

Friday evening, 21 May 2004

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. Develop a love and compassion toward all sentient beings. All sentient beings wish for happiness and none of them want unhappiness or suffering. In this sense all sentient beings, all of us, are the same. Therefore, just as we ourselves want happiness, think that all sentient beings wish for happiness and then develop love for all of them. Love is the mental attitude wishing others to have happiness and the causes of happiness. Compassion is the mental attitude wishing all sentient beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. In this way try to develop these attitudes toward all sentient beings. Then make this even stronger and determine to take the responsibility to achieve this upon oneself and thereby generate the extraordinary thought. While we make this promise, presently we are not able to do this. If we check who can do this we will discover that only having attained buddhahood will be able to do this. Therefore, generate the mind of enlightenment thinking to attain enlightenment in order to be able to benefit all sentient beings. However, developing the mind of enlightenment, bodhichitta, is not enough, in addition we need to engage in the deeds of a bodhisattva. This means that we need to develop the six perfections within our own minds. For example, the mind of giving is the thought to give whatever others need be it Dharma, knowledge, or even our own body. Then we need to practice morality, the mind thinking to abandon bad behavior and bad attitudes, whatever is negative. Then we need patience. For example, when someone says something bad to us, criticizes us, is against us, and so forth we need patience, which is an undisturbed mind. We need patience in our everyday life. Sometimes we even get angry at ourselves when we ourselves make a mistake. For example, if someone writes something but it does not go well, then one gets angry and throws the pen away! This is anger or hatred, it is the opposite to patience. It is not enough just to say the word “patience, patience,” to have this word on our lips, in addition we need patience within our mind, within our brain.

We also need to develop joyous effort in order to eliminate or destroy the many kinds of laziness. Laziness is the main obstacle to meditation, for example, the development of calm abiding. For this reason we need to develop joyous effort, the mind that delights in virtue, such as studying in order to develop our wisdom or knowledge, and then puts effort into it. In this context, we are studying the concentration chapter of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*. Next is the subject of wisdom. We also need wisdom. We need to understand whatever exists in the world, therefore we need to develop wisdom, the knowledge of anything whatsoever. However, the main wisdom is that understanding the nature of phenomena, the lack of inherent existence or dependent-relation.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Why do I make such an effort to polish it
Like [cleaning] a weapon that will cause me harm?
Hence the entire world is disturbed with insanity
Due to the exertion of those who are confused about themselves. (69)

Our bodies are dirty and unclean, that is, impure, yet due to our confusion or ignorance we do not recognize that it is unclean and therefore try to clean it. Due to the mental afflictions we put strong effort into this whereby we become as though crazy. This happens all over this world. Therefore, we need to think about the fact that our body is unclean. In other words, why are we attached to our own and others' bodies? It is because we do not see that this body is impure, we are ignorant of this reality. Out of strong attachment to his or her body when something goes wrong, some people even go crazy. Some people even kill their partner, their children, and so forth. By the mental afflictions such as attachment they become as though crazy and even kill others. For this reason we need to examine our own bodies. It is only the outer skin that is nice, if it is opened we will find that under the skin it is not nice. So what help is it to clean the outside when inside it is dirty? If we open the body, inside we will find it to be similar to a toilet. Likewise, inside our mind there are many dirty things such as jealousy, attachment, anger, ignorance, and so forth. Therefore, what we need to clean is the inner dirt, that is, the dirt or impurities in our own mind. How can we clean attachment? We can apply the temporary antidote of thinking that the body is very dirty, that it is like a corpse. Since our body is dirty inside, why are we attached to it? Thus, we should give up attachment to it.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

When my mind rises [above worldly concerns],
Through having beheld nothing but skeletons in the cemetery,
Will there be any joy in the graveyard cities
Which are filled with moving skeletons? (70)

If we were to go to a cemetery and see bones and so forth and think that it is dirty, we would ask ourselves why we have gone there. In fact we do not want to go to cemeteries because there are many skeletons and bones there. Cities, on the other hand, are filled with moving skeletons. We are like moving skeletons that pervade the cities, therefore cities are like cemeteries. So why do we enjoy such places? The dry bones of the dead and our presently not dry bones are just the same. Therefore, why are we attached to and enjoy moving skeletons? One should think in this way in order to understand that there is no reason to be attached to bodies. We should strive to reduce our attachment for our own and others' attachment. We should give up becoming as though crazy out of attachment. The body is unclean therefore it is not fit to be attached to. Our body is like a moving corpse or moving skeleton, therefore why enjoy it? In other words, it is not suitable to be enjoyed. Our body is like a zombie. If a zombie were to come toward us, we would escape. However, our bodies are similar.

Furthermore, these unclean [female bodies]
Are not found without paying a price:
In order to obtain them I exhaust myself
And [in future] will be injured in the hells. (71)

Here the emphasis is placed on men as it is men who fall in love with women. Then they try to obtain the bodies of women. However, their bodies are also unclean. It is also not easily found without paying for it, it must be paid for. So why does one want a female body? Without paying for it, one will not obtain anything. For this purpose people put effort into collecting wealth. To collect this wealth, we engage in negative actions. How? For example, thinking to engage in a business, something that should have a price of 5 Euro but we say that it nice and put the price of 10 Euro on it saying that "it is just for you." In this way we deceive many others, whereby we create non-virtuous actions. In addition, we become tired striving to make money. Some work so hard that they do not even eat and drink with the result that they even fall down dead. These actions were done for the purpose of gaining wealth and while we may gain some temporary result in the end it harms us and brings us great suffering. Sometimes people engage in negative actions such that they even come to lose their business and end up in prison. We see this as it often happens, for example, Parmalat, Cirrio, and so forth. The owners of these companies ended up in jail having tried to cheat others in order to make more money. In this way they lost everything. Since we see this, we need to avoid engaging in negative actions in order to become wealthy. The only result of negative actions will be suffering in the future.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

As a child I am unable to increase my wealth,
And as a youth what can I do [being unable to afford a wife]?
At the end of my life when I have the wealth,
Being an old man, what good will sex be then? (72)

(Togme Sangpo)When we are a child we are unable to find a wife and are unable to accumulate wealth. When we are an adult if we cannot find a wife or wealth what can we do? If we are able to collect a bit of wealth having become old we are at the end of our life. Then what can we do? If one is an old man even if one finds a wife one will not be able to enjoy her! Shantideva says this. Perhaps now in the world even old men who are rich can find a very nice, young wife. The woman thinks "He is old so if I stay together with him he will soon die and his wealth will be mine." This happens. Sometimes also very old women find a young husband, this happens even here in Italy. However, it happens everywhere, I remember hearing about an old Tibetan woman that had a very young

husband. When I saw them I asked if he was her son and other people told me to keep quite. She was in her mid-sixties whereas he was about twenty-five. I also saw an old man, a good *tangka* painter, who was with a pretty young girl and I asked him if she was his daughter but he did not answer me. Afterward another person who was with me told me that she was his wife. I asked why this young woman had married such an old man? It was because she was thinking that he would soon die whereupon she would inherit his wealth and could then marry a young man. Here the text does not say this, he just says that it is difficult to find a wife or that if one found a wife one would not be able to enjoy her.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Some evil and lustful people
Wear themselves out by working all day
And when they return home [in the evening]
Their exhausted bodies lie prostrate like corpses. (73)

Some people work all day and in the evening, tired, return home and collapse like corpses. (Togme Sangpo) Evil men with strong attachment work and work all day out of attachment to money, then tired and exhausted they return home in the evening completely worn out, lying stretched out like a corpse. As a result of this some problems occur. For example, perhaps the wife wishes to enjoy herself with him but he is completely tired and cannot make her happy. Cyclic existence is like this, and in this way our life finishes. The same can happen if the wife works all day while the husband stays at home, in that when she returns home she wants to sleep whereas he wants to enjoy himself. She is like an unmoving corpse! I think that this happens.

Here Shantideva is emphasizing that attachment to anything, whether to wealth, to the body, and so forth, does not bring any happiness but only brings suffering. Therefore, we need to try to lessen our attachment and to try to create virtuous energy in our mind. We need to check our own mind as there are many faults abiding there. Such faulty mental factors create problems for us. The real harmer is not outside beings, it is the inner mental afflictions that harm us. It is our mind that invites others to become our enemies. Our mind creates external enemies due to which we engage in negative verbal and physical actions, as a result of which they retaliate. We need to think about this.

Saturday morning, 22 May 2004

Develop a good motivation wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and for this purpose to listen to the teachings. Try to always generate a loving-kind mind toward all sentient beings.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Some have the suffering of being disturbed with travel,
And having to go a long way from home.
Although they long for their spouses,
They do not see them for years at a time. (74)

Some people due to traveling become very confused, being far from their native land, due to which they experience suffering. Due to going to a long distance they cannot meet the members of their family even one time in a year due to which they suffer. Needing to distance themselves from their families, they do not see their wives, children, and so forth for a long time even though they constantly think of them. Due to not being able to meet her, they are unable to enjoy themselves with their wife, that is, to have sexual intercourse with her, even though they have a strong attachment for this. This happened in the past, however traveling these days is very easy and so husband and wife can visit each other. Scientists have developed means that facilitate travel and confusion, nowadays people can see each other by way of their cell phones! Therefore, if a man wants to see his wife's or children's faces he can easily do so. However, presently there are many problems in families. Perhaps a few families or couples never have problems, there is always harmony.

However, most have problems of disagreement and disharmony which lead to separation and suffering. Perhaps some men can seek out and find a young woman but then eventually they too separate and he constantly changes partners. Some people do like this, also some women. They think that their husband is quite nice but they do not enjoy sex with him and so look for another man. In this way there are many problems. The cause of this is mental afflictions, especially attachment. This makes problems. If we check our minds we will find that they are really very strange.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

And some who wish for benefit, due to confusion
Even sell themselves for the sake of [women and the like];
But not attaining what they wish,
They are aimlessly driven by the winds of others' actions. (75)

(Togme Sangpo)How does our body suffer? We are motivated by the wish for benefit for ourselves and others, however the method to obtain this is not right, rather we are as though confused. We are even willing to sell our body, that is, to work day and night in order to make money. This is done for the purpose of taking care of one's family members, one's wife, one's children. For this it is as if we are willing to sell our bodies, that is, we work day and night for other people in order to obtain money. In this way our body suffers and we do not even achieve our wishes. We experience many troubles and suffering, it is as though our wife and children are carried away by the winds of karma, like the wind blows leaves away. In this way we suffer. Working to take care of our family, our body suffers and we become tired, but due to the winds of karma our wife and children are carried away.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Some sell their own bodies
And without any power are employed by others.
Even when their wives give birth
Their children fall at the feet of trees and in lonely places. (76)

Having sold our bodies to others, we come under others' power, that is, we have to follow others' orders due to having signed a contract. Even when our wife gives birth to a child due to being unable to help her, homeless she must give birth under a tree or in an isolated place due to which the child may even die. This happens even nowadays to gypsies and beggars. Also some young girls give birth in secret and put their child in the garbage. Sometimes these children are found and brought to hospital and their lives are saved. Sometimes the child is abandoned in a corner outside. This happens due to being attached to sexual intercourse. Some women have a husband or boyfriend who does not want the baby. The cause of all this suffering is attachment.

There are also those who are unable to find work due to which they cannot obtain money and then cannot buy food and so forth, due to which they end up as thieves who steal others' belongings or robbers who hold others up. Some steal by car and some by bicycle but during the get away are caught by police and sometimes are even killed. This is caused by attachment, the wish for money which they do not have.

Out of attachment some people take drugs such as heroin. However, if they do not have money they cannot buy these substances, which temporarily make the mind quiet and give an experience of suffering. However, in reality they only bring more and more suffering. Some people even end up taking their own life. This happens. People thinking that something brings them pleasure become confused and do not understand that it does not bring happiness but only brings suffering. The cause of all this is attachment.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Some fools who are deceived by desire,
Wishing for a livelihood think, "I shall earn my living [as a soldier],
Then, although afraid of losing their lives, they go to war.
Others become slaves for the sake of profit. (77)

It happens that due to the government giving a good salary to the military some people become soldiers. Then although worried and afraid of losing their lives they have to go to war in order to earn their money. There are also others who do not want to join the military, but their families push them to do so. Then having gone to war they may be injured or killed in battle due to which their families experience much suffering. This happens normally. First the family encourages them to work for the military in order to gain money, this is done out of attachment. Then due to problems later on they become sad. This happens due to not thinking before and at this point it is too late to do anything. The husband dies, and the wife and children suffer. War is only a problem, people kill each other, it is not an enjoyable experience nor an opportunity to travel. War is battle. Some nations say that they are peace-keepers but actually they bring weapons with them to fight. This is not right, but nowadays people do this. This deceit has attachment as its root.

Out of stupidity people go to war but having arrived at the place of war they begin to worry that they might lose their life. Due to engaging in war, there is suffering, no enjoyment. Even if they think that they will win the war, those who are caught by the other side may be imprisoned and even tortured. Such things happen in war. Therefore, it is not correct to become a soldier in order to earn money. The young men here in Italy have to do one year of military service. However, if someone does not want to do military service they can do twenty months of social service instead. Although this may appear to be difficult, in the end there is no danger. Why do young people need to train to become soldiers? Because if the country is attacked the government wants to be able to send everyone to fight. These kinds of problem will occur as long as we are in cyclic existence.

Some lustful people even cut their bodies,
Other impale themselves on the points of sticks,
Some stab themselves with daggers,
And others burn themselves – such things as these are quite apparent. (78)

Out of attachment or sometimes due to a particular custom people do such things. Motivated by desire or attachment people, thinking to attain happiness, even cut their bodies. They think that due to these actions they can gain higher realizations or rebirth. Others thinking to obtain money sell their kidneys and other organs. This is not due to a religious belief, however others in accordance with a particular religious tradition in ancient India impaled themselves on a trident thinking to attain nirvana. In China, on the other hand, some people are killed in this way. Some people stab themselves with a spear. Due to intense suffering and not being able to find a solution, people commit suicide. This happens around us. Others kill their wife and children and then kill themselves. This is due to being unable to bear their suffering and being unable to find a method to alleviate the suffering. Others put gasoline on their bodies and then light their body on fire due to which they die. This happens all over the world. The reason for killing themselves is the wish to put an end to suffering.

In India there was a particular tradition that when a husband died, his wife was expected to throw herself into the burning funeral pyre. This tradition still happens in some areas in India. When Indira Gandhi was prime minister she tried to put an end to this by making a law, but still people continue to do this. Due to the nylon saris that Indian women wear, they immediately catch fire.

However, others inadvertently burn to death, for example, in a burning house. This happened in Sera Monastery in south India where there was a building in which the Kopan monks lived. In the house there was a big kitchen in which one day one of the monks forgot to turn off the gas but closed all the doors and windows. That day many nuns had come to visit from Kopan and the monks went shopping for food in Mysore to offer them. When they returned, they opened the door of the kitchen and turned on the light due to which the place burst into fire and one monk was killed and the other badly burnt. Thus, even though we do not want to die, due to conditions we can die. Why does this happen? We say that it is due to karma, that is, due to a previous negative action of burning other beings. This is the ripened result of this action that is experienced by oneself. There are physical, verbal, and mental actions of which there are many types. For example, with our body we can kill other people, we can steal others' belongings, and we can engage in sexual misconduct. These are non-virtuous actions. Some men even have sexual intercourse with a woman and then kill her. Some men even do this with very young girls. This happens even here. This is because of the attachment the man has for sex. Some of these men are caught and put in prison where they experience suffering for many years. The cause of all this is attachment. Therefore, we need to strive to lessen our attachment. This harm to others is done out of attachment to happiness but when we do not obtain it we think that it is better to die and kill ourselves. Sometimes we are motivated by strong jealousy which makes us

create problems for others. In this way we create much suffering. If we check we will find that the main cause of our suffering is the mental afflictions in our mind. We need to recognize that the one who makes problems and suffering for ourselves is not outside ourselves, it is not other people, rather the source is found inside ourselves. We need to check this carefully as when we experience problems we tend to point to someone else thinking that he or she makes problems for us. For example, we may point to our father or our mother as the source of our problems. However, the main problem-causer is found within ourselves. In addition, there are external conditions but the main cause is within our mind and our actions. If we engage in virtuous actions we will experience happiness and if we commit non-virtuous actions we will experience suffering; this is the law of cause and result. This is a natural law, it is not a law formulated by a country. Therefore, since we all wish for happiness and good things we need to create good and virtuous actions. Then there is also the non-virtuous action of lying. It may appear that sometimes it is necessary to lie for a particular purpose. For example, perhaps if we were to tell the truth it would not be believed therefore we lie a bit in order to be believed. It seems that this happens. If we need to lie but our motivation is good, for example, to avoid creating conflict, then it is okay.

Then there is divisive speech which is not good, for example, saying “Raffaello said such-and-such” to Angelo, and then saying “Angelo said such-and-such” to Raffaello although it is not true. This creates disharmony between people.

Also the use of harsh words is non-virtuous as it hurts others’ minds. It makes them unhappy, therefore we need to avoid saying harsh words.

In addition, we often engage in idle or meaningless talk. This is the most dangerous. Why? Because we always do it. We pass most of our time in this. On the other hand, we rarely use harsh words, and rarely engage in divisive speech. Mostly we engage in gossiping. For example, even if we are doing meditation but are doing it with the wish to obtain some reward, the motivation is attachment, therefore it is not very good. If, for example, we read religious texts in order to gain money this action is transformed into idle talk. Therefore, since idle talk is dangerous we need to try to avoid it.

Saturday afternoon, 22 May 2004

Generate the motivation wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings and for this purpose to listen to the teachings. Try to keep the mind quiet and to develop the thought wishing to care for others, that is, the thought that cherishes other beings. Try to give up the self-cherishing mind. All our problems in everyday life come from the one main cause that is self-cherishing. If we are unable to give the thought cherishing ourselves altogether we should at least try to reduce it. This is very important. We need to think “I can do whatever I want,” without becoming depressed and without becoming agitated. Many people put themselves down, we should not do this. It is not easy but if we try something will happen. On the other hand, if we do not try nothing will happen.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Due to the torment involved in collecting it, protecting, and finally losing it,
I should realize wealth to be fraught with infinite problems.
Those who are distracted by their attachment to it
Have no opportunity to gain freedom from the misery of conditioned **experience** (79)

If we are attached to wealth there is no opportunity to become free from cyclic existence. It is difficult to collect wealth, it is not something easy. If one is able to collect it, it can be lost. Even if one tries to protect one’s wealth, it is difficult and one experiences suffering. Therefore, this attitude harms us, we can even end up poor. Then we will suffer. This is due to attachment to wealth. Due to the mind being constantly distracted by this attachment, one will not have time and will not even think to strive to become free from cyclic existence. With this distraction of attachment to wealth, our life will finish. One day death will arrive. We do not know when it will arrive. Then we will go on to the next life empty handed. Therefore, now we need to develop the intention to practice Dharma, that is, to develop the inner wealth of good qualities. This is the main and most important work that we need to do. For example, other people cannot give their inner realizations to us, nor can they take our problems from us. This is our own responsibility alone. From

beginningless time until now we have been born in cyclic existence in many different levels, constantly wandering in cyclic existence. Sometimes we have taken higher rebirth as human beings in good situations and as gods such as Brahma and Indra and the gods of the upper realms. However, after that we fell back into the hells. This has actually happened. Since things are not sure, we need to quickly develop good qualities within our mind. This is because death will come and we do not know when. Perhaps tomorrow we will die. Or perhaps we will lay down to sleep tonight and tomorrow we will not wake up. Others will say “Poor him, he died. He is not here anymore.” They will cry a bit, but there will be not benefit.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

In the same way as animals drawing carriages
Are only able to eat a few mouthfuls of grass,
Likewise desirous people
Have many disadvantages such as these and little [profit]. (80)

In short, cyclic existence has many disadvantages which are shown here by means of an analogy. Those who have many desires have many disadvantages, like a horse carrying a load can only eat a mouthful of grass that does not fill his large stomach. Similarly, we have attachment and big desire due to which we strive to accumulate wealth but are unable to accumulate much and at the same time there are many obstacles. Many people engage in activities that initially go well and seem to be perfect but later on they start to go wrong due to which they experience many problems and even end up in debt. We hear about this and see it in our daily life, even the very rich can become poor. Why is this? Because things are impermanent, meaning that they change momentarily. Therefore, we need to develop the intention to understand the nature of cyclic existence. Having understood its nature, we will develop the wish to get out of cyclic existence. We need to become free from cyclic existence and attain the liberated state that is happiness. This is our aim, if we try we can obtain it. Now we have obtained a precious human rebirth with the eight leasures and ten endowments. We are very fortunate in that we can develop inner qualities and attain liberation from cyclic existence in this very life.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

And since even animals can obtain this [little profit],
Those who are pained by their [previous] actions
Waste these leasures and endowments so difficult to find
For the sake of something trivial that is not so scarce. (81)

Animals are able to obtain some things such as food. If we act like an animal we will waste this precious human rebirth endowed with the eighteen qualities. Presently we are able to do whatever we want, but if instead we behave like animals our human rebirth will be completely wasted and become meaningless. Our human body and mind are more powerful and strong than those of gods, nagas, and other powerful beings such as some types of animals like lions, tigers, elephants, who have strong bodies. When we meet a big snake we feel fear even though we are bigger than them, however our minds are stronger than theirs. The mind of human beings is powerful because it enables us to achieve enlightenment in this very life. Enlightenment is not easy to obtain, but now that we have found this precious human rebirth with eighteen qualities that possesses an intelligent and powerful mind we can achieve the final aim of enlightenment. Even if we cannot achieve enlightenment we can use it to generate the mind of enlightenment, or great compassion, or great love. Human beings can learn many things and they can gain much knowledge. Why is this? It is dependent on having this precious body. Therefore, we should try not to waste this human rebirth and instead take its essence. To take its essence means to try to keep morality, to be honest, and to develop concentration and wisdom. In this way we can gain inner qualities and in the next life we will again have the life of a practitioner. Like this, if we are interested in religion, such as the Buddha-Dharma, we should not waste this human body but instead we should use it to improve and perfect ourselves. We should try not to cheat ourselves. Sometimes we deceive ourselves.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

The objects of desire will certainly perish
And then I shall fall into hellish states.
But buddhahood itself is attained
With just one millionth of the difficulty (82)

Involved in continually exhausting myself
For the sake of what is not very great.
[Hence] the desirous experience greater misery than
[Those following] the awakening way of life –
But for them there is no awakening (83)

Desirable objects quickly vanish, leaving us with nothing. Then we will fall into the hells where we will be unable to do anything due to the great suffering and difficulty. Then it will be difficult to attain buddhahood. It is not easy to attain enlightenment, for example, perhaps we try to engage in the activities of a bodhisattva but they are difficult, however work that does not bring enlightenment is even more difficult. For example, like working day and night to obtain money, money, money is difficult, the body and mind become tired and exhausted, and we experience suffering but without obtaining any good result. However, even though it is difficult to practice the six perfections and subdue our mind in the end it will bring the result of enlightenment. Suffering is meaningless, it has no purpose, it does not bring anything good. For example, when we are suffering due to sadness our mind will be distracted by suffering. However, if due to seeing suffering one develops compassion then this is very good. Seeing suffering, we will wish to become free from suffering and the causes of suffering. Experiencing suffering out of attachment to desirable objects is only the cause of falling into the hell realm. We undergo many difficulties and obstacles when striving to attain wealth yet we continue to strive for it, due to which we experience suffering while accumulating it and in addition in the future we will experience intense suffering. This is meaningless, therefore we should not put much effort into money thinking how to cheat others and so forth as otherwise it will only bring suffering. However, in order to survive we need food, clothing, a home, a car, and so forth, in fact these days we need many things in order to live. Therefore, we do need to collect some money. So what should we do? We need to take the middle way, that is, to not fall into the extreme of collecting many material things. With a good motivation we should with honesty and in the right way work in order to gain the necessities. This is what Shantideva says.

Those who have desire and want to obtain more and more experience even more misery and suffering. The more wealth one collects, the more suffering one experiences. Why is this? Because one engages in many non-virtuous actions that bring the result of suffering. Such people cannot generate the mind of enlightenment and cannot attain enlightenment.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Having contemplated the miseries of hell,
[It will be clear that] there is nothing comparable
To the harm caused to desirous beings
By weapons, poison, fire, ravines, and foes. (84)

We should contemplate the suffering or misery of the hell realm which are greater than the sufferings for those who have strong desire who are cut by weapons, who ingest poison, who fall into a fire or a ravine, and killed by enemies. Although these things are very dangerous from our point of view, these sufferings are not very heavy compared to the sufferings of the hells which are much stronger. Why is this? If one stabs oneself, one suffers for a short time and then dies. Also if one takes poison, one either quickly dies or dies within a day or two. In any case our life is very brief so whatever suffering is experienced is relatively short. On the other hand, if when born in the hell realms even the shortest lifespan in hell is much much longer than the lifespan of human beings. In addition, one experiences suffering for the entire duration there, from the time one is born there until the karma is exhausted and one dies. Therefore, thinking about this we should understand that the suffering of the hells is incredibly great. It is really like this. We should think about this and now that we have a good rebirth we need to try not to be reborn as a hell being, as a hungry ghost, or as an animal but instead to practice perfectly. We need to practice morality, to abandon non-virtuous actions and guard the ten virtuous actions.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

Having in this way developed disillusion with desire,
I should generate joy for solitude.
The fortunate ones stroll in peaceful forests,
Devoid of disputes and disturbing conceptions (85)

They [live] in joyful houses of vast flat stones,
Cooled by the sandal-scented moonlight,
Fanned by the peaceful, silent forest breeze,
Thinking of what is of benefit for others. (86)

Devoid of outer disputes and inner mental afflictions one should abide in a peaceful place free from thieves and other problems and try to develop the mind of enlightenment. It is important to develop this kind of attitude. Our mind should be joyful to stay in a solitary place that is peaceful. It should be free from disputes with others and our mind should be free from the mental afflictions and instead should be happy and relaxed. It should have the pleasant scent of sandalwood, pleasant moonlight, with nice big stones where one can relax and look at the moon, at the nice forest, with no one to disturb one, due to which one can relax and work to develop the mind of enlightenment. If one can do this, it would be the best. It should be free from noise, very quiet. In this way our mind will be more relaxed and peaceful and we will be able to practice the Dharma. Although this is not easy we need to try to develop more calm and peace within our mind, not thinking of many things, possessing less desire and more satisfaction. In our daily life we should try to think in this way as thereby our life will become easier and happier. If we think a lot about collecting wealth, about our relatives, our children, our wife, our husband, we will only become more unhappy. We need to think that we have enough food, enough wealth, enough clothes, enough of everything, and thereby be content.

END

(no teachings Sunday morning, Vajrayogini empowerment)