

Viet Nam – 2012

talk on 10.10.2012

TEACHER - STUDENT

*“... it's more wishful to see people with kind heart, faithful people,
and honest people again .“*

I know many of Vietnamese Buddhists, they are very faithful, very religious people. They have a lot of faith, devotion to Buddha, Dharma and Tibetan Buddhism. That means there is very good karmic connection between us, and between you and Dharma. I have been to Vietnam four times and I have seen many many people with a lot of faith, have seen many beautiful places and it's very nice to see that again. But it's more wishful to see people with kind heart, faithful people, and honest people again. Being with people who try hard for improving oneself, for being better Dharma practitioners is always very wishful and there is more wish to see that.

*“To take whatever they hear as serious and apply all that to their
daily life; “*

It's normal for everywhere and in Tibet when people meet with lamas or Rinpoches they get excited. It's OK to get excited about Rinpoches and lamas. But benefit to get from that is not only to see, but to listen to what lamas, teachers say, to what they teach. To listen to that and to take that as a lesson is the most important.

For people, for disciples, the important part is to listen, to study. To take whatever they hear as serious and apply all that to their daily life; to take that as remedy to reduce negative thoughts in their mind. That is the most important part.

Important part for the teacher is to teach students in a correct way. It doesn't have to be profound but it has to be much directed and upon the problems and suit the students' level. That's the correct way of teaching.

Many of you probably have seen many teachers and have heard teachings from many lamas: Tibetan lamas or teachers from other traditions of Buddhism. It doesn't matter Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism or Vietnamese Buddhism -the foundation of Buddhism is the same. To understand the foundation of that religion is very important.

It's not important to say: "I'm from such and such lineage, tradition". It's important to understand the lineage and lineage masters, how to practice, and how to know to practice. That is important.

TO PRACTICE DHARMA

"To practice Dharma we need a lot of patience and diligence."

Buddha said negative karmas or obscurations in mind of beings cannot be washed by the river. And sufferings of sentient beings cannot be removed by Buddha Himself. Realization of Buddhas cannot be passed to sentient beings. The only way to help is to show the path, to teach them Dharma. [For the students] to listen to Dharma teaching, to study, to learn, and to practice is the only way that leads to liberation.

Buddha said: "I have shown you the path to liberation. You have to understand that all depends on yourselves." So, whether you will be liberated [or not] depends on you. It depends on how you understand, how you put efforts, how you practice. So, Buddha said liberation depends on oneself.

Although liberation depends on oneself, it also depends on many other conditions, other factors. For example, to listen to Dharma - hearing, thinking, meditating - one has to take correct lesson from a genuine teacher. Then put a lot of efforts into practice, as much as one could. Only by doing so may liberation come.

It's not proper that one has got some teaching and then does nothing. Or one puts in some hope "I will be liberated" - that's not enough. The correct way is that once you know how to practice you have to put it into practice continuously, diligently. One

should not let his/ her mood lead: when the mood is good we practice, when it's bad then no more practice. We forget about Dharma. It doesn't work.

To practice Dharma we need a lot of patience and diligence. Because of our bad habitual tendencies we don't have enough patience for Dharma practice. We lose our patience many times. We also get distracted easily by various things and issues of our lives. All of this actually creates obstacles for improving our Dharma practice. We should be careful, be aware of all that. And apply the correct method to improve the way we think, the way we learn. So, we'll be able to improve our mind.

Most of the time, we see things in a way different from what they really are.

We can raise a question: "Why do we need Dharma?" We have to find the correct answer to this question, otherwise we never really understand why we are doing this or that. We don't know what Dharma does. If we try hard to get the correct answer to this question then we can see that we have reason to practice Dharma. And the reason is in the power, the benefit of Dharma. So, to raise the question and find the correct answer is important.

Why do we need Dharma? Because we have too much distraction in our mind and this blocks our mind. And this doesn't allow us to see things in correct ways. We have ignorance. Because of mental distraction and ignorance we cannot see things correctly. Most of the time, we see things in a way different from what they really are. And that leads to negative emotion. Because we see things differently things go wrong. And because we see things in wrong ways this creates problems for us, creates unhappiness. Problems are created because of negative emotions, and these emotions are rooted in ignorance, in seeing things in a wrong way. Therefore, we need Dharma. Dharma helps to correct all this.

What is the meaning of practicing Dharma? It's to fix our mind in a correct way. Our mind is not in a correct position. So, the ways we perceive things, we see things are not good, not right. We have to fix our mind. How to fix our mind? We have to practice Dharma.

EMPTINESS - BODHICITTA

"There are two parts in Buddha's teaching. The first part is teaching on emptiness. The second one is teaching on bodhicitta."

There are two parts in Buddha's teaching. The first part is teaching on emptiness. The second one is teaching on bodhicitta. The meaning of practicing Buddhism is to unify these two things together. This is a correct way of practicing the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni. When we listen to Buddha's teaching we have to know these two parts. One is emptiness and the other is bodhicitta. If a practitioner knows only one part or the other one then this is not complete. To practice Dharma first we have to practice bodhicitta. We begin with practicing bodhicitta and compassion. Then we go on to meditation on emptiness.

EMPTINESS - INTERDEPENDENT ORIGINATION

"... does not understand interdependent origination then there is no way to understand emptiness."

How do we practice emptiness? What is emptiness? First, we have to know the meaning of interdependent origination. According to the teaching of interdependent origination all phenomena depend on each other. If one does not understand interdependent origination then there is no way to understand emptiness. However, emptiness is a profound and difficult to realize. Therefore, one has to rely on understanding of bodhicitta and compassion. If one understands bodhicitta and

compassion very well and correctly then there is a big chance to understand real meaning of emptiness.

What is the meaning of interdependent origination? As I explained earlier, existence of things depends on something else, [things depend] on each other. Not a single phenomenon can be independent. No phenomenon can exist without depending on other ones. Everything has to rely on other things to be established. That means things do not have nature. They are not established by their nature but by conditions, by something else.

"The meaning is that no self is independent; self is dependable"

But we do not understand this and we see ourselves to be established by nothing or by ourselves. We see ourselves as independent and develop pride in ourselves. That's grasping, attachment to self. We see ourselves as truly established by ourselves but in fact we are established by many factors, many conditions. Usually we don't see that we see only what is evident and this creates problems for us. We see ourselves as center established by nothing. We are the center, very important, very powerful. We want to control everything. We don't see that our existence depends on others. We see only ourselves and we say: I, me, myself etc. I'm important, I'm king, I'm God, I'm leader etc.

We just make mistakes.

The view of Buddhism is that there is no self. What does that mean? The meaning is that no self is independent; self is dependable. Life is illusion. Why do we say life is like a dream or illusion? It's because it depends on many things. When things come together then that makes something. That is something that is like a dream. For example, yesterday is like a dream. Yesterday when many things came together then there appeared yesterday. But then it disappeared. Because the conditions, the factors that created it took apart so it dissolved, it disappeared. The answer is yesterday is gone like a dream.

Everything is like that. Our life is like that. At this moment we see it as real. We say: "This is bad", "This is good", we make a lot of judgments. But when conditions change

the result also changes. Nothing exists for ever and never changes. Everything has to change. The answer is yesterday is like a dream and everything is like that. That is their nature. There is no power to stay like that for ever, without any changes. That is called interdependent origination.

COMPASSION - INTERDEPENDENT ORIGINATION

"..we have to be kind and compassionate to each other.

It's because we depend on each other."

So, people have to depend on each other. Sentient beings depend on each other. How? We know in a small group people depend on each other. Then it becomes bigger, bigger, bigger... Then the whole world actually depends on each other. So, to know this connection is good for all of us – for developing bodhicitta. It's because we have to be kind and compassionate to each other. It's because we depend on each other. That is the meaning, the view of Buddhism that is called interdependent origination.

To understand that is a profound way to realize what is called emptiness. That is really emptiness. But we do not know the connection. Don't see how it works in a profound way, in a subtle way. We only see in a rough way. We only see something there on the surface (*doing gesture of on-the-surface*) but we don't see details of that. Therefore, we are on-the-surface person. We are just wandering around in phenomena and do not see their nature.

We don't see the nature of phenomena. We just see the frame, the physical, only the outer part, not the inner part, the in-nature part. Therefore, we are ordinary people, our mind is very ordinary. Why do we become very ordinary? The condition for that is ignorance. Because we don't see the connection, the nature so we have a lot of ignorance, a lot of mental distraction. We need to fix our mind. We need to know Dharma.

That is the view of Buddhism, the way Buddhist people should understand phenomena. What is the meaning of Dharma? What does Dharma do? The meaning of Dharma is that it's remedy. Dharma is remedy, the condition. What does this condition do? It's to make something happen. It has power.

TO TAME OUR MIND

"Dharma means to tame our mind and to protect."

What can Dharma do? To make our mind better. Why does our mind need to be better due to Dharma as remedy. As I said earlier, our mind is not perfect. It has impurity. So, it has much chance to mistake. As our mind is not perfect we have to do something. What does Dharma do? It's to subdue wild mind, to tame the wild mind, to make mind more peaceful. So that is called Dharma.

Dharma works when one's mind becomes more peaceful, more calm, more tamed. When that happens we are practicing. Very often although we say we are practicing Dharma, we have faith in Dharma but maybe Dharma is not working for us. It's because our mind is still very wild, very wrathful and aggressive. When that happens, when people have a lot of anger, very wild, very aggressive that means their practice is not going well. Therefore, we need to know the real meaning, the work of Dharma, try to use that over, over and over. When we have problems, we have anger, attachment, jealousy, and when negative emotions are going around in our mind we need more Dharma. That is how we apply Dharma in daily life to tame our wild mind.

There are two main qualities of Dharma: one is to subdue mental distractions, the other is to protect from samsara. In general, Dharma means to tame our mind and to protect. Whenever one is doing genuine Dharma one is trying to reduce his negative emotions and to protect one from falling into lower realms, from samsara. That's two things that make one a perfect Dharma practitioner.

What do we mean by mental distraction, negative emotions? There are many kinds of negative emotions but we normally say three poisoned minds or five poisoned minds. These three or five main negative emotions cause all kinds of negative emotions in our mind.

*"We always try to avoid seeing what is really happening in
our mind."*

Of course, everyone know we have heard of all this 10.000 times, or 100.000 times. The more we hear the more we ignore this. Why do we do that? Why do we ignore this important subject? Our ignorance is so strong that we do not want to know this subject. Because this is the main cause for us to be unhappy: to be bad, to have a bad name, a bad image of ourselves. Therefore, we do not really want to know these things. When they come around we think: "It's ok." When jealousy arises we think: "This is some else's fault, not my fault."

We always try to avoid seeing what is really happening in our mind. That is called ignorance, the power of ignorance. That prevents us from understanding reality. Therefore, we want to be in samsara for ever. We want to be ordinary people like we are now for ever. Now do we really want to do something differently? And we have to. We must try to understand these things and try to make change.

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ANGER

"Anger... only brings more problems, creates more hatred."

We took rebirth in the Desire realm so, naturally, in our mind there are a lot of desires. If these are desires for basic needs then this is not a problem. There is no way to cut that. The problem for human beings is that we have too much desire and desires for too many things. To practice Dharma is to cut down, to reduce desires and negative thoughts. There is no way to stop desires and attachments right away. But the benefit of Dharma is to reduce these attachments. If one has more desires, and more attachments everyday and for everything then there is no use to be a Dharma practitioner. We have to understand that.

I think anger brings no benefit at all. Having anger is always very bad. It brings unhappiness only, it creates more problems. But attachments, such as desires for basic things – we need that because we have to survive. We need to have something to eat, something to wear, to protect us. Still, anger is something totally different. Anger is always very bad, at any time. No benefit at all. Only brings more problems, creates more hatred. So I think we really want to get rid of our anger, hatred. Because hatred only causes more problems, more unhappiness between people, more unpleasant things among people. So this really bad thing, only extra thing and we don't need it.

But our mind naturally has emotions that very difficult to get rid of. But we have to try our best to get rid of that. To make ourselves more peaceful, gentler, more understanding, more tamed, more kind. And doing that is good not only for oneself but bring happiness for other people, for the environment.

Practicing Dharma we have to try our best, very hard, to understand how bad it is - anger or hatred - and how good it is not to have hatred.

“Sometimes practicing Dharma brings all problems, brings more jealousy,”

There are many things we can talk about. I can find just many of problems of yours, correct it and point it. These are other people's problems. People have a lot of problems, which is easy for one to see. But to see one's own problem is very difficult. So we wish that people can make changes in their life using Dharma, practicing Dharma. What kind of change we need to make, we must make? We must make changes that other can see. “I was very emotional, very narrow-minded long time, maybe ten years ago. But I have Dharma, I practice Dharma, now my mind is more open, understanding, takes more things. I don't get upset that easy as I used to be. I

don't get angry so easily because I have Dharma." If somebody says something like that it's very positive.

But things often happen with many people the other way around. Sometimes practicing Dharma brings all problems, brings more jealousy, I think. It brings more unhappiness and we get upset much easier. People do not understand things as they used to do. So this is negative part. Of course, we do not wish to see that.

We wish to see other things happening with Dharma practitioners. More open-minded, more patient, more compassionate, more peaceful. So we have to understand that. That's important. That's the only thing that is important for Dharma practitioners, but not other [things].

How much money do we have? If we have, that's good. We don't have, that's ok. How much compassion do we have? This is very important. How much understanding do we have? This is very important. How much anger do we have? Not good. Not good at all; bad, in fact. How much desire [for], attachment to money do we have? Not good.

When someone does many good things, try to be a good person, I think, positive things naturally will happen. We do not need to follow, to try to make that (positive thing) happen on purpose. For example, when we do a lot of purification, accumulation and when we do those things enough, of course, positive things will happen. So people should have that kind of understanding.

BEING A GOOD PERSON

"... the first thing is honest."

When Buddha became an enlightened person. He taught Dharma not to all human beings but only a few. He took a few fortunate people to teach Dharma.

Why did Buddha do that? Because whether Dharma work or not depends on you, if you are a good human being. It depends on if you are able to be good Dharma practitioner, a good person or not.

So to understand Dharma, to be a good Dharma practitioner, first we have to be a good person, good human being. What kind of condition makes a human being a good

human being? Of course, the first thing is honest. To be honest is very important. If someone is not honest, if someone is sort of sneaky, cheat people there's no chance, no condition to be a Dharma practitioner. Having a lot of angry mind is not a condition to be a good Dharma practitioner. A Dharma person has to be a compassionate person, honest person.

And to have intelligence is also very important. If [one has] no mental faculty, no intelligence to understand meaning of Dharma then there's no chance to practice Dharma. So being intelligent is also important; being intelligent with honesty! Not the other way around. These basic things, basic conditions are very important for the people who want to practice Dharma. Without these conditions there's almost no way to think of Dharma practice.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: *I'm practicing Sutrayana Amitabha, may I "move" to Your Vajrayana practice.*

Answer: We don't say "move" but we say "practice Sutra Yana and Vajrayana together". Because they are always related to each other, there's always connection between them. They don't have to really separate them completely from each other. To practice Vajrayana means to think, to visualize those Buddhas, Bodhisattvas. In Sutra Yana, in Sutra of Amitabha you have to visualize Amitabha, you think of Amitabha, the qualities of the pure land of Amitabha. This is how you practice Sutrayana Shukhavati Amitabha in Sutrayana. In Vajrayana also we visualize Amitabha. It is because there are five Buddha families in Vajrayana system. So we practice together.

When Buddha turned Dharma Wheel the first time He taught Four Noble Truth. In Sutra Yana it's called *Four Noble Truths*. In Vajrayana there is *Four Thoughts that turn mind to Dharma*, which means four preliminary practices. This is the same as practicing Four Noble Truths. So it doesn't matter whether one starts practicing Vajrayana or Sutra Yana one has to practice this; has to begin with this basic thing. One has to think of the difficulty of obtaining human body, impermanence of life, the

cause and effect of action, and the suffering of samsara. To think, understand this, practice this is the basis, the foundation. This is how one starts practicing Dharma. Vajrayana.

Question: *I'd like to ask a question everyone is interested in. Practicing Dharma one has to become a monk or a nun. What does being a monk or a nun mean? Why should monks and nuns shave hair?*

Answer: There's no requirement that one has to become a monk or a nun in order to become a Dharma practitioner. Generally, there's no requirement for that. Many people are willing to become a nun or a monk to have a simple life, easy life; to have more chance to be a real Dharma practitioner; or to be even closer to Buddha's path. That's ok. So the meaning of that is to try to reduce attachment, desires in mind by giving up many things. Being a monk or a nun may mean not only internally but also externally. They want to be different from ordinary people. [Lay] people wear ordinary clothes but monks or nuns wear clothes differently, the style is different. They shave their hair to make life simple. Because having hair you have to wash, to cut. It takes at least 10 or 15 minutes everyday. But we don't have hair ... *(laughing)* to make life simpler and less work.

The reason for three of us to shave our hair is very simple. The weather in Vietnam is very hot *(laughing)*.

Question: *If I want to practice visualizing Buddha or a Yidam should I receive initiation from a Vajra master? I've heard visualizing without receiving initiation may create bad karma. If I want to visualize You, may You give us some ritual, ceremony this time?*

Answer: Generally speaking, Vajrayana requires one to have got initiation, instructions, reading transmission for practicing a Deity or anything. So the answer is "Yes". But I think when people do not have good conditions to receive empowerment from a Vajra master, still they really want to practice and have got a lot of enthusiasm in practicing Vajrayana, I think they can practice. They can recite mantra, they can practice Yidam. But the best way is based on the conditions.

For the second question the answer is ... We or I do not have anything to give empowerment this time. Initiation takes many things: substances, mandala, and other things. Last time there were two monks, Dawa and Nyima ... They had everything. They had texts; they had other substances ... If we have this I would say "Yes". But because we do not have I say "No".

Question: *I want to have a good job in order to have means for making offering to Three Jewels, to monks, to make donation for printing and publishing Dharma books. Is that greed?*

Answer: For people like you have having family, being in the society, having regular, ordinary life it's important to have a good job. We agree with that, we accept that. We, monks, shanga wish people to have good jobs, people work well and have good life. I think people always change their mind. Many people think at the beginning: "If I have that much money I'll do this or that ...". But when they reach that they think; "I want more. I'll make it bigger." So their desire grows larger and larger.

Question: *When I listened to Your teaching on the important factors, conditions for enlightenment the factor Dharma reaches my heart most deeply. Could You please elaborate more on the factor Guru. I think this is the decisive factor.*

Answer: Yes, qualified teacher is very important. But I think we'll have many other opportunities to talk about this. When we have a chance we'll talk about this more. Because it has been a long time; I think all of you have been very patient. Now I think it's better to go home. I wish everyone to have a good time, a good evening. I hope if the talk was good please try to remember what I said. Remember to make it help to solve problems in your mind. Try to apply that. As I mentioned earlier not seeing the Teacher but listening to Him brings most benefit. So I'd like to say to everyone: "Thank you. Have a good evening, a good dinner and good sleep."

(This is the end of the teaching on 10th Oct. 2012.)

(Talk on 12.10.2012)

DHARMA

*"Dharma is virtuous
at the beginning, the middle and the end."*

Many of you are familiar with Tibetan culture, Tibetan Buddhism, have met with Tibetan lamas, and taken lessons from them. So, you know Tibetan tradition well. Still, Tibetan and Vietnamese traditions are different and there are some new things we can share. You can learn and I can learn something. So, I think you make questions and I'll answer. This is a good way of learning from each other.

Even though [we are from] these two traditions we have the same way of understanding Buddhism and teaching of Buddhism - Dharma. What is Dharma? Dharma is something good and Dharma makes things good. Dharma is always virtuous. Dharma is virtuous at the beginning, the middle and the end. That is Dharma.

What makes Dharma virtuous at the beginning, the middle and the end? This is Compassion, Bodhicitta and Good Action. These things make Dharma virtuous at the beginning, the middle and the end.

There are similarities between different traditions, different religions. For example, other traditions also talk about Emptiness. Also, different traditions see loving kindness as something very important. The way Buddhism describes Compassion is much broader, wider and correct. It's because Buddhist people see all sentient beings as equally important. Some other religions may see human beings as most important and other beings are not much important; other beings are for humans and human beings are the king.

In Buddhist tradition we don't see it that way. We see all sentient beings as equally important because all of them have Buddha's nature. All sentient beings depend on each other for their existence. All of them want to survive, to exist and to be happy. So, all of sentient beings are very important in our Buddhist tradition.

In Tibetan monasteries monks have to study 5 subjects. And this is the difference between Tibetan and Vietnamese traditions. In Tibetan monasteries monks have to study 5 subjects such as: first – logic. This is very important in Tibet. Then they have to study Madhyamika (the teachings of Madhyamika tradition), Prana-paramita, Amitabha teaching, and monastic disciplines of Hiayana tradition.

Tibet is a Buddhist country. Most of the people there are Buddhists and they are very religious. They also study Dharma and practice Dharma but they do not go to too many things. It's because they have their own families to support, have issues to take care of and responsibilities to take so they do not have as much time for Dharma practice as monks do. Dharma teachers also give teaching to the public but usually in a more simple way. They teach very practical, very useful and essential things. They talk all the time about Compassion, Loving kindness and Cause and Effect. These are very important subjects for population and for lay practitioners in Tibet.

*"Dharma is something easy, simple to talk about
but difficult to do. For this reason, every lama,
every Buddhist teacher always teaches the same things..."*

Generally speaking, a scholar is something very different from a Dharma practitioner. There are many very smart, knowledgeable scholars who are still wandering in samsara, not able even liberate themselves from negative thoughts. It's not enough only to understand Buddhist teachings. To be a good Dharma practitioner one must practice. One must develop Compassion, train his mind and liberate himself from negative thoughts, and dualistic thoughts. This is the unique way of becoming a real Dharma person.

Whoever wants to be a good Dharma practitioner must go through this way, must take this path of real Dharma. Otherwise, you can be a smart scholar but still wandering in samsara, still suffering and not able to get liberation. It's because many things, many problems arise in your mind that you are not aware of.

To really practice Dharma one should know that Dharma is something easy, simple to talk about but difficult to do. For this reason, every lama, every Buddhist teacher always teaches the same things, mentions the same thing to their disciples, over and over again and again. It's because they have good reason for that.

*"When we practice Amitabha
it's not enough just to recite the mantra."*

Ordinary people and Dharma practitioner in Tibet know Amitabha's practice. In Vietnam and in China you also do the practice of Amitabha. The teaching of Amitabha Buddha on how to take rebirth in Shukhavati land of Amitabha Buddha is very popular and important in Tibet, also. This is a very good and simple and very powerful practice that people should do. It's because of our conditions, our mental faculty and power that it's difficult for us to get liberation directly in one life. Compared to that path of taking rebirth in Shukhavati Land is easier way. Therefore, to practice Amitabha is very good.

Shukhavati Pure Realm is a place with no problems that we have in our world - something that we have in our body and mind. In the word *Dewachen* "De" means "Bliss" – the opposite of suffering. Shukhavati has great qualities and many people want to go there. For that reason, they recite Amitabha's mantra or His name repeatedly. This is the condition for someone to take rebirth in Shukhavati. But sometimes it's not enough just to recite Amitabha's name. There are four conditions for one to take rebirth in Shukhavati, which we should know. We should be aware of these four conditions for taking rebirth in Dewachen.

The four conditions are mentioned in Shukhavati Sutra by Shakyamuni Buddha. The first condition is called "supportive" which means to support the practice. We have

to visualize Amitabha Buddha. How do we visualize Him? We should know His style. What is His appearance? What clothes does He wear? We should also know His aspiration and know Dewachen very clearly. There are many payers for taking rebirth in Dewachen. One of the most popular, most simple, easy and clear is the prayer by Karma Chagme. There are translated versions of this prayer in English, Chinese and Vietnamese. It's very powerful and useful.

Amitabha in Sutra tradition usually has red color, one face, two arms. He wears three Bhikkhu robes, sitting on a jeweled throne on front of Bodhi Tree with all the decoration. The Great Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is on His right side. Bodhisattva Vajrapani is on the left side. Amitabha is surrounded by hundreds of thousands of Bodhisattvas and other high beings in the Realm of Shukhavati. We think of and visualize Amitabha in front of us.

When we practice Amitabha it's not enough just to recite the mantra. As I said earlier we should be aware of thoughts and motivation in our mind. While somebody is doing Amitabha practice he should focus his mind on the visualization. But the way we usually do is not like that. Most of people have lots of distraction and thoughts going on in their mind. So reciting mantras they think of other things like husband, wife, family etc. It's not good. Therefore, we need to be concentrated. How can we do that? We focus on visualization of Amitabha and try not to lose that visualization.

Second cause is to do purification and accumulation in front of Amitabha. How do we do that? There are many ways. It's taught in Shukhavati Sutra that one can do Seven Branch Prayer: prostration, offering, confession (purification), rejoicing, requesting Guru or Buddhas to turn The Dharma Wheel, requesting them to stay and dedication.

This is the foundation: to develop Bodhicitta and compassion. To recite the mantra is not enough and we have to develop Bodhicitta. One has to do that not only for oneself but also for others. Bodhicitta is a kind of motivation. "Bodhi" means "enlightened" and "citta" is "heart". "Bodhicitta" is "enlightened heart". What is "enlightened heart"? It's very pure. Why do we say that heart is pure - a bodhi-heart? It's because our hearts are not like that. They are very negative, full of selfishness and

selfish thoughts. Because of that they are not pure. But the hearts of high beings like Amitabha or Avalokiteshvara are very pure. They are not selfish so they can think of others all the time. [Unlike them], we think mainly about ourselves. We have to develop enlightened heart - Bodhicitta. How do we develop it? We have to think of all the sentient beings and wish them to be liberated from samsara and reach Buddha-hood.

The fourth cause is called the helper to that practice. We say a lot of aspiration. We say: "May I be reborn in Shukhavati. May all sentient beings take rebirth in Shukhavati." We say that over and over again many times. We say that with strong intention. And then we dedicate all good actions we have to the taking rebirth in Shukhavati of all sentient beings. These are the four causes for one to take rebirth in Shukhavati.

Compassion, bodhicitta are very important for the practice of Amitabha. It's very important, very useful to develop these qualities. Not only for Dharma practice but there are problems and issues for which development of these qualities is also very useful. We can see that many people do not have kindness or bodhicitta at all. These people are not happy and wrong things always happen with them. Most of the time they are in bad moods and they can be very aggressive, very selfish. Bodhicitta and compassion can help to reduce these negative emotions. These qualities can make one's mind pure and make one a good and peaceful person that many people appreciate, admire and want to be like them. We do not want to be like those who are negative, mean, and aggressive. So, compassion, kindness and bodhicitta are the qualities we should develop as much as we can.

THE PRACTICE

"If one wants the practice that introduces [him] to the nature of mind he has to go through preliminary practice (ngondro)."

***Question:** Buddhism appeared in this world 2556 years ago. Since then so, many schools and branches have been established. In Buddha's time were there so, many of them?*

Answer: Actually yes. Buddhist tradition in India has four main schools. These schools have their branches also. For example, Madhyamika has four schools. That's normal because Buddha's teaching is great, very broad so the ways people understand [the teaching] are very different. So there appeared this school and that school. But every school tries to reach the right view of Buddha's teaching. So that's ok to have different branches. People's mental faculty is very different so there are so many schools and branches. But the goal is the same: how to reach liberation. That's karmic connection. Why there are so many branches? The answer is: because there are different karmas.

***Question:** Should a Vajrayana practitioner go through ngondro practice? Is it appropriate if he doesn't practices ngondro and does only Tara, Medicine Buddha or Amitabha and so on?*

Answer: Why there is Vajrayana? Vajrayana is for those who are fortunate enough to reach liberation in a quicker way. There are many levels of Vajrayana teachings and practice, for example Mahamudra or Dzogpa Chenpo. To practice Mahamudra or Dzogpa Chenpo one should go through preliminary practice. This is preparation that creates the condition and the cause for one to reach liberation. Without those condition and cause it's almost impossible to reach realization. Therefore, ngondro is more important for that kind of practitioner. So, the answer is "Yes". If one wants to practice, for example, Green Tara or Medicine Buddha the requirement for that is to receive relevant initiation, teaching on that and instructions on that. Then one is able to do the practice. But not teaching on the nature of mind. If one wants the practice that introduces [him] to the nature of mind he has to go through preliminary practice (ngondro).

***Question:** In Vajrayana there are different Yidams. How can I know which Yidam I should practice?*

Answer: This question is very common. It's asked by many people. It's not that easy to say "do this" or "do that". How to know which Yidam one should practice? There are a few ways to know, at least two. First, the Yidam is introduced by the disciple's Guru. The second way: it happens naturally. Someone may just say: "Oh!

This Yidam is good. I want to practice.” Or some people have dreams [while] some other ones have special feelings when they hear the names of the Yidam. These are two main ways to choose the Yidam, i. e. the two main [kind of] karmas.

There’s another way, very common way of understanding Buddhas and Yidams. All Buddhas and Yidams have endless Compassion and Wisdom, endless power to help sentient beings. So, practicing whatever Yidam will bring a lot of benefit and a lot of good things will happen. There is Buddha of Longevity, Medicine Buddha, Buddha of Activity, and Buddha of Wisdom. If someone looks for longevity it’s ok to practice Buddha Amitayus. By practicing Buddha Amitayus one can reach liberation. We can choose Yidams in this way. If someone wants to succeed in this life, for example in business, he can practice Green Tara or Orgyen Dzambhala. Those who need wisdom can practice Manjushri or Sarasvati. This is a very common way to choose a Yidam.

SAMAYA

"Vajrayana or Dharma practice is all about samaya."

Question: *Today Buddhists do not know about 14 samaya of Vajrayana. Could You please give teaching on this to us and let us take the samaya.*

Answer: *(laughing)* Everyone likes to take vows very much. But people don’t like samaya very much. This is a great subject. Vajrayana or Dharma practice is all about samaya. For example, when I talked about how to practice Amitabha the four conditions I taught are kind of samaya. It’s because if you don’t do that there’s no way to get success; there will come problems. If you do that you’ll succeed in your practice. Therefore, I said Vajrayana or Dharma practice is all about samaya. 14 samaya in Vajrayana are very important but to talk about that we need more time.

What is samaya? The meaning of samaya is to take commitment that we’ll do this or that. When someone says: “I practice compassion” the samaya for that is: not to have anger, aggressiveness, or hatred. Hatred, anger and selfishness are obstacles to

practicing compassion. Therefore, samaya means someone saying: “I’ll do this, I’ll not do that.”

Someone says: “I practice Vajrayana.” What does that mean? That means: I establish the nature, the purity of the mind. That’s the general meaning of Vajrayana. The samaya is: “I’ll not create more negative thoughts, negative thoughts to other people, other phenomena and other things.” This is one of the most important parts of Vajrayana practice. That’s very general. There are many samaya but you can take just one, or two or three. I’ll see Guru as Buddha, listen to Guru. I’ll try to remain, to rest in wisdom, in the mind of Guru.

Samaya is a Sanskrit word. Its meaning is “keep commitment”. In Tibetan language it is “Tamsit”. “Tam” means to say “I’ll do this or I’ll do that”. And then you keep that. That’s what “tamsit” is. That is samaya. When someone says: “I’m practicing Buddhism.” You ask: “What Buddhist tradition are you practicing, Hinayana or Mahayana?” If he says “Mahayana” then, naturally, that means “I’m practicing compassion.” That’s the meaning of Mahayana. Saying so means “I’ve taken commitment that I’ll try to see all sentient beings my parents; I would be kind to them like a mother.”

Samaya is something important and something you don’t know much. I’m practicing compassion but I want to be angry. That’s not ok. When you are upset with somebody, you are angry with somebody you have broken samaya - samaya of bodhicitta, compassion.

"The teaching of Patrul Rinpoche is very direct and clear."

Here is “Words of My Perfect Teacher” by Patrul Rinpoche. He’s a very good teacher that teaches you how to develop bodhicitta, compassion, kindness, how to see things correctly, how to see other people. People should have some time, put some efforts to read this book. It will give you very good lesson. You’ll see very clearly how selfish we are, how angry we are. You can see that very easily reading this book.

The author of this book, Patrul Rinpoche, was a very famous Dharma practitioner. He was accepted by all Tibetan traditions. Even great masters agree that he was a great Dharma practitioner like Milarepa. H H Dalai Lama mentions Patrul Rinpoche many times. The teaching of Patrul Rinpoche is very direct and clear. He uses very simple vocabulary so that ordinary people can understand. I don't know what about the Vietnamese translation but in Tibetan language it is a very clear and simple teaching; very simple way of teaching.

Patrul Rinpoche was not rich or famous for having many disciples. But He is famous for His style which is different from that of other people. He's direct and humble. He criticized all lamas who were arrogant. This is His picture. There is a question to this picture. Many people whether this picture is Patrul Rinpoche or not. It's because this lama wears something very nice. So, they say this is not Him as He used to look like a beggar.

I've talked about Patrul Rinpoche. People who want to practice Dharma, no matter what tradition you are from, what your lineage is, can benefit a lot if you read the book "*The words of my perfect Teacher*". It teaches you how to practice real Dharma, how to establish renunciation, how to develop compassion and bodhicitta, how to understand samsaya, understand your life, how to deal with issues and problems in your life. There is a lot of wisdom, intelligence and understanding in this book. It's a great book to read.

As I mentioned earlier Patrul Rinpoche was very popular. All Tibetan schools and traditions accept that He was a great master, a great, genuine and honest person. He was not only a great Lama but, they accept, also a very humble and very honest. He had very little attachment to this life. His life was fully dedicated to Dharma. All traditions of Tibetan Buddhism accept He is as great as Milarepa. The Great Treasure Revealer Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who is one of the most important Treasure Revealer in Tibet, a very high realized being in history of Tibet, composed a prayer for Patrul Rinpoche. He wrote a very nice, beautiful and long prayer and said to one of His disciples who was in charge of publishing this payer that he could show the text to Patrul Rinpoche only after he had finished the publishing. Otherwise He would

destroy it. The disciple was not able to do as instructed. Patrul Rinpoche learned about that and threw the prayer into the fire.

But the disciple had already learned the text by heart and managed to save it. Patrul Rinpoche is externally emanation of Shantideva, internally emanation of the Great Mahasiddha of India Saraha. Secretly, He is emanation of Avalokiteshvara. Patrul Rinpoche is a great high being and very special emanation.

BARDO

"... doing Dharma practice is a good preparation for a better place after this life.

Question: *Where are we going after death? Could You please talk about the Tibetan Book of the Dead.*

Answer: I think where we go after death depends on where we want to go. If we want to go to a better place we have to prepare. For Dharma practitioner doing Dharma practice is a good preparation for a better place after this life. That is the general meaning of Dharma practice. In our Buddhist tradition there is teaching about what place is better to go and what place to avoid. So, Buddha's teaching gives good instructions, direction about where to go and where not to go.

In the Teachings on bardo there are six bardos, maybe 3 or 4 ones. [The time] between this life and the next life is a bardo. In general, "bardo" is whatever is between some other things. Dream is another bardo (dream bardo). When we meditate focusing on some object this is another bardo (meditation bardo). When we are sick and the disease takes away our life; from that moment until the breath stops this is bardo of death moment. To understand bardo well takes a lot of practice. In daily life you should think everything in this life is like a dream, everything is illusion and we are living in a dream.

Even though we are awake now but we still think all the visions, the appearances are like a dream. This is a way of understanding bardo. It's because if we have strong attachment to appearances of this life there is no way to recognize illusions in the Bardo. Therefore, a method to understand the Bardo is to think everything [in this life] is a dream. This is how to train your mind to understand Bardo well. Another way is to reduce dualistic thoughts, attachment, grasping in your mind. This is a simple and practical way to deal with Bardo [state].

Teaching on bardo is a very great subject and takes a lot of time to teach. To understand that teaching one has to have some basis, some condition and preparation like preliminary practices. That teaching is related to Dzopa Chenpo teaching. To understand real meaning, real nature of bardo one must understand the nature of mind. Everything in the teaching mentions emanations of mind. That teaching is based on the teaching of Dzogpa Chenpo Therefore, to receive that teaching one has to go through preliminary practices.

I, for example, teach six bardos in my monastery in the winter. I give that teaching for three months or sometimes 100 days. It's a very long, profound, complete, very beautiful, practical, blissful and powerful. So, if anyone wants to know and to practice they should prepare for that. When the karmic conditions get together then there will be chance to receive that teaching.

Five of the six bardos belong to this life. [The teaching on] the fifth bardo – the bardo of luminosity, bardo of Dharmata – is mainly about the nature of mind. So, if one takes a lot of practice on nature of mind or other Vajra practice then there is high chance for him to reach liberation in the bardo of Dharmata right after the moment of death. So, it takes a lot of experience, a lot of efforts to be able to do that. Therefore, one must have a lot of practice.

Question: *How should we, beginners, divide time between mantra reciting and meditation?*

Answer: Life of a Dharma practitioner at whatever time is practice. But in this kind of society, in busy life it is difficult to use most of our time to practice Dharma.

So, we take part time to practice Dharma. In the morning if one gets up early then wake up with understanding and remembering the meaning of life and impermanence of life.

To refresh your mind think of impermanence. Think because everything is impermanent so I don't have much time to do something for myself. So, I want to do useful things, meaningful things, which is Dharma practice. So, the first thing to remember is impermanence.

Remember impermanence is very important. I have to practice Dharma because I have a lot of negative karmas so if I do otherwise then when death comes I'll go to low realms, to bad places. I want to be a better [person], to have more freedom. So, reflection on impermanence is great practice and we do whenever we can. If you have a ngondro text then use it. You know how to begin, for example, the taking refuge part or developing bodhicitta part. This is written in the text and you follow it. Try to think of and remember the meaning while doing practice.

AMITABHA PRACTICE AND GURU YOGA

*"Being in the wisdom,
the mind of Guru is essential in doing Vajra practice."*

Question: *Do we have sadhanas for the practice of Amitabha? Do we need to use ngondro text for this practice?*

Answer: There are many sadhanas of Amitabha in different traditions. There are a few sadhanas in Lama Sang's Treasures. Visualization belongs to Vajra Yana tradition. Generally speaking ngondro or Guru Yoga is a very important part for Dharma practitioners especially for Vajra Yana practitioners. Vajra Yana requires the practice of Guru Yoga all the time. Being in the wisdom, the mind of Guru is essential in doing Vajra practice. So, Guru Yoga is very very very important.

Practitioners like Patrul Rinpoche for example – He practiced Guru Yoga every day. Sometimes He practiced Amitabha, Manjushri or other Yidam but before doing that practice He started with Guru Yoga. So, Guru Yoga is daily practice for Vajrayana

practitioner all the time and for all traditions. Not only in Tibetan tradition but also for those masters, like Mahasiddhas of India such as Tilopa and Naropa, this is also their tradition. They taught us how to do things. They gave us their teachings and showed us their tradition. So, this is important not only in Tibet but in India as well.

Question: *Could You please let us know what Amitabha's mantra is? Can You teach us how to practice so, that mantra recitation could be effective?*

Answer: If one tries to do that, the 4 conditions, and to think of Amitabha and the Pure Land and in front of that does accumulation, purification, develop bodhicitta and a lot of aspiration to achieve that [goal] then those 4 conditions will make his/her Amitabha practice very successful.

How do you do mantra recitation? You say the name of Amitabha: "A Zi Da Fat" (*laughing*). You are calling Amitabha while repeating His name. Why do we repeatedly call His name? The reason is we are making very close connection with Amitabha. I call You, You pay attention to me, help me, give me blessing and give me power. This is the meaning of repeating Amitabha's name. In Chinese people say: "Namo A Mi Ta Fo."

"Namo" means you pay respect, you do prostration to Amitabha. Why do we respectfully call Amitabha? It's because you have strong devotion to Amitabha so you are calling repeatedly to Him. What does that devotion bring? Only that devotion [can] bring you to Amitabha very closely and Amitabha to you in a very special way. "Namo" represents devotion, respect in mind, which is very important. So just saying the name is not enough. But saying the name respectfully, saying with devotion, with faith and this makes a big difference. It brings a lot of blessing. That makes prayer very successful.

What is the meaning of "Amitabha"? What does that mean – the name of the Buddha? "Amitabha" means "light", "brightness" (Of course there are many [kinds of] lights. There's sometimes very little light (*laughing*). Amitabha's light is countless, immeasurable. Is it regular light like the sun or the bulb? No. It is

measureless light of Wisdom, Power, Activity, Compassion, Bodhicitta and Quality. This is boundless, countless light of Amitabha.

***Question:** Could you let us know if Shukhavati Land exists somewhere or it just exists in our mind, in visualization?*

Answer: Amitabha's Land does not exist in this Universe. It exists, however, not only in mind but does exist in reality. It's in a different place. In the prayer of Shukhavati by Karma Chagme or in Shukhavati Sutra it is said that the Pure Land of Amitabha is very far from here to the West – countless worlds. After you pass countless universes you reach to Dewachen. But to go there we travel mentally, not physically. We do not take airplane, car or motorbike. The travel there is very short, very quick.

GURU

*"To be somebody's Guru is not easy.
To be somebody's disciple is not easy either."*

***Question:** How can we decide what master is our Guru?*

Answer: I think karmic connection makes a master one's Guru. Karmic connection is very important. Generally speaking, there are many requirements for a master. A master has to have a lot of qualities. He has to be qualified, which is mentioned in different texts. If you want to search for a master, search for his qualities; if the master is knowledgeable of Dharma, compassionate, kind and honest; if he acts according to Dharma. Or does he do something very bad all the time. We have to know different things related to the master. In the Buddhist traditions in China and Vietnam the ways people do are very different. The people here do not have means to really investigate the master. They receive teaching and empowerments first and then make judgments. That is too late. That is a way of making mistakes. That is not good. So before making Dharma connection one should investigate and should know about the master well and

then go from there. How do we know that one is our Guru? Once you have established Dharma connection then of course that is your Guru. This is one thing. If the master is qualified, compassionate, and knowledgeable of Dharma and he acts according to Dharma then it is ok to take as your Guru.

But here it's very different. In China and the US also, some people having received lots of teaching from a master and then say: "Oh, I don't like this master." It's not ok to say things like that because you have already received lots of teaching from him. So, if you want to say that you have to say that before you make Dharma connection. Then that makes you pure. If you say that afterward that makes you bad. That's called breaking samaya.

The word "Guru" is very heavy. "Guru" means somebody higher than anyone else. What makes a Guru special? The knowledge, the wisdom, and the compassion of the Guru make him higher than anything else. To be somebody's Guru is not easy. To be somebody's disciple is not easy either. It's because to be a disciple, a practitioner of Dharma one has to have many conditions: honesty, understanding, knowledgeable, hard work ... These things make one a real disciple.

Without all these [qualities] and having no knowledge to distinguish between good and bad one jumps doing things in a stupid way. That is not a good disciple. And if somebody is dishonest - he/she sees some qualities of Guru but doesn't tell the truth. He/she tells something [totally] different criticizing and putting in more things this is not an honest way. This is a very bad disciple. So, to be a disciple one has to have some qualities as well.

TODAY WORLD

"We have to check with our mind all the time.

And to say to ourselves: "This is enough, otherwise it's too much." "

***Question:** Nowadays images of sex are advertised everywhere and all means of communication are used for this. How can we protect our minds.*

Answer: Buddhism has methods to tame one's mind. It's because people have very wild mind and distracted mind that is attached to many things and that has a lot of desire. Buddhism teaches us how to reduce desires. It teaches people to have contentment, satisfaction, which is very important. People lose qualities of their mind having too much desire. We have to check with our mind all the time. And to say to ourselves: "This is enough, otherwise it's too much." So that's how we should put limit to our desires. We have to know the power of desire, attachment. If we let it go then it will go [further] endlessly. If we stop here then we'll be able to put limit because we somehow can control our mind if we really want to. So, I think to work with mind is a way to reduce desire and attachment. Having too much desire creates obstacles to one's life. If we do not really want to have that kind of obstacles we have to put limit and control our mind.

Since we have chance to talk about this in the few following days and since we have no time to listen, to talk, to make questions that is enough for today. We can stop here. And the last thing [to talk] is nowadays in the world many scholars agree that Buddhism is not only as a religion but it's a great education. Buddhism is a great education. It is accepted by many scholars and people. Studying Buddhism is a great way of learning that makes one a good person, an honest, peaceful, compassionate and kind person, which is something very good and necessary. In this modern time, very tough time without having this kind of education people can do such bad things that are beyond our understanding. To study Buddhism is very meaningful and useful for life and people.

(This is the end of the teaching on 12th Oct. 2012)

(Talk on 13.10.12)

DHARMA

"it's because it works for me I think it will work for you."

Many of you have strong faith in Dharma. You have belief in Buddha's Dharma. That is the reason we are here. We say "karmas". Everything is created by karmas. We are from Tibet – Tibetan Buddhist people - and are here, in this country, for [helping] Vietnamese Buddhists. We get together in this place due to karmic connections. So that is good. Because of this karmic connection I'll be helpful to you. Many of you, especially the organizers, have put a lot of efforts, used a lot of energy and time to make this event happen. That is something we should remember. I also appreciate that.

All of you know that Tibet has had some difficult times. But still there is a lot of Dharma, a lot of genuine masters. Buddhism in Tibet is still very complete and rich. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism is actually going around the world. Many people try to learn this tradition as well. So I have chances to go to places to teach Buddha's Dharma and chances to meet different people to talk about some ideas of Buddhism with people and to share different ideas with people. This is something very good.

I have been a Buddhist person since I was born. So, Buddhism pervades my life; I'm familiar with this tradition. So, I can feel, I can see the benefit of that religion, being a religious person, practicing that religion. I can say to me "I'm a Buddhist person". There is a lot of benefit to me to be so.

(Some people want to know about Rinpoche's life)

"We do not talk about anything but Dharma.

It is very important."

A Dharma person talks about Dharma, which is something for him or her very special. We do not talk about anything but Dharma. It is very important; and it is very important to me as well. That [Dharma talk] symbolizes the knowledge of that [Dharma] person, experience of that person. So, I don't think we need to talk about my life, which is always related to Dharma especially.

When I teach people what really works for me I try to tell people and to give that message to people: it's because it works for me I think it will work for you. That is the reason why if it's something I don't think to be good I don't say it's good. That is not a way of teaching Dharma.

Whatever I say, whatever I think to be good I tell you: "You should learn this." For example, when I say compassion is very important. "Oh, He really believes this is good." You should see that. You should believe that. There are some people – they are just wandering; or they study Buddhism because they want to make money or something. But my case is very different. I talk not about me, but it's just [Dharma] teaching in general. For Dharma teachers, that's essential that their ideas, their views, their habits, their 'how to teach' etc. everything shows the teacher himself. That's a way for you to get to know the teacher.

So, if some teacher says repeatedly "Renunciation is very important", for example, then he must sincerely think that is very important. That is a method for disciples to get to know the teacher.

INNER PEACE

"I think destruction inside..."

The tradition of Tibetan monastery I have described the other day a bit; for example: what kind of study monks do in a monastery. They have to go through this system, this tradition. Tibet is very different, especially in old Tibet. This is a remote country, a unique place. There were no regular schools [for the population]. The only way for ordinary people to do is to send their boys to monasteries to get education. For that reason, there a lot of monks in Tibet. It's because Tibetan people have a lot of faith

in Dharma. They had very strong wish for their children to get education in monasteries. The monastery works as a university in Tibet. That tradition had very positive part. But there were negative parts, too. Many people did not have a chance to get education. Ordinary people were not well-educated. So, the luckiest ones were monks. And, of course, a lot of nuns got education as well. But most of the people who got education were monks.

Nowadays, things have changed. The whole system has changed. The style in Tibet has changed a lot. There are more chances for ordinary people to get education. More and more people learn Tibetan [language] to read texts and their education improves a lot. Even though the situation was tough in Tibet but now the recovery works. In many monasteries education is better than it used to be. So, this is a good piece of information I've given to you.

I told the story of my monastery to the Vietnamese people who went to Golok this year; the history of the monastery, its life in the past and how it is now. So [those] people know that. We say, for example, some bad time is very useful Dharma. I think if people do not want the change then external conditions can not be very powerful. For example, though Tibetan people have undergone Cultural Revolution or other difficult times but internally there is not much change at all. We kept the rich tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in our mind. Actually, Tibetan Buddhism was not destroyed at all although it has gone through such a difficult time.

But what makes that change? I think destruction inside - the destruction, for example, caused by too much desire, too much attachment to material things. That destroys the rich tradition, not what happens around in the environment. Therefore, I think, during the most difficult time in Tibet were most faithful. But nowadays, probably they have seen a lot of things in the world a lot of development in material things so they have got some distraction. They focused on the external part too much, not on the internal one. That's the problem.

TRADITION

"... Buddhist tradition was kept by those faithful people."

Therefore, I think the tradition, especially Buddhist tradition, was kept by those faithful people. There were a lot of great masters, brave masters and [they were] very loyal to that tradition so the tradition was kept very well. But as I explained to those people now it has improved; the monks, the study, the practice etc. all of this has improved a lot since I was a child.

I think this is common everywhere. External development or material development affects inner peace and inner world. When too much development externally happens then people pay a lot of attention to that. There is a chance to lose the inner strength, inner peace. Material development has some good parts but mainly it can bring destruction for people. It keeps people very busy and brings people a lot of worries and produces a lot of pressure on their mind; so, people try to follow that development all the time, running after that, chasing after that. Of course, it's not harm to think of other things, to do other things. But inner things, inner peace are ruined. They run not only physically but mentally when they are running after that development. This is bad for people's mind, for peace of mind, for the tradition, religion. That I think people know. People should be aware of that kind of dangerous situation.

FAITH

*"To keep faith, we have to know
how to develop inner peace, inner strength."*

Believing in a religion or having faith in Buddha or other Gods is something very strong. It's often said it is like a lion. It can not be destroyed by others but oneself. Buddha Shakyamuni said His religion will not destroyed by other religions but by the problems created by His disciples, His people. For example, if monks and nuns have a lot of desire and they don't study, don't practice or meditate then they will follow

material things, material development. That will destroy the religion, destroy Buddhism. That lion is very powerful so no other animals can attack him but germs in his body will kill the lion. He said something like that. So, our faith belongs to ourselves. If you want to keep and to develop it then we'll try to do that. To keep faith, we have to know how to develop inner peace, inner strength. That is the only way we can develop our faith we can keep our faith and devotion to Buddha and Dharma.

There are some bad monks, bad lamas, bad religious people everywhere. But people often make mistakes. They say that religion is bad because of that person. Buddhism is bad because of that monk. That is not an honest way of seeing things. What we need to know is how Buddhism requires followers, especially monks and nuns, [to act]. Those lamas or monks are not able to represent that religion, that tradition. But people do not see this way and they say the religion is bad. Therefore, I think religious everyone, especially teachers, should be careful of their actions: how they act, how they think, how they talk. It's because that affects the religion and the tradition.

If a Buddhist person talks very nicely, peacefully and honestly then this is very positive. I think we should do that and try to do that. Whenever we are not able to do that, whenever we are out of patience we should think: "Oh, I do something very bad." We should fix the problem. Still, there are Buddhists who say mean things, have arguments with each other but they don't think this is a problem. That's a big problem. So, I say as a Buddhist you should notice that there is something bad and you can not do that. We must try. That will be good not only for oneself but for the community or the whole religion as well.

I have not seen Chinese or Vietnamese monks who do these things. But, unfortunately there are some in Tibet. Sometimes Tibetan lamas or monks do these things and that is not good. In Tibet I try to convince monks not to do that and criticize them a lot. Even though I don't see anyone like that in Vietnam or China there may be. Who knows? But I hope not.

DESIRES

"... we should control these desires otherwise there will be too much for anything."

When people have too much desire even so-called monks sometimes can not control their mind. In Tibet 3 or 4 years ago, there was a monk who was not really a good monk. He was wandering around spending time in daily life society doing some business, making money. We don't know for what because he did not have a family. One day he had an idea: to kill his best friend for his belongings because his friend had some jewelry and cash. So, he secretly killed his friend. The police found him and he's spending time in prison now. That is very bad. That actually happened in my tradition in Tibet. It's something that has happened and it's real.

Similar story can happen anywhere in any religion. In the world that happens quite often that a religious person kills somebody. But a monk did such a thing is very rare to hear. So, this is always very good to check one's mind to control desire and attachment.

That is how mind makes people crazy. It's because everyone has mind, very wild and very nasty, so that could happen with anyone. That mind sees many things as important. That can happen to any of us very easily. In this Realm of Desire, of course, we have desires but somehow, we should control these desires otherwise there will be too much for anything. Therefore, to be a Dharma practitioner, to be a Buddhist person the basic thing one has to do is to check the mind, to work with it to make some peace and understanding in the mind. We should try to fix our mind because it primordially is pure. The nature of mind is pure so we have chance to fix it and to make it tamed and peaceful and bring some wisdom, patience and kindness. That is the meaning of being a Dharma person.

People have life and they have to survive. But we have to survive according to the rules, on a system. Then that will be ok and we have a good life without having such terrible things: a lot of corruption, dishonesty, cheating a lot, lying etc. without all this as much as possible. Then it's possible life it ok.

Buddha, including shanga and monasteries pray for people, Buddhist supporters and followers to have good life, to fulfill their wishes. But, as I said, we have to have a system. Buddha does not say people can not do business, for example. That's ok to do business. But one has to do business in an honest way. What is the meaning of business? - To make money and to get some benefit from that. But there is a system, there is some limitation: one can not make that much money at a time; for example, 100% or 200% - we can not much that much money. And if you say: "I'll do that" then there is cheating and lying for that [purpose]. That is not ok.

We often say: "You can not harm others." Unfortunately, in Tibet I have seen this kind of people (like in China or Vietnam), Buddhist people whose business is killing animals. Buddha teaches that one should not harm others, not kill others' lives and should try to save other beings' lives. This is a system. This is a requirement in Buddhist tradition. Still, not only in Vietnam or China but in Tibet as well some people who have taken refuge in Three Jewels and keep killing yak or sheep for their life or for money. This is very sad. For many people there is no other option and that is the only thing they can do to survive then that is understandable. But we must not do that for desire. If one kills animals to get rich this is not ok. If people have to kill some chickens or pigs as they have no other option then that is understandable. But many people are not in that situation. They try do make more money, try to use other beings and others' lives. That is terribly bad.

This morning we discussed some important issues of Buddhism – what mistakes people always make. I mentioned this morning there are many real things like that in reality that happen with many people. The reason for me to talk about these realistic things, the things that happen in reality, is important to know. It's because we want to be good, to be real Dharma people. "Real Dharma person" means people who do not make such mistakes, such problems. They are those who do things correctly, think accordingly. They do good, nice, beneficial and virtuous things.

HONESTY

*"Try to be a nice person and be honest person.
That covers everything."*

Generally speaking you can spend all your life to study Dharma. It's because in Buddhism there are many subjects. Buddha's teaching are very great. Therefore, some scholars spend all their life studying but they say: "Oh, I'm not knowledgeable enough for Dharma. I have to learn more and more." So, you can spend that much energy and time to study the tradition of Buddhism. But people like us – ordinary people of ordinary lives – still want to know Dharma, want to practice Dharma.

We do not need to have that much time to study. We just need some basic understanding and basic things to do. Try to be a nice person and be honest person. That covers everything.

How to be an honest person? The whole meaning of Buddhist teaching is actually about how to be an honest person. And teachers show methods how to be an honest person and how important honesty is. So, this is very important. But still, it's difficult to do that. The reason for us to be dishonest all the time is our mind. We train our mind in different ways – sneaky ways, dishonest ways. Therefore, we have these strong habits and it's difficult to do that (to be honest).

But, as I said this morning the nature of our mind is very pure. It's very pure from the beginning – so it's naturally very pure, very honest, very peaceful. Therefore, if we want to train our mind in that position there is a chance. There is a way. This is very possible. It depends on if you try or not. If you do so of course there is a way. It's because naturally there is a way. So, I think that's something very important.

EQUALLY KIND

"We can not reject anyone."

And Buddhist people should be kind people, kind to everyone, to all beings. That is one of the main parts about Buddhism. People are nice and kind to many people but still they can be mean to other ones. They can be aggressive, jealous, angry or whatever. They can be like that to other people. To be kind to your friends, your relative and families is not enough. We want to be kind to everyone including those people we do not like very much. We have to try to be helpful to others.

We can not reject anyone. We can not push ourselves from being helpful to anyone. It's because if you do that you try to reject being kind to someone. That means you push yourself from being a compassionate person. It's because compassion requires us to be equally kind to everyone, to all sentient beings. So that is very important.

And especially, we have to be peaceful, sweet, kind and honest to those Buddhist people, to those who are in the same religion such as Buddhism and are [disciples] of the same teacher. In the community if anyone does such things in not nice ways – try not to be understanding – and that brings obstructions to the community, to your lineage, to your tradition. Therefore, it's important to be kind and to see how important to have good relationship between so-called brothers and sisters.

HARMONY IN THE SANGHA

"Disharmony is something very negative..."

Disharmony is something very negative, very powerful that destroys good communities, good shangas, good groups, monasteries and temples. Buddha always said that it is very serious and unvirtuous thing to destroy harmony between Dharma

people. So, to keep good connection, to develop friendship between Dharma people is a very important and very virtuous thing, Buddha said.

And we can see even in Tibet recently some very important monasteries no longer there because of disharmony. They did a lot of gossiping, there was a lot of jealousy between [the people], a lot of arguments in the shanga so they went to different directions and the place is gone. That happens in many places, with many shangas and communities even during Buddha's time. Some community, some shangas (monks) and group had problems – disharmony problems – and that community was destroyed. So, for your tradition, for example, in Vietnamese Buddhist communities having good friendship, having harmony and mutual understanding is very important.

It is good not only for the community but also it's good for one's own samaya. It's because samaya is something that always deals with your companies, your Dharma brothers and sisters. The higher teaching you receive, the deeper teaching you receive, the deeper or more special connection you get with your companies

and Dharma companions. So, it's very important to respect each other, to respect all sentient beings, especially those who belong to the same religion, the same tradition.

HARMONY IN THE SOCIETY

"The only way for you to have happy and peaceful life is being peaceful people and understanding people."

Good relationship is necessary not only for the community but also for the society. In a family harmony is very important. If husband and wife have arguments all the time then there's no harmony. Is it something pleasant? No! Therefore, Buddhism teaches people how to have peaceful mind anywhere, at anytime, in any place. It does not teach only people in temples to have peaceful life. What make peaceful life and peaceful mind? What I have said earlier is basic things. These conditions are very necessary for life, not only for Dharma but for peaceful life.

To be a peaceful person is not an easy thing to do. When people want to be more successful they want to be more powerful. So, they try to destroy others, try to argue with others, try to fight, try to beat and do whatever. Those kind of actions is just like child's style. They do not work very well. They work only temporarily, not in the long run. In the long run if you are aggressive and dishonest then you'll have more problems. It will only bring more problems for you. It will not do away your problems. The only way for you to have happy and peaceful life is being peaceful people and understanding people. That is something very important and necessary for the long run.

Generally speaking that is how to be Dharma people. That information and method given by Buddha, Dharma and Buddhism I used to teach those things. I don't teach specifically this lineage or that lineage. I don't mention what lineage I'm from. That's not very important, not very necessary unless I'm asked to do so – to do some specific teaching or empowerments.

I teach those things even in Tibet and people find them very practical for their life. So, people have new understanding the qualities and the important parts of Buddhism. Tibetan people are usually very quiet people. Also, people in many places in the world are like that – very quiet; mentally quiet. But being quiet does not work all the time so they have to give up or they end up their life without achieving anything. So those ways of teaching in Buddhist tradition are very important and very practical.

In your daily life when you deal with many things, when you face many difficulties or many different things in society, life and family also understanding and patience are very important. Being very short-tempered, getting upset very easily – those kind of actions are very bad and do not help very much. In a family, for example, when your companion gets upset because of this or that then you should be patient and not get angry at that time. Try to let it go so there's a chance to bring more peace in the family and in your mind.

KURUKULLA - POWER

"It's because ordinary people or beings are not powerful.

It's because they are under the power of their negative thoughts."

This Kurukulla prayer "The Hook of Red Lightning" was written by me. I wrote it in Vietnam. I have some writings on Kurukulla. This is one of the prayers that many people often do. Also, this prayer has good stories. Some people practiced this prayer and good things happened with their life so they think this is special – it has some blessing.

In my case, Kurukulla is not my main practice. In fact, I did not practice Kurukulla at all. But one time interdependent origination arose so I wrote down that sadhana of Kurukulla. I did that in Vietnam. Generally, I feel Kurukulla is a very kind Deity. In my personal life Kurukulla is helpful supporter for me in many ways even though I don't do that practice very much. It's because I have this connection and sometimes I have to give some teaching on Kurukulla to people I have to have some practice to be done; I have done some prostration for Kurukulla.

"Prayer for power". This is not regular power, not the power that is created by extreme or regular ordinary conditions but it is related to nature of phenomena, nature of our mind. The meaning of this prayer is to rebuild the inner strength, the inner power and the purity of the mind. It's because ordinary people or beings are not powerful. Why? It's because they are under the power of their negative thoughts. This power is beyond that kind of power. Therefore, with purity we see nature of the mind and of phenomena.

I think if anyone wants to be powerful they have to understand the real meaning of power is to understand nature of one's own mind, to realize that nature. That kind of realization is genuine power – power that never changes, power that controls everything, Nirvana or Samsara. And other powers are not really power.

There are many teachings of Buddha. All those teachings given by Shakyamuni Buddha were given for the reason: As sentient beings have different mental faculty and mental interests there are many [different] Dharma teachings. For those very fortunate, very smart, intelligent people Buddha gave very powerful teachings like instruction on nature of mind.

Mentally, people have different levels so they were taught at different times and different seats. But the purpose of Dharma teaching is for every sentient beings to eventually reach that kind of free state, that kind of powerful place. I think Kurukulla is not for material [gain] or for someone to get things in this life. The main purpose is to reach that kind of wisdom - that power.

The first two lines is actually saying about nature of mind. The nature of mind is like this; it's wisdom like vajra body that never changes. It never loses its strength and understanding. Therefore, primordially (from the beginning) there is no suffering. Naturally, there's no conceptualization - no conceptualization of that suffering and of that negative thing. It's very pure. The way Kurukulla laughs, the sound of Her laughing is sound of Emptiness and Bliss. The union of Bliss and Emptiness.

The real meaning of this prayer is we call Kurukulla as we want to be free from the extreme thoughts and concepts in our mind. We understand that the nature of Kurukulla is the same as nature of emptiness. By calling Kurukulla one requests Her to protect him or her from these extremes and to give him or her power of wisdom – power to understand reality.

There are also 9 other Deities in the prayer so we pray together: Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara, Hayagriva, Orgyen Dzambhala, Tara, Vajrayogini ... Tara, sometimes Red Tara, is Deity or Dakini of power. But in this case it is Green Tara is Deity of all activities. And Kamaraja with His consort and so on. We pray together these Deities with Kurukulla. Kurukulla is emanation of body, speech, mind, qualities and activities of all Buddhas. Therefore, she is a great Buddha. Since She has many qualities She has power to give us this kind of blessing. Therefore, we pray Kurukulla.

As for ordinary people when a thought arises in mind we try to follow it. As soon as thoughts arise we lose our strength and concentration so we try to follow that concept, that thought. If this is not a good thought then we are unhappy and we get distracted. We do not have the strength, the power to control ourselves so we follow our thoughts and we go up and down accordingly. Therefore, we are not powerful, not free from these extremes. That's called illusion. These thoughts are like a network that never ends. One after another many endless thoughts arise and we get all kinds of feelings and moods. Therefore, we do not have power to control ourselves, to stay in the same position, to stay in happiness and, sometimes, we do not have power to

stay in unhappiness. We just follow whatever we think. So now we have chance to pray to Kurukulla to protect us from this situation.

On page 3 “We call out for ...”. We understand our own situation and the nature of Kurukulla so we make confession to Kurukulla to purify our negative karmas done through body, speech and mind.

Of course, there are different ways of understanding things. Different levels and different yantras talk on different subjects, different things, and have different ways of understanding phenomena and the nature of human body as well. Since we have such strong ignorance we do not know the qualities, the nature of our own things so we often make mistakes. Therefore, we make confession to Kurukulla: “May I be purified because of my regret and my strong connection.” We should say that and do purification.

On page 4, line 7 it says: “May we all, until we reach enlightenment”. We say some aspiration for other things. We say: “May we be able to purify negative karmas. From this life until we reach enlightenment may we have good life, good family, good conditions ...” So, we say aspiration for that.

We say: “May I reach the activities that benefit beings. That means “may I be like Shakyamuni Buddha who benefits all sentient beings.” Also, we say: “May I be able to bring happiness, bring joy to those who hear me, who think of me ...” So that is how we make aspiration and how we wish we are able to benefit sentient beings in many ways; as many as possible.

“May objectless knowledge and compassion ...”. That means: “May I be here for ever for sentient beings to benefit them.” That means we don’t say: “I want to take rebirth in Dewachen. I’m bored with this life.” No! We want to do something for others so it’s ok for us to be here as long as possible; as long as sentient beings exist. That is how we develop bodhicitta, which is bodhisattva’s motivation. Bodhisattva’s motivation is something very strong and very brave. They can not get upset easily. Bodhicitta has a lot of confidence. Bodhisattvas have a lot of confidence in doing activities for all sentient beings. They do not care how much difficulty they have to face. They are willing to do that. This is how you make aspiration to develop bodhicitta motivation.

“May all things such as illnesses, demons and obstacles ... “on page 5. We say some aspiration especially for this life. We wish that there are no demons, no negative energies, no obstacles, no bad luck and so on.

“When illusory body ...” The second line on page 6. When death comes how should we accept that? How should we face that? By doing Kurukulla practice when our body is destroyed and death comes we want to transform our consciousness into wisdom of Kurukulla or mind of Kurukulla. If we say this prayer a lot and think of this a lot then there is chance for us to be able to do that. And if you do this daily practice and establish strong connection with Kurukulla I think when death comes Kurukulla will appear and lead you to a peaceful place.

There are different styles of Kurukulla. This is one of the most popular ones. Many people know this style: one face, two arms, standing up and holding different things. This is a very common form of Kurukulla. As I gave teaching on Kurukulla in the US so you'll be able to get the recording of that teaching and listen to it. I've given instructions on how to visualize, how to think, how to recite the mantra, how to establish your visualization and how to dissolve the visualization and so on.

(This is the end of the teaching on 13th Oct. 2012)

