

Friday evening, 28 January 2005

Try to generate a good motivation wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and for this purpose listen to the teachings. Everyone of us knows that we need to develop love and compassion for all sentient beings. This is important. We should try to develop the mind of enlightenment or bodhicitta. This means to try to develop a good heart or a good motivation that want to take care of other sentient beings and does not think to take care of oneself.

Now I will try to say something about the text *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*. I will read a bit of the Tibetan to give the transmission of the root text, beginning with verse 107.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Thus, because he loves to pacify the pains of others,
He whose mind is attuned in this way
Would enter even the deepest hell
Just as a wild goose plunges into a lotus pool. (107)

Seeing that one can act for others welfare and eliminate their suffering, one's mind is happy and joyful. One becomes like a goose that enjoys entering a lake covered in lotuses. We too should enjoy enacting the welfare of others in a similar way. If one can do something to benefit other sentient beings, one becomes happy. We should try to generate an equal attitude toward oneself and others, not thinking that oneself is more important and others are less important. We should see that we are all the same in that we have similar feelings. So we should try to, for example, develop the thought that we would be happy to go even to the hell realm for the benefit of other beings. We should strive to generate joy in this way.

There are stories about bodhisattvas who have visited the hell realms in order to help the beings there. It is good to benefit even one sentient being by separating him from suffering. It would be good even if we were able to liberate one sentient being from the suffering of the hell realm, hungry ghost, or animal realm and set them in the realms of human beings, anti-gods, or gods. Like this, we should develop the thought to take care of oneself as well as all sentient beings. For example, why do we ourselves need to eliminate the suffering of other sentient beings? Because it is suffering. For example, if we suffer, we need to eliminate this suffering. Similarly, we also need to help or benefit other sentient beings in the same way. We should think "Other sentient beings, as the subject, I need to benefit them because they are sentient beings." We take care of our own body. There are many different sentient beings but all sentient beings are the same in this sense. Why? It is because every sentient being wishes for happiness and does not want suffering. They are all equal in this.

Will not the ocean of joy
That shall exist when all beings are free
Be sufficient for me?
What am I doing wishing for my liberation alone? (108)

Since all sentient beings experience much suffering, if one were able to liberate them then one would be filled with an ocean of joy. One would experience this joy because one has been able to liberate all sentient beings. Would this not be sufficient? Then is wishing for my own liberation alone right? It is not right, it is not sufficient to liberate oneself alone. Why is this? We would only be one single being who has been liberated, while our mother sentient beings continue to suffer. Yet, we and all sentient beings are the same in wishing for happiness. Therefore, we need to liberate them from suffering and set them in happiness. This is an important job. Why? "Liberated" means to be liberated from suffering and from the mental afflictions. If we check our own mind we will find that in it there are many negative emotions. For example, we will find attachment or desire. If we check our mind we will find hatred. If we check our mind we will find ignorance. If we check our mind we will find pride. If we check our mind we will find doubt. If we check our mind we will find afflicted view. We will find all six root afflictions. We have belligerence, excitement, and so forth. I won't go through all of them. For example, we have jealousy, miserliness... If we check, we will find all of them in our mind. For example, rich families have a storeroom in which there are many things, like inside Shine one will find many types of jewelry, earrings, necklaces and so forth, but some things need to be

thrown away. Similar, inside us there are many things, some of which we need to eliminate. Our main problem-maker in daily life is, for example, attachment. Attachment is together with us all the time. Whenever we see something nice, immediately attachment arises. We will see this if we examine our own mind. The so-called five qualities of the desire realm are the objects that make our attachment grow. Just as we need to eliminate attachment from our mind, so too do all other sentient beings. Why? Because attachment harms oneself and also harms others in that it makes us suffer.

We should try to understand our own mind. We have many sufferings, why? It is because we created the cause of this suffering. Thinking in this way, we will come to understand that our main enemy is the inner mental afflictions, it is not other external people.

We have many afflictions. For example, we desire others' wealth, others' land in which there is petrol, minerals, and so forth, others' power, others' belongings, and so forth. All this is due to attachment. If we check, we will find that attachment continually arises. Some attachments are strong, some attachments are less strong. Why do we remain in the ocean of cyclic existence? Because in previous lives and in this life, we created actions motivated by an afflicted mind. For this reason, we cannot get out of the ocean of cyclic existence, but instead remain wandering in cyclic existence.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Therefore, although working for the benefit of others,
I should not be conceited or [consider myself] wonderful.
And because of the joy there is in solely doing this,
I should have no hope for any ripening-effect. (109)

If one does something for the benefit of others, one should not do so wishing to gain something for oneself. This would not be good. One should not be conceited about doing this. Whatever one does, even something small, for others, one should rejoice in it for others' sake. One should think "Even if I can only do something small, this is good!" One should not think that by helping someone else, one will get something in return. Do not think this. One should not think that by helping others, one will receive help. For example, one should not do something with the hope that think "I give my watch to Raffaello, then he will give me something much bigger." One should not have such hopes, instead whatever one can do for others, big or small, one should do it without hoping for something in return. One should not hope for a result, such as a fruitional result. For example, presently we are experiencing the fruitional result of virtuous actions created in past lives that acted as virtuous projecting and virtuous actualizing causes that have brought about this attractive human body with all its senses and limbs complete. On the other hand, an example of the fruitional result of non-virtuous actions is the dog that we saw come into the gompa earlier on this evening. Its body is that of a female dog; this is fruitional result of a non-virtuous action. This is what is meant by a fruitional result. However, in this case that one should not hope for a fruitional result means that, having given some small material thing to someone, one should not hope to receive something bigger in return.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Therefore, just as I protect myself
From unpleasant things however small,
In the same way I should act towards others
With a compassionate and caring mind. (110)

Just as we try to protect ourselves, so too should we try to protect other sentient beings. Just thinking to protect oneself from unpleasant things is small. Just as we protect ourselves, so too should we try to protect other sentient beings. This is important, we need to do this.

Now we try to create the causes for the success of our future lives by engaging in positive actions. Similarly, we need to take care of other sentient beings. We should do this motivated by compassion. We should take care of others with a compassionate, good mind that wants to take care of them. We need to develop compassion and cultivate this attitude in our mind and with this take care of others. We need to continually develop compassion and love, not allowing our mind to be separated from them and from the good heart and the mind of enlightenment. This is an activity of a bodhisattva, we should try to emulate the deeds or activities of bodhisattvas. We should look up to this, like a bird drinking water that drinks and looks

upward. We should look upward at liberation and enlightenment. We should not look downward, like a pig snuffling in the dirt. This means that we should not be looking at the ocean of cyclic existence. This is important. Therefore, we need to try to do like this. I am not joking. The ocean of suffering of cyclic existence is like a dirty place. We should not be like pigs who like dirty places filled with garbage, thinking to find in cyclic existence some nice object or some happiness. This would not be right. We should not do like this. We should look upward.

For example, if there are two politicians, one who tries to cheat others by talking very nicely and the other who talks directly and honestly without thought to cheat, people will follow the one who talks nice even if they know that he is not so honest and that he cheats them! They believe in him. On the other hand, they do not like or respect the person who talks honestly and says things straightforwardly. Why does this happen? Because sometimes our mind is very ignorant. Due to our mind being overcome with ignorance, we follow that which is not right. Similarly, we follow the material things of cyclic existence out of ignorance. However, there are those who try to give up cyclic existence, the mundane things such as wealth and pleasures, and try to find something that brings a deeper happiness.

I'll stop here this evening. What we need to try to do is to develop the bodhisattva activities and the mind of enlightenment. When we go to sleep, we should try to develop a loving kind mind toward all sentient beings thinking "Even to eliminate the suffering of a single being, I will do these activities." Meditate in this way and then go to sleep.

Saturday morning, 29 January 2005

Develop a good motivation of a loving kind mind toward all sentient beings and the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. For this purpose listen to the teachings.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says

Although the basis is quite impersonal,
Through [constant] familiarity
I have come to regard
The drops of sperm and blood of others as "I." (111)

So in the same way, why should I be unable
To regard the bodies of others as "I"?
Hence it is not difficult to see
That my body is also that of others. (112)

We need to develop this kind of attitude. Due to familiarity we have come to consider even the union of a drop of sperm and blood as "I." In other words, our body came about due to the joining of the semen from the father and the blood from the mother inside of which entered our consciousness, giving rise to the baby, oneself, that was then born. In this way, we have come to think of that which arises from drop of semen and blood as "I" or "my body." We should try to extend this thought to others. We need to extend this familiarity to others such that we come to also think of others' bodies as "I." We should not see ourselves and others as different but strive to see that we are the same. Why? Because just as we take care of our own body, so too do we need to take care of the bodies of the members of our family, of all human beings, and of all sentient beings. We need to try to develop the attitude that wishes to take care of and cherish others. Just as we cherish ourselves we should strive to cherish others. One should consider others' body as I. For example, we should think that just our nose is "my nose," so too is others' nose "my nose," that others' arms are "my arms," and so forth. Just as I think this is "my eyeglass case," so too should we think that others' body is mine. We constantly say "this is my thing, my daughter, my son..." We are already familiar with this thought, therefore we can then extend it to others, wishing to give them happiness and to eliminate their suffering. In this way we should train our mind. Just as we have the attitude that wants to be rid of our own suffering and wants to obtain happiness for ourselves, so too should we wish to free others from suffering and give them happiness. Very easy, no?! Ha ha. We should try even though it is not so easy. In this way we

familiarize with the attitude of taking care of other sentient beings. This is very important. Why? In this way we can completely change our mind.

If we have the mind that wishes to take care of others or that holds others as important, we will put effort into eliminating their suffering. In short, we need to try to take care of others thinking that they are more important than ourselves. Presently we have the mind that cherishes ourselves and the mind that grasps at a self (for example, at a self-supporting substantially existent self), we need to abandon these minds and develop the mind that cherishes others. This is the main cause of bodhichitta, the mind of enlightenment. We can develop the mind of enlightenment by means of the meditation on exchanging self and others. To do so, we need to think of the faults of cherishing ourselves and the many qualities of cherishing others, and then exchange these attitudes. This means that we need to give up the mind that cherishes ourselves and develop the mind that cherishes others. If we think carefully, we will see that the many shortcomings, difficulties, and sufferings, both mental and physical, that arise in our life have as their cause the self-cherishing mind. Due to this mind, we create many negative actions that bring us the result of suffering. Thinking only of ourselves and taking care only of ourselves has many faults and many shortcomings and brings many difficulties. On the other hand, taking care of other sentient beings has many advantages and benefits. In addition, one will create a lot of positive energy and will be able to help others and make them happy.

First we need to equalize ourselves and others, that is, to think that oneself and others are equal or the same. From all points of view we are the same. Then the actual exchange of the two attitudes, that is, to give up cherishing oneself and to cherish others, is explained in the next verse. How can we exchange ourselves with others? This is explained in the next verse.

Having seen the mistakes in [cherishing] myself
And the ocean of good in [cherishing] others,
I shall completely reject all selfishness
And accustom myself to accepting others. (113)

The self-cherishing mind is the cause of all faults, therefore it has many disadvantages. Therefore, we need to try to eliminate the self-cherishing mind, to give it up, and to stop it. In addition, all excellent qualities, the ocean of good qualities, comes from the mind cherishing others. Therefore, we need to put effort into developing this attitude of cherishing others within our mind. We should try to completely abandon the self-cherishing mind and to practice the mind cherishing others. We should meditate on the mind cherishing others. Meditation in this context involves making this attitude manifest in our mind and then single-pointedly keeping the mind on it. Put another way, our mind becomes one entity with the attitude wishing to cherish others. Thus, when meditating all that is manifest in one's mind is the attitude wishing to take care of other sentient beings.

On the other side, we should think of the faults and disadvantages of the self-cherishing mind and develop the thought to eliminate it. We need to try to give up this attitude, our mind should think only to do this. We should try to do this, to exchange these two attitudes.

Someone may wonder whether it is suitable or not to develop familiarity with this attitude. This thought comes because sentient beings are infinite or numberless, so one can wonder how one can develop the kind of attitude that wants to take care of them all. How can one think that they are all related to oneself and wish to take care of themselves? Not to mention all sentient beings, we do not even know all human beings. How many human beings are there in the world? Six billion! That is a lot. Even in a small area of the ground, the ants are numberless. Then if we look at the ocean, how many different kinds of fish live there? We are unable to count them. Some think that fish are not sentient beings but are a type of carrot, perhaps water-carrots! They are not meat. Some people say this. However, from the point of view of Buddhism fish are sentient beings. When I stayed in Sera Monastery in Tibet one time I went on pilgrimage to the Jokang Temple in Lhasa and stopped to buy something in the nearby market. I heard Tibetans calling out "Water-carrots for sale. Water-carrots for sale." I did not understand what this meant and asked someone what a water-carrot was and was told that this was said instead of saying "Fish meat for sale." In short, they are sentient beings.

Sentient beings are infinite, therefore someone thinks that it would be difficult to think of all of them as mine.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

In the same way as the hands and so forth
Are regarded as limbs of the body,
Likewise why are embodied creatures
Not regarded as limbs of **life**?

(114)

Externally our body is composed of many parts, the right arm and left leg, right leg and left leg, and so forth. Likewise, inside there are many parts organs, the lungs, heart, liver, spleen, and so forth. In spite of this, we take care of and protect each part of our body as “my body.” Why? Because we think “They are all my body.” Similar to this thought, although sentient beings are many we should try to develop the thought cherishing all of them and wishing to protect all of them. We need to extend the care we have for our body to all sentient beings.

Why are we unable to think that all living beings or all embodied beings are “I”? In other words, we need to develop the desire to do so. This is necessary because just as it is necessary to take care of and protect every part of our body so too is it necessary to take care of all sentient beings. Just as we need to take care even of a single finger, similarly we need to take care even of the smallest creatures. A woman once asked me “If we need to take care of all these creatures, how can I take care of all the ants and flies that come in my house? Even just by walking, I sometimes end up killing one.” I said “I don’t know. Perhaps try to recite some mantras. There is a mantra that is to be recited in the morning after which one spits on the soles of one’s shoes. If one does this, it is said that when one steps on an insect and it dies it will be reborn in the god realm of the Thirty-Three.” One can also recite this mantra on a broom and then carefully sweep up the ants. The Buddha gave this special mantra that is to be recited three times in the morning, after which one spits lightly on the soles of one’s shoes. In this way, by the power of the Buddha any insect that one steps on will have a good rebirth.

How can we exchange ourselves and others? This what set out briefly before, now it will be explained extensively below. How can we become familiar with cherishing others? We need to first understand that we can give up the thought cherishing ourselves and develop the thought cherishing others. We should do this without becoming proud of ourselves. Generally when we think we can do something, we become proud. We need to eliminate this pride.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Through acquaintance has the thought of “I” arisen
Towards this impersonal body;
So in a similar way, why should it not arise
Towards other living beings?

(115)

Our body is selfless, without a self. We need to familiarize with the attitude or understanding that our body is without a self. By familiarizing with this, it can eliminate the conception of a self, for example, the conception of a self-supporting substantially existent self or the conception of an inherently existent self.

Through familiarity with this body that is selfless, we think “my body.” In general this body is without a self, yet we still think “my body.” Like this, we need to try to develop the attitude cherishing them and thinking of them as “my.” Why should this mind not arise through familiarity with it? It definitely can arise. I think that it can arise. Then we try to think of all sentient beings as “my,” by familiarizing with this mind we can be of benefit to other sentient beings and a mind of pride or grasping will not arise in us. Having generated a good mind, our mind will be more peaceful and such minds will not arise. In this way, we should try to develop the mind that always cherishes other sentient beings.

When I work in this way for the sake of others,
I should not let conceit or [the feeling that I am] wonderful arise.
It is just like feeding myself –
I hope for nothing in return.

(116)

Just as now through familiarity we think of our arms and so forth as our body, so too should we become familiar with thinking of others as mine and try to take more care of them. We should not let conceit, a puffed up mind like a balloon, arise. If we do this, we will only fall down! In short, we should try to see ourselves and other sentient beings as the same, without difference. To do this, just as we take care of

ourselves we need to take care of all others. Other sentient beings are important because they are very many, they are numberless, whereas we are only one single person. Between one and many, many are more important. Therefore, we need to take care of the infinite sentient beings more than we take care of ourselves. We should try to do this.

I will stop here. I tried to get up early today so that I could do my prayers but suddenly while reciting mantras I fell asleep again!

Saturday afternoon, 29 January 2005

Develop a loving kind mind toward all sentient beings. We need a good heart toward all sentient beings and whatever we do we should try to do it for the benefit of others.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Therefore, just as I protect myself
From unpleasant things however slight,
In the same way I should habituate myself
To have a compassionate and caring mind for others. (117)

We do not eat with the hope to receive something in return in the future. On the other hand, benefiting other sentient beings has many advantages. We try to protect ourselves even from a slight unpleasant word. We need to protect others from suffering in the same way as we protect ourselves and to constantly familiarize with compassion for them. We should constantly think to take care of other sentient beings or migrating beings who are infinite in number and to protect them from suffering. We should try to continually generate a compassionate attitude toward others in our mind. This means that we need to familiarize our mind with compassion. For example, with respect to attachment there is no need to make an effort for it to arise, it just arises spontaneously. In a similar we should develop familiarity with love and compassion such that they arise spontaneously without effort.

We know very well what compassion is. In Sanskrit it is called “karuna.” If karuna is directly translated into Tibetan it is de gog which can be translated as “that which stops happiness.” This because due to thinking about others’ suffering and taking this as one’s observed object one becomes unhappy, whereby one generates the wish to free them from suffering and the causes of suffering. Since suffering is a result, in order to eliminate it we need to eliminate its principal causes. What are they? They are contaminated actions and the mental afflictions or negative emotions. These two are the main causes that bring sentient beings all their undesired suffering. This happens because they created the cause due to which the result arises. For example, as a result of a burning fire there arises smoke and, after the fire dies out, ashes. Results come from causes and conditions. Even though there exist the causes, if the conditions are not complete, a result will not arise. Thus, the conditions also need to be complete for a result to come about. We need to understand this and generate the wish to take care of other sentient beings due to which we need to eliminate our inner mental afflictions. We need to put effort into developing compassion, because, when compassion arises, love will automatically arise, like a shadow accompanying the body. We need to strive continually to generate a compassionate mind.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

It is out of his great compassion
That the Lord Avalokiteshvara has [even] blessed his name
To dispel the nervousness
Of being among other people. (118)

We need to try to develop great compassion toward sentient beings. We need to protect sentient beings from even the slightest of sufferings. To do this we receive blessings from the protector Avalokiteshvara to be able

to do this. By reciting even just his name, we are blessed by Avalokiteshvara. He is the manifestation of the compassion of all the buddhas of the three times in the form of a deity, and is therefore also called the Compassionate One. By reciting his name, the fear of being surrounded by migrating beings is dispelled. In other words, even if we are surrounded by others, we will not be nervous. The recitation of his name dispels such fear. Also due to the power of reciting the mantra of Avalokiteshvara, those who surround us will be freed from fear or anxiety. In a sutra it is said that we should remember Avalokiteshvara's name in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. Avalokiteshvara's name could refer to his mantra: OM MANI PADME HUM. This mantra has six syllables, they can eliminate the sufferings of the beings who have taken rebirth in the six realms and are experiencing their various sufferings. The six realms are the god realm, anti-god realm, human realm, animal realm, hungry ghost realm, and hell realm. As long as we have not achieved nirvana or buddhahood we will continue need to take rebirth once again. Due to the actions we create, sometimes we will be born as a hell being, as a hungry ghost, as an animal, as a human being, as an anti-god, or as a god. All sentient beings are included in these six categories of beings. Those people who always practice virtue will take a good rebirth, the best of which is precious human body endowed with the eighteen qualities, possessing the six elements, and born from a womb. There are four types of birth-sources: birth from heat and moisture, birth from an egg, birth from a womb, and miraculous birth. Birds are, for example, born from eggs as are many other types of sentient beings. However, the best of all these rebirths is that of a human being as in one life a human being can achieve enlightenment.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

I should not turn away from what is difficult;
For by the power of familiarity
I may be made unhappy even when someone
Whose name once frightened me is not around. (119)

Some people that if it is difficult to familiarize with the attitude of cherishing others. They think that although it has advantages, it is difficult and turn away from it. However, we should not do this, instead we should put even more effort into exchanging ourselves and others. Due to familiarizing with this practice we can come to generate this kind of mind, we will be able to change our mental attitude. Perhaps in the past we were frightened just by hearing the name of someone who was our enemy, but later on this person became a friend and then even a very close friend such that, when we are not together with him or her, our mind is unhappy and we miss him or her. We can see this happen in our world. Perhaps in the past we fought with each other and tried to destroy each other, then gradually we became closer and eventually became friends. On the other hand, it can also happen that in the past we were very close, good friends, then slowly we transformed into enemies who even try to destroy each other. There is an example, maybe it doesn't matter! For example, the family of George Bush, both father and son, and the family of Saddam Hussein in the past did business together, but now we see what happened. Now they say that Ben Laden is trying to destroy America, but he too in the past is said to have been a friend of Bush's family. Perhaps this is also the case now! Even though they talk in public as if they are enemies we do not know what is happening behind the scenes. Things change in this way. Our mind also changes. At first we may see someone as frightening and not want to see or hear of him or her, but then things change and we become close friends who do not want to be separated from each other. This happens and this is what is meant by Shantideva.

Therefore, due to familiarity our mind can change. How? We need to exchange ourselves and others. This means to change the mental attitude of cherishing ourselves for the mental attitude of cherishing others, that is, to give up the mind cherishing ourselves and to develop the mind cherishing others.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Thus whoever wishes to quickly afford protection
To both himself and other beings
Should practice that holy secret:
The exchanging of self for others. (120)

As we want to liberate other sentient beings from suffering we need to meditate on exchanging ourselves and others. This is not easy. Someone hearing about it may generate fear. Wishing to protect ourselves and others

from cyclic existence and solitary peace, which does not bring the final result and does not allow one to help others, we need to eliminate the self-cherishing that is the cause of cyclic existence and solitary peace. With this desire we need to change the attitude of cherishing ourselves for the attitude of cherishing others. This practice should not be revealed to those who are not appropriate vessel for the mahayana. This practice of exchanging self and others is an important point of the path of the great vehicle. Therefore, we should not tell it to those who do not accept the mahayana. Others say that the mahayana does not exist. This happened in the past, for example, Vasubandhu, when young, thought “ The mahayana does not exist, it is like a flower in the sky. Nagarjuna is a manifestation of a demon. My brother, Asanga, is his follower.” In this way he criticized the mahayana and his brother. It is recounted that one time he went to visit his brother. Asanga was staying in a cave where he had written many texts in Sanskrit. Vasubandhu began to read these texts over the week he was there and began to generate interest and decided to stay a couple of more months. He read all Asanga’s texts such as the *Bodhisattva Grounds* and so forth. He came to understand that the mahayana actually and really existed. Due to this, he changed tenets, previously he was a holder of the hinayana tenets and then became a holder of the Chittamatra tenets of the mahayana school. After this, he wrote many texts. He was very intelligent. He had memorized many texts such that he could recite them for two weeks without finishing all those that he had memorized. In order to confess and purify the fault of criticizing the mahayana, he wrote the *Treasury of Manifest Dharma (Abhidharmakosha)*. This shows that our attitudes can change. If we put effort, we can change anything we want. All our faults can be purified.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Because of attachment to my body,
 Even a small object of fear frightens me.
 So who would not revile as an enemy
 This body that gives rise to fear? (121)

We should think that the self-cherishing mind is the cause of all shortcomings and the cause of all fears. Due to attachment to our body, we experience great fear even of small things. As long as we cannot exchange ourselves and others and are attached to our body, even seeing a tiny snake brings very big fear. The body of the snake is the body of a sentient being. Why do we have fear upon seeing its body? Why do we generate hatred for it, thinking that it is our enemy? We should try to reverse this hatred by thinking of the small snake as a poor animal and generating the wish to free it from its suffering. We need to develop love for the small snake. We can recite some prayers in its presence. This can be helpful to it.

We should try to think that all sentient beings have been our mother. Therefore, the body of that small snake is the body of our mother. Why do we fear this body? in this way try to develop the thought that the snake has in the past been our mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, son, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather... We should remember this when seeing, for example, this snake.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

By wishing for a means to remedy
 The hunger, thirst, and sickness of the body,
 I might kill birds, fish, and deer
 And loiter by the sides of roads [to rob others]. (122)

Why does one eat birds, fish, and deer? It is out of self-cherishing, the thought to keep one’s own body healthy by eliminating hunger and thirst. We wish to eliminate sickness or pain. Some people say that by eating fish some illnesses can be cured, but I don’t know about this. Others say it is good to eat chicken. In either case, many people like eating these animals. Why? Because out of a self-cherishing mind, they want to make their own body strong and healthy and to eliminate their hunger and thirst. If the body is weak, more sickness will occur. For this reason people kill birds and so forth. We hear the hunters out shooting early in the morning. What are they shooting at? They are shooting at birds that often were originally bred in cages, fed, and then liberated. These people are happy to kill and rejoice saying “Today I killed such-and-such.” At dawn I hear them shooting. Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow the hunting season will come to a close in Tuscany.

Some people wait in ambush for others to pass by in order to catch rob them. In Milan a monk was walking, a man threw some dirty liquid on him and he put down his bag to clean himself off while someone made off with his bag. One lady stopped to help him and while she distracted him, the other man stole his bag. Also in Milan in Piazza del Duomo, another monk, Dema Locho Rinpoche's brother, was carrying his bag over his shoulder in which he had \$1000. Someone bumped against him, he turned to look at the person and meanwhile someone on the other side took his bag and made off with it. These things happen.

Once I and Pemba Tsering were walking in Connaught Place in Delhi. He had a monk's bag over his shoulder. I was a bit ahead of him when several Indian women bumped against him and one took his bag and escaped. He lost his money and we lost our return tickets to India and our passports. As there were many people we could not identify who had taken the bag. Thieves invent many ways to fulfill their scope.

Inside us abides a robber or thief, it is anger, which robs us of the virtues we have accumulated. We need to understand how anger makes problems for us. To eliminate it we need to develop love and compassion. In any case we need to develop love for all sentient beings including birds, fish, deer, snakes, and so forth. Why do we need love and compassion for these sentient beings? It is because they have been our relatives in the past and in the future will once again be our relatives. For this reason we need to take care of them. We are intelligent human beings. They are stupid, they can only harm others, they cannot do anything to eliminate their own sufferings, even small sufferings. Therefore, we need to try to develop a good heart toward all sentient beings. This can cause happiness to grow in our mind and with this as a cause we will reach enlightenment. We should try to develop love, that is, to make our mind one entity with love. Then, if someone harms us, at that time think "This is due to the ripening of my negative karma, therefore I need to accept it." Think that this is good because it will exhaust our negative karma whereby we will always experience happiness and pleasure. In this way, when someone harms us we should not retaliate as this is not right. We should try to do this. A mind training text says that there is only one thing to blame. What is it? It is our selfishness, our self-cherishing mind. On the other hand, sentient beings are good and kind to us, they bring us all good things, all our happiness comes from their kindness. Therefore, we should meditate on the kindness of sentient beings and generate the wish to repay their kindness.

Sunday morning, 30 January 2005

Try to develop the motivation wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and for this purpose listen to the teachings. Try to develop compassion. Compassion is necessary at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, it is important at all times. At the beginning even before we have entered a path we need compassion, in the middle at the time of practice we need compassion, and at the end when we have attained buddhahood we need compassion. Therefore, we should try to cultivate compassion in our mental continuum.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

If for the sake of its profit and comfort
I would kill even my father and mother
And steel the property of the Triple Gem,
Then I would undoubtedly proceed to burn in the flames of the deepest hell. (123)

In order to gain something such as money we may go so far as to kill our father and mother or both. There are people who think to kill their parents in order to gain their wealth and power. There are also those who steel the property of the Three Jewels. These are causes for being reborn in the hell realm. There are stories about how people have stolen from the Three Jewels for profit. For example, they have taken the belongings of the sangha or taken good things that been offered on the altar and have then sold them. In the past there were famous statues from whom it is recounted robbers took what had been offered to them and then sold these offerings. Also in Nepal, only thirty or so years ago, in Sango, a special place of Vajrayogini, there is a famous statue that someone tried to steal. An American man paid another man to steal the statue and send it to him. The thief went to the temple, where there were only two monks guarding the statue, he managed to capture one but the other was able to beat the gong, waking up the village people who came, threw stones at

the car, punctured its wheels, and caught the man with the statue. He was then put in jail for many years, but they could not find the American who was behind the theft. Here too people have stolen money offered to the stupas by breaking open the donation box. What is the result of these actions? It is that in the next life one will be reborn in the hell realm where one's body, the nature of fire, will burn but one will not die for many eons.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Therefore what wise man would desire to
Protect and venerate this body?
Who would not scorn it
And regard it as an enemy? (124)

Through thinking about the suffering that will ensue, one should avoid such actions. In fact the wise refrain from such actions. If we do these things to take care of our body, why would we not regard it as an enemy? We think that we need to take care of this human body, why? Because dependent on this body we have a mind that is intelligent. If we take the essence of this precious human rebirth we can achieve whatever aims we desire. Even in this life, in three years and forty-five days, we can achieve buddhahood. We can do whatever we want with this body. With this human body and the intelligent mind supported on it human beings have made great progress in developing technologically. We all know this. For example, it is easy to communicate with each other, we can even see each others' faces in tiny cell phones. Our world, which used to be big, has become very small. It is also easy to travel, many things have become very easy. We can make many things very quickly. However, on the other hand, there are also many things that have degenerated due to which more problems are arising. There are natural disasters caused by wind, fire, water, and earth that can destroy many things. For example, an earthquake can destroy many houses and buildings. Why do these happen? I think that it is the result of our collective negative karma.

We need to give up or discard the self-cherishing mind. This is the main cause of developing the mind cherishing others or bodhichitta. When we think of who are our enemies, we think of someone outside ourselves. Due to this, we wish to destroy some sentient beings and take care of others, our relatives and friends. We think that by killing a certain person, for example, a terrorist, there will be no more terrorists. However, it does not work like this. We think that if we kill such-and-such a person who is our enemy our problems will finish. However, it is not like this, rather we come to have more enemies because all the friends and relatives of that person come to be our enemies. Rather than destroying one enemy, we create many more. Some politicians do this, however they will only have more problems in the future. They are not aware of this. We see this outside ourselves.

However, if we destroy our inner enemy it will not return. Our inner mental afflictions do not have friends or helpers. They are completely destroyed. If we destroy the inner enemy, then it seems that external enemies are also destroyed. We will be very peaceful, we will not harm anyone and therefore no one will harm us. Rather they will think that we are very good and will venerate us. For example, everyone has respect for Milarepa, a famous yogi in Tibetan Buddhism, and Saint Francis, a famous saint in the Catholic tradition. Just hearing the name "Saint Francis," faith and confidence arise the mind of the hearer. Other famous people like Hitler, just upon hearing their name our mind becomes unhappy even though he is long dead. Another one is Mao Tse Tung, for some people just hearing his name makes them unhappy. They did different deeds, because the latter did very bad deeds upon hearing their names we become unhappy whereas because the former did very good deeds upon hearing their names we become happy and rejoice. We need to try to destroy the inner enemy as then we will experience peace and will also bring peace to others. There is a concentration called "without afflictions," which when foe-destroyers meditate it and walk around a city all the people in the area become very peaceful. The afflictions do not arise manifestly in their continua. This is the power of having destroyed the inner enemy, the mental afflictions.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

"If I give this, what shall I [have left to] enjoy? –
Such selfish thinking is the way of ghosts;
"If I enjoy this, what shall I [have left to] give?" –
Such selfless thinking is a quality of the gods. (125)

This is from the point of view of giving. We need to think about this. If someone asks us for something, is our mind happy? At this time the miserliness that does not want to give away our belongings may arise. This mental attitude, this selfishness, is like the attitude of spirits. On the other hand, if someone asks us for something and our mind is happy, thinking to give it for the benefit of sentient beings, this is a very good attitude. Some people rejoice in this opportunity to give to others, this will bring a good result in the future. If someone asks for our watch, if we are happy and give it to the other person, this is very good. If someone asks us for a part of our body, there are those who are able to rejoice in doing this. Some people give their kidney to those whose kidneys no longer function. If someone is able to rejoice in giving such things, this is said to be “a quality of the gods.” However, the word “gods” here does not refer to the mundane gods but to the supramundane gods, the deities, such as Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani, Tara, and so forth. However, there are also mundane gods who try to help others. If someone requests their help, they try to help.

In short, we need to try as much as possible to develop our inner qualities. We need to increase the mental attitude of giving, this eliminates the mind of miserliness. This is mental attitude that makes us poor in the next life and perhaps even in this life. For example, among human beings there are those who did not practice generosity in the past but instead were miserly, tightfisted and unable to open their hands, but due to the practice of morality were born human beings who cannot find food, clothing, shelter, and even water due to which they die of starvation. We see that there are many human beings in the world who are in this situation. Why is this? It is the result of not practicing generosity in their previous life and of being miserly.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

If, for my own sake, I cause harm to others,
I shall be tormented in hellish realms;
But if for the sake of others I cause harm to myself,
I shall acquire all that is magnificent. (126)

This verse is from the point of view of harm. If for our own purpose, for our own happiness, we harm others, that is, we kill them, we steal their belongings, we lie to them, and so forth, what result will this action bring to us? Check what will happen. It will bring torment in the hell realm. This means that one will be reborn in the hells where one will experience many problems. There are many hell realms – eight hot hells and eight cold hells, four neighboring hells, and the occasional hells, the latter of which some are found in the human realm. It is said that there was a monastery which during the day seemed a normal monastery where the monks lived a peaceful life, but at night transformed into a hell where the beings fought each other with weapons. Someone who went there saw this suffering, but then the next day it was once again quiet. This is an example of an occasional hell. Because these hells exist, we should not kill for our own purpose, for example, we should not kill animals to eat them. We kill domestic animals, cows, sheep, goats, and so forth for our own purpose. In some places they also kill horses, donkeys, and so forth. This is all for the purpose of eating their flesh. In addition, we kill some animals for their skin. If we check, we will see that we do these things for our own purpose. Such actions are negative and will bring the result in the future of rebirth in the hell realm.

On the other hand, if we do actions for others’ purpose or for others’ benefit, even harming our own body or belongings by giving away a part of our body which causes us pain or by giving away our wealth which makes us poorer, it will bring the result of obtaining excellent qualities in the future. Here it says “I shall acquire all that is magnificent.”

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

By holding myself in high esteem
I shall find myself in unpleasant realms, ugly and stupid;
But should this [attitude] be shifted to others
I shall acquire honors in a joyful realm. (127)

For example, if wishing to be praised, thinking only of our fame and being attached to fame, someone praises us, we will be happy. Some people wanting to be high, to have a famous name, praise themselves as being

good, a hero, and so forth. There are those who do this, boasting that they are special. With this type of behavior as a cause, what happens? They will be reborn in the bad migrations as an animal, hungry ghost, or hell being. In short, they take rebirth in the lower realms. Then even if they are born as a human being, they will be ugly and stupid. This attitude causes this. Therefore, we need to praise others, saying that they are good. We need to respect others, for example, other human beings. If we do this type of action, talking respectfully and praising their good qualities and showing respect with our body to others, what will the result be? In the future we will be reborn in the upper migrations as a human being or god. Others will make offerings to us and help us, we will achieve whatever we want. Therefore, we should hold others as high and respect them. If we do this, our inner qualities will increase and in the future we too will be held high. The text says “I shall acquire honors in a joyful realm.” “A joyful realm” means the upper realms of human beings, anti-gods, and gods, where beings are affected by less problems and experience more enjoyment. For example, the gods of the desire realm are very happy, as are the gods of the form realm. We know about this very well. There are also the gods of the formless realm. However, the anti-gods are jealous of and fight with the gods of the desire realm. Why do they do this? They fight over the Jambu tree, a wish-fulfilling tree, which characterizes the southern continent. I won’t go into this here.

In short, these are realms of happiness compared to the hell realm, hungry ghost realm, and animal realm. We are unable to see the beings of the hell realm and hungry ghost realm, nor can we see the beings of the god realm. We can see the beings of the animal realm, for example, when we go to the sea and look in the water we see many creatures, this being one of the places in which animals live. There are also many others that live on the ground. If we were born as an animal, how could we bear it? We could not, therefore it is better to engage in creating virtuous actions. We should abandon killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle talk. We should also give up the mental non-virtues of covetousness, malice, and wrong views.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

If I employ others for my own purposes
I myself shall experience servitude,
But if I use myself for the sake of others
I shall experience only lordliness. (128)

If we use others for our own purpose, this is not good. What will we experience as a result? In the future we will become others’ servants. We will not have any power and will have to follow others’ orders. We will have to say “yes,” and do what has been ordered. We will not be able to do as we want. Therefore, when we do such actions we should think that in the future we will have to experience their result.

On the other hand, if we use ourselves for others’ purpose, to benefit other sentient beings, by serving them and helping them, what will the result be? The result will be that “I shall experience only lordliness.” This means we will have a high position, that is, our body will be handsome, our caste will be good, and our family will be good. This is the result of such actions. Therefore, we need to try to respect others, to serve and help them, as this will bring highness to us in the future. You can read about this in the commentary on *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* by Geshe Yeshe Tobden.

END

(Tib. p. 164 line 3 middle)