translated, such as the word “Bhagavan”, because it has six meanings.
- 3) those things that did not exist in China should not be translated, such as the thing of “Jambu tree”.
- 4) those things that were already long-existed and had been well-accepted in history should not be translated, even though they could be translated, such as the words of “Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi”, or “Anubodhi”, which had been handed-down in Sanskrit transliterations ever since the times of Ven. Mortan.
- 5) those things that would give rise to great respects and with positive connotations should not be translated, such as the word “Prajna” which people will give great and due respect to it. On the other hand, if using the word “Prajna” with its literal meaning as “wisdom” instead, then those who were less experienced in knowing the meaning of it might simply take it very lightly, and thus would not show great and due respect to it after hearing the word.

The meaning of these “five categories that that should not be translated” refers to the following situations whereby only their “pronunciations” and/or “transliterations” should be done, or else simply to “retain the original version” without any translations. The principle of these “five categories that that should not be translated”, if explained in plain words and ordinary language,

will be as follows:

1. **Secrecy** – for example, the different words and sounds of the different “Dharanis” in all the Buddhist Sutras are considered as “secret words” which are subtle, profound and inconceivable. Hence, the “meanings” of these secret words should not be translated.
2. **Words consisting of many meanings** – for example, the word “bhagavan” has the different meanings of “fortunate, excellent, revered, sacred, the holy one, world-honored”. As it has six meanings, and so the translation of it could not just pick any one of the meanings.
3. **Something that does not exist in the place of the translation** – for example, the “Jambu tree” which originated in places of South Asia, such as in India, and could not be found in China. Hence, the original pronunciation/transliteration was kept and so there was no direct translation of its meaning.
4. **Things which have been long-existed and well-accepted** – for example, the word of “Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi”, which has the meanings of the “most supreme, complete, perfect enlightenment and wisdom”. Ever since the times of the Eastern Han Dynasty, translators of different generations have all used the transliterations of this word, and so most readers have already got used to this with no difficulty. On the other hand, if changes are to be made now, they would have to re-adjust to the whole new meanings attached to the new translation of this word again. Hence, the original transliteration has been kept.
5. **Things that denote respect** – for example, those words of “Prajna; Shakyamuni; Bodhisattva”, and so on, would not have been literally translated as “wisdom; powerful and charitable; those beings with minds that bent towards the right path in seeking enlightenment”, simply because the former category of words would make people give rise to the feeling of “respect”. On the other hand, if the latter category of translations were adopted instead, people would simply “take those words lightly and casually”, and thus would not attach the same kind of respect when mentioning those words.

Nowadays, some people would consider the “mantras” as something that “could not be explained” or “meaningless”, as simply because of the language barriers of those who recite them. Their argument being that those ancient Indian Dharma practitioners who were proficient in Sanskrit would not have separated the “sounds” from the “meanings” of the mantra, and so they must have known the meanings of the “mantras”. Hence, this can prove that the meanings of all “mantras” could be explained and translated. They further consider that if the meanings of the “mantras” are not translated, such that if one only reads out the “sounds” of the mantra without knowing its “meanings”, then it seems that one does not know what one is doing, and so this would become some kind of a “superstition”. On the other hand, if one repeatedly says out the words of the “mantra”, it would be even better if one can understand the meanings attached to it. Their rationale is that “whether the words are magical and efficacious will depend on the mind of the reader, and so if one can read them with a sincerity of heart and complete understanding, then the words would be efficacious.”

Such reasons and arguments were due to the fact that they do not understand the origin of and the rationale behind the “mantras”, and do not believe the “hidden abstruseness for its being efficacious”. However, not believing in it does not mean that one can then insult it casually. This is particularly true for such a great historical figure as Master Hsuan-tsang, who was so full of wisdom, mercifulness and persistence, as well as a great practitioner with great knowledge, profound insights, deep understanding and practical experiences behind him, and for whom one should not be belittled in a lightly fashion. The



principle of “not translating the five categories” that was adopted by Master Hsuan-tsang must have a much deeper meaning behind it, and so we should be paying great respect to it and follow suit.

It was mentioned in the last chapter that each sentient being has a unique “vibration frequency of one’s own mind”, like the finger prints of a person which is most unique to him or her. Some of the mantras consist of the Names of the Buddhas because some of them would use the sounds that most complement his/her personal unique personal “vibration frequency” as his/her name. Hence, some of the mantras can thus be explained. As for some of the other mantras, there are some additional “respectable or remarkable phrases” or “particular phrases” either at the beginning or at the end, and so this may give the impression that those mantras have explainable meanings. However, this “should not be taken as representing that all the mantras could be explained and translated”, and thus would disregard the “hidden meanings” of the mantras. If there are those who follow this trend in the future, then the practice method on the reciting of “mantras” in “Vajrayana” practices would be destroyed, or would “only exist in name”. It is sincerely hoped that those people in the Buddhist community can retain some “merits” by not casually criticize those things, people and teachings which are beyond their understanding, comprehension and capability, as this would “not only hurt oneself but would also hurt others”.

The Interrelationship Between the Different Levels of “Mantras” and “Right Concentration”

The merits of having received the “relevant teachings” in the recitation of mantras are remarkable and vast. As to its abstruseness, apart from relating to its rationale on “resonance” and the “motions among the particles”, it is also very much related to the different high or low levels of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit). According to Bodhisattva Maitreya’s classification, in Volume 45 of the “Yogacaryabhumisastra”, “Dharanis” are divided into the following kinds:

(1) Dharma Dharani – the successful symptom

for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to remember the words and sentences of the various Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes;

- (2) **Meaning** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to remember the meanings of the Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes;
- (3) **Mantra** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that, through one’s “meditational power”, one would be able to experience the special effects of the “mantras”, and would thus be able to help other sentient beings to remove all kinds of calamities and illnesses.
- (4) **Endurance** Dharani – the successful symptom for the receiving of the “relevant trainings” in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” is that one would be able to know the true existence of, and the real meanings behind, the various Dharmas, as well as the ability without losing them.

Why is it necessary to classify “mantras” into the above-mentioned four kinds? “Mantras” are recited through the use of sound, and so why is it that the recitation of different “mantras” would lead to different kinds of merits? Why is it that the above-mentioned four kinds of mantras would give rise to those different merits, and not other merits? What are the high or low levels of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit) that each of the above-mentioned four kinds of “mantras” would need to match with?

Let us first try to explain on the “Dharma Dharani”. “Dharma” refers to “all the Dharmas that one has heard about”, including the “teachings, methods, knowledge and formatting”. Once having heard about them, one would be able to remember the words and sentences of the Sutras in one’s “numerous lifetimes”. The reason is because the types of sounds for the “Dharma Dharani” have specific stimulating effects on the “memory” system of one’s “mind”. However, the “memory” system of one’s “mind” is not just the memory

system of one’s physical brain. If it has to go deep into the “mind” to stimulate and transmit the memories, it has to be matched with one’s “mental concentration”.

This is because “mental concentration” represents one’s “conscious condition” of entering into the “state of stability; with slower brain waves, and reduced disturbances, and gradually advancing towards to the state of stillness”. When one’s “conscious condition” has gradually entered into the state of steadiness, the range of the sound waves of this type of “Dharma Dharani” would extend further to the “memory” system of the “mind”.

The step is to first get started with the memory system of the physical brain of one’s body. After having gone through the stage of “repeated skillful practices”, one would then be proficient enough by having one’s “mental concentration” to go deeper into the level of the “alpha wave” (that is, entry into the elementary stage of “visualization”, or the relaxation of one’s “conscious condition” at the elementary state of “mental concentration”). The unique sound range and vibration frequency of the “Dharma Dharani” would then stimulate the “memory” system of the “mind” and make it remain in an “open” state. One would then be able to transmit those “precious Dharmas” into the “memory” system of the “mind”, and would thus give rise to the possible merits of the “Dharma Dharani”. The successful symptom would be that one would be able to remember the words and sentences of the Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes, as these Dharma practitioners would emphasize mostly the Sutras.

If one would apply one’s “mental concentration” to go even deeper into the level of the “Theta wave” (that is, entry into the higher levels of “visualization”, or the deeper levels of “mental concentration” on the stillness of one’s “conscious condition”), one would give rise to the profound merits of the “Dharma Dharani”. The successful symptom would be to be able to remember “all the Dharmas that one has heard” in one’s numerous lifetimes without losing them. This is because the level of the “Theta waves” belongs to the “conscious condition” of extreme steadiness, which is able to transmit large volumes of information/data with high speed performance, even much much faster than the

speed of contemporary “optical fibre broadband”. Once “being connected”, “all the Dharmas that one has heard before” would be transmitted to the “memory” system of the “mind”, and would maintain a “state of openness” in one’s numerous lifetimes, so that this would enable oneself to have total access to all the information stored in one’s memory in numerous lifetimes. The reason is because the unique sound range and vibration frequency of the “Dharma Dharani” are extremely sharp, and can open up the “door” of the “memory” system of the “mind”.

Hence, “Dharani” is also known as the “Entire Control”, meaning that one can give rise to the type of ability in having an “entire control of all the Dharmas and to hold onto them forever”. If one can complement this with the strict adherence of the “precepts”, as according to the “Yogacaryabhumisastra”, one would be able to attain the magical merits of “achieving the level of upholding all the good things without ever forgetting or losing them, while one would never give rise to any evil thoughts in numerous lifetimes”. “Dharani” is also known as the one that “can hold and can reject”. If one can complement this with the teachings on “Emptiness”, as according to the “Yogacaryabhumisastra”, one would then be able to “reject the demerits on the two extremes of ‘voidness-existence’, and be able to hold onto the merits of the ‘Middle Way’”. Hence, the merits of “Dharma Dharani” are: to enable the one who recites the mantras to give rise to the “ability on the wisdom of remembering”. This would enable one to “hold onto all the Dharmas that one has heard before and be able to remember them forever without ever forgetting or losing them”. In other words, the merit on the recitation of “Dharma mantras” is the



ability to give rise to those wisdom which belongs to the “wisdom of one’s memory”, including the “formatting” for operational memory”.

Due to the fact that there are differences in terms of the different “sound ranges and vibration frequencies” with the different levels of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit), and so it would give rise to the different levels and degrees of “merits”, and so the interrelationship for the different levels of “mantras” with that of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit) will be “closely related and interdependent upon each other, like the ‘lips and teeth’, or having a causal relationship with each other”. Otherwise, without the assistance by the quality environment of the “Right Concentrations” (or “Samadhis” in Sanskrit), the “sound ranges and vibration frequencies” of the “mantras” would have to go through numerous repetitions before they can have the rare chance of having one or two occasions to be able to enter into the “memory” system of the “mind” in an attempt to open up the “door leading to one’s wisdom”.

Which is More Important in the Recitation of “Mantras”: “Quantity” VS “Quality”?

Most of the Dharma practitioners would consider that if they can recite a sufficient amount of “mantras”, they would be able to give rise to merits. As such, they would neglect the importance on the “quality” in the recitation of “mantras”, as well as its “methods, ‘spiritual guidance’ (Tri) and ‘oral-pith instructions’ (Man-ngan).” The outcome is that, even if they have practiced for their whole lifetimes, they would still be unable to give rise to the merits of the “Dharma Dharani” (“mantra”). What you are now reading is, in fact, part of the contents on the “spiritual guidance” (Tri). Even most of the ordinary “Gurus” would not have understood them, and do not know about them, and so they are very precious, indeed. Since there are only a very few people who can give rise to such type of merits, and so no one can really “verify” the above-mentioned explanations with their practical experiences, even though the various Buddhist Sutras have mentioned about the different classifications, levels and merits of the “mantras”. The lack of experiences represent that one would not be able to “verify” them, and



would also mean that one “could not be able to comprehend” them. Hence, all those mentions of the “methods, spiritual guidance and oral-pith instructions” on the recitation of mantras, as well as the rationale for the giving rise of their merits, would all become an extremely mysterious “black-hole of the universe”. Such type of abstruseness has quite often been mystified and abused by those **cheaters** who would make them to sound very mysterious and magical.

Now, we would continue to explain on the “**Meaning Dharani**”. The word “Meaning” refers to the “meanings, rationales and mysteries of all Dharmas”, including the “teachings, methods, knowledge and foratting” of all the “meanings, rationales and usages” that one has heard about, one would be able to remember them in one’s numerous lifetimes. The reason is that the sounds of this type of “**Meaning Dharani**” have specific stimulating effects on the “comprehending and thinking” system of the “mind”. However, the “comprehending and thinking” system of the “mind” is not just the “comprehending and thinking” system of the physical brain of one’s body. In order that one can **go deeper into the “mind”** to stimulate and give rise to the **wisdom** of “thorough understanding and comprehension”, one must have to complement this with one’s “mental concentration”.

The procedure would be that one would first have to get started with the memory system of the physical brain of one’s body. After having familiarized oneself skillfully with this procedure, one would then apply one’s “mental concentration” to enter into the level of the **“alpha wave”** (that is, **entry into the elementary stage of “visualization”**,

or the relaxation of one’s “conscious condition” at the elementary state of “mental concentration”). One would then use **the unique sound ranges and vibration frequencies** to stimulate the “comprehending and thinking” system of the “mind” by converging it into a state of “having merged the different types of **consciousnesses**”. This would enable one to transmit “all the **precious Dharmas**” into the “comprehending and thinking” system of the “mind”, and would then give rise to the possible merits of the “**Meaning Dharani**”. The successful symptom for the receiving of the **“relevant trainings”** in the proper recitation on this type of “mantras” **is that one would be able to remember all the meanings of the Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes without ever forgetting them.** (The consciousnesses, as mentioned in “having merged the different types of consciousnesses” are referring to the “**first consciousness to the eighth consciousness coming from one’s “mind”**”).

If one would then make use of one’s “mental concentration” to enter into the level of the **“Theta wave”** (that is, **entry into the higher levels of “visualization”, or the deeper levels of “mental concentration” on the stillness of one’s “conscious condition”**), one would then give rise to the vast merits of the “**Meaning Dharani**”. The successful symptom would be that **one would be able to remember all the meanings of the Sutras in one’s numerous lifetimes without ever forgetting them.** This is because the level of **“Theta wave”** belongs to the “conscious condition” of an extremely stable state, which is able to transmit large volumes of information/data with high speed performance, even much much faster than the speed of contemporary “optical fibre broadband”. Once “being connected”, **“all of the meanings of the Dharmas”** that one has understood in the past would be transmitted into the “memory” system of the “mind”, and would be maintained in a “state of openness” in one’s numerous lifetimes, so that this would enable oneself to have total access to all the information stored in one’s memory in numerous lifetimes. The reason is because the unique sound range and vibration frequency of the “**Meaning Dharani**” are extremely sharp, and **can open up the “door” of the “memory” system of the “mind”, and would thus make the “various consciousnesses to merge together”, and open up the “door” for the “comprehending” system of the “mind”.**

There are obvious differences between the merits of the “**Meaning** Dharani”, and that of the “**Dharma** Dharani”. The main merit of the “**Dharma** Dharani” is to “**remember** all the **Dharmas**”, while the main merit of the “**Meaning** Dharani” is that, apart from “**remembering** all the Dharmas”, one would be able to “**comprehend**” all the meanings of the Sutras, including the easy mastering of the **newly**-learned meanings of the Sutras. This is because its merits can enable one to “merge the various consciousnesses together”, such that the understanding of the already-acquired knowledge would help one to better “**comprehend**” the meanings of the newly-learned Sutras. Hence, one would be much easier than other Dharma practitioners to be able to thoroughly “comprehend” the meanings of the Sutras. Hence, when one **explains** the meanings of the Sutras, one would be able to be more **accurate and to analyze more in-depths** into the subject matters, and would make others more easy to understand them.

Since **the most important fundamental point in one’s Dharma practice is on whether one can accurately and correctly “comprehend” the sentences and meanings of the Sutras before one’s achievements in the Dharma practice can be further enhanced.** Hence, the merit of the “**Meaning** Dharani” is not only the kind of merits and levels of achievement that a Dharma practitioner must have to achieve, but it is also a stage that one must have to go through during one’s Dharma practice. Through the recitation of mantras, one would definitely be able to **speedily achieve** such level of achievement and merits, and could thus be said to be a “shortcut”. The question is whether the Dharma practitioner

would be able to master the knacks in the recitation of mantras.

Then, what about the giving rise of the merits of the “**Mantra** Dharani” and “**Endurance** Dharani”? Besides the mysteries of the “resonance” and the “operations of particles”, are there any other deeper meanings in the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? Are there any differences in the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? Which of them would have a greater strength? What kinds of benefits will they have? What are the differences in the techniques of reciting them? There are two levels when producing human sounds: “the “conscious” and the “sub-conscious” levels. Will they be beneficial to one’s Dharma practice? What are the effects that are produced in the practice methods for the recitations of “Mantras, Buddha’s Holy Names, or the Sutras”? To what degrees and levels do these practice methods influence one’s “mental strength”? What is the highest level of objective that can be achieved through these methods? What is the length of time that one has to spend on these methods? We will continue to share some of these mysteries in the next issue of the “Lake of Lotus”.....**(To be Continued)**

(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 (21)

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

Excerpt of Last Chapter

The Founding Father of Tibetan Tantrism, Guru Padmasambhava, has warned us that: **“Don’t lose one’s ‘view’ in one’s ‘action’, and don’t lose one’s ‘action’ in one’s ‘view’”**. Either of these two wrong ways will eventually lead one to fall into the Three Lower Realms of the “cycle of karmic existence”.

Hence, Guru Padmasambhava has given us his Spiritual Advice: **“Though my ‘view’ is higher than the sky, my ‘action’ regarding cause and effect is finer than barley flour”**. Hence, one has to learn slowly to be able to **“descend with one’s ‘view’ while to ascend with one’s ‘action’”** in order that the two can eventually be united together as one single entity.

Furthermore, Guru Padmasambhava has again warned us, especially for those “Vajrayana” Dharma practitioners, that: **“Vajrayana Dharma Practitioners are like a snake inside a bamboo shoot, it can only either climb up or go down. There is no third route to go”**. These are all the golden words of wisdom that we all, as genuine Dharma practitioners, should hold dear to our hearts, while put them into genuine practice!

Hence, one has to be “down to earth” in one’s

Dharma practice, to practice the Dharma **“whole-heartedly”** and **“honestly”** (that is, **not having self-deception as well as in deceiving others**), and should be assisted by the very basic foundation of the Buddhist teachings. If there are confusions, it is most essential that one should practice the Dharma diligently





according to the instructions of one's own **Root Guru**, and to regard them as the ultimate instructions.

During our Dharma practices, our "views" and our "actions" must be in unison and in union with each other. In the process of one's Dharma practice, there are the four different aspects of the View, Meditation, Action, and Fruit that one should be aware of.

The Four Aspects of One's Dharma Practice

The "**View**" is like a compass that one can use in order to give you a **sense of direction** as to where your "final destination" should be, so that you can "position" yourself correctly and in the right direction. Hence, one's view must be a "**Correct View**" in pointing oneself towards the **correct direction** of the ultimate goals of "liberation and enlightenment". All other directions will not be considered as the "correct views"!

Our "**Correct View**" should be positioned at the highest level, e.g. our "**View of Emptiness**" should be pitched at the state of "**Neither Existence Nor Voidness**". For this, one must first try to understand it at the knowledge level, and then through one's Dharma practice, one can slowly gain more insights into it with more experiential certainty in its comprehension.

Finally, the various degrees of one's "**Awareness**" will then be able to determine the various degrees of strictness in one's own "Actions".

"**Meditation**" is to "realize through experiencing" by the using of "practice" as a way to "endeavor physically and forcefully" in order to imprint one's own "**Awareness**", at the knowledge level, to go deep down into the inner part of one's own "mind". In this way, one's Dharma practices will slowly become more and more in tune with what the Lord Buddha had taught us.

"**Action**" is to let the "View" and the "Disciplines" to go even deeper down inside the innermost core part of one's own "mind", in such a way as to "**reveal and realize Awareness itself**" with certainty in one's own actions of everyday life experiences through **intuition** without any hesitations.

Finally, before we talk about the "Fruit" or "Fruition", there are the various levels of "realizations" before one can finally attain the "complete enlightenment" (or "**Buddhahood**" in Sanskrit); hence one should not have misunderstood that once you have realized, you will automatically become fully enlightened! This is not true at all, and is simply a "beautiful misunderstanding" of some sort! According to the "**Maha-Prajnaparamita Sutra**", there are explanations on the 20 different levels of "Emptiness". Hence, with a different level of realization, one will attain a different type of "**Fruit**" or "Fruition". In this way, with different views and different means of Dharma practices, as well as with different degrees and levels of realization, one will be able to achieve the different "Fruitings" of the different "**paths and levels**" (that is, the "**five paths**" and the "**ten levels**") for one's spiritual development and attainment.....

(To be Continued)



The Ultimate Love & Care of Life

End-of-Life Care (3.1)

Vajra Master Yeshe Thaye
Acharya Pema Lhadren

Foreword

How to face “death”, and all the way to the point of how to receive the best ultimate love and care at the last moment of one’s life journey, such that an individual would be able to proceed to another stage of life with confidence and dignity, as well as for one’s concerned kith and kin to let go of sorrows in the process is, indeed, a big matter for all of us to learn and study about. This is also the **utmost sincere wish for the two of us in trying to contribute towards the ultimate well-beings of all illimitable sentient beings.**

In order to transform this ideal into reality, the two of us started to establish the “Dudjom Buddhist Association (International)” in Hong Kong ten years ago (January 1998). Then, three years ago, the “Inaugural Issue” of the English-Chinese bimonthly magazine – the “Lake of Lotus” – was published in January 2006, and one year ago in June 2008, we have sent four of our disciples who possessed either bachelor’s degrees and/or master’s degrees, or even with a physician’s qualification, to study for the program on **Postgraduate Diploma in End-of-Life Care**, offered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Owing to the “Bodhicitta” of these four disciples, together with their characters of “being respectful to both the Teachers and the Teachings”, they have now graduated as scheduled. In the very near future, they **will**



be sharing the valuable knowledge with those people who are interested in this topic. We would like to express our sincere thankfulness to them.

This “End-of-Life Care” program, which was the first of its kind in Hong Kong, was offered by the Faculty of Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and was also the first postgraduate program of this kind among all the universities in Hong Kong.

The targets for its student intake are mainly for medical personnel, but due to the fact that the Faculty of Medicine at the Chinese University of Hong Kong wanted to offer this kind of service as an integrated holistic service of love and care to patients of terminal stage and of chronic diseases, and in order to promote this kind of service in a holistic manner, non-medical individuals such as social workers are also accepted to the course. However, the applicant must be a recognized degree holder.

The “whole person” means the concerns on the love and care of the four major dimensions of the patients, namely: the “physical/physiological, psychological, social and spiritual” aspects. Since the areas of coverage are so broad, the team that work together would have to comprise of various types of professionals, such as physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, dieticians, social workers, volunteers, and so on, in order to cater for the proper services to the patients concerned.

As the program covers a broad range of topics, it has been conducted by experienced medical, para-medical and other professional personnel of different specialties. The program consists of the following five major areas of concern:

1. Principles and perspectives of end-of-life care
2. Symptom control and medical care in end-of-life care
3. Psycho-spiritual care in end-of-life care
4. Principles and dilemmas in end-of-life care
5. Service models and future directions in end-of-life care

On top of lectures, students are required to attend three rounds of attachments in hospitals, and to submit three case reports after that. These four disciples who have recently graduated from this program will write articles for the “Lake of Lotus” to introduce relevant information for the sake of benefiting all sentient beings. Wish for the Increase of Wholesome Merits !

End-of -Life Care Before Death---- -A Clinical Perspective (1)

By Sangye Namgyal

He is a private medical practitioner for about 20 years, and has the following professional qualifications: MBChB, DCH, DOM, PgDip in Com Psych Med, Dip Med, DFM, PgDip in End-of-Life Care, Cert. of Cont Med Edu, M.Sc. in Corporate Governance & Directorship, NLP Practitioner.

Different Kinds of Death

In order to better understand the near-death symptoms and their control or alleviation, it is best to classify “death” into different kinds. It is because different kinds of “death” have different symptoms to manage. However, nowadays there are many ways to classify according to the reasons of death. The easiest method to classify it is to see whether death occurs either accidentally, or non-accidentally, with the latter case meaning that “death comes gradually”. In “sudden accidental death”, the patient will only experience a very short period of time before death, and hence their symptoms before death are tremendous but short, and so “death” often occurs before any medical help could be given. Whereas in “non-accidental death”, the physician can have plenty of time to plan and help the patients, so that they can enjoy better life-time and the quality of life before death.

Changes in the “End-of-Life Care” Concept

In the past ten to twenty years, people seldom

talk about “death”, and will usually consider “death” as a taboo. This occurs both on the patient’s side, as well as on the physician’s side. However, with the development of “palliative and hospice care”, more resources are now being put into the “end-of-life care”, with this situation having changes in the recent one to two decades. A new kind of specialty on palliative medicine slowly evolves, and recently a foundation has given new funds to establish palliative wards in about 6 major hospitals in Hong Kong. Thus, the concept of “end-of-life care” has gradually changed from both the points of view of the patients and of the physicians.

Different Causes of “Non-Accidental Deaths”

Furthermore, to better understand the “near-death” symptoms of “non-accidental death” and their control or alleviation, it is best to classify the different causes of “non-accidental death”. Their symptoms and management are rather different from each other. “Non-accidental death” can be commonly sub-divided into those “caused by cancer, chronic illness, frail elderly or neuro-degeneration”. These are the major causes of death that we can well plan our management of their different cases. As for “acute deaths”, such as those from “infection, acute heart failure, acute lung failure”, etc., those are not good examples for us to illustrate on the good “management of end-of-life care”. However, when we are becoming familiar with the “end-of-life care”, we can still apply the principles that we have learnt to these “acute deaths” or “sudden death” patients.

Cancer Management Model

Among the sub-divisions of “non-accidental death”, cancer and their management are well studied, and serve as good examples for us to illustrate on the principles of “palliative care”. Cancer patients are also being better looked after because the “onset, course, life expectancy” and other information of their cancer history are well studied in large-scale scientific researches, and hence well

documented. On the other hand, those patients who suffered from “chronic illnesses, frail elder aging and neuro-degenerations” usually have undergone prolong and less well-known courses, with having lesser resources to be put into their “study, treatment and management”, and hence their management protocols are less well-defined when compared with cancer management. As a result, **the cancer management model is best used to illustrate on the principles of “palliative care”**.

According to the Hong Kong Cancer Registry in the year 2005, there were about 22,000 cancer patients added into the statistics per year, and about 12,000 cancer people die every year. That is, about 54% of the cancer patients will face their “deaths” annually. Among those who die from cancer, about half of them are coming from the 3 most common types of cancer, namely: “lung, colo-rectal and liver cancers”. Therefore, the symptoms and management of these 3 most common types of cancer are particularly noted. The average life time risk of people dying from cancer is: 1/7 in male, and 1/13 in female. **As people are getting longer life expectancy in modern times, due to the successful combats of infectious diseases, it seems more likely that modern men have much higher chances in getting cancer nowadays, and so it is even more timely for us to have the services of “palliative care”**. The median age of dying for cancer patients is 71, which is lower than the life expectancy in average male of 79.4 and in average female of 85.5, as according to the 2007 statistics of the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department [1].

Reference

- [1] Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, *Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (Dec 2009), Page 4.*



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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