

*Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

*A Chat  
about  
Heruka*





# A CHAT ABOUT HERUKA



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LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE  
A CHAT ABOUT HERUKA

The Skillful Means of Taking an Everlasting Holiday in Tagpa Kachö,  
the Pure Land of Vajrayogini

Edited by Thubten Chodron

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*To be read only by those with full initiation into the Highest Yoga  
Tantra practices of Chakrasamvara or Vajrayogini*

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*Through the merit of having contributed to the spread of the Buddha's teachings for the sake of all sentient beings, may our benefactors and their families and friends have long and healthy lives, all happiness, and may all their Dharma wishes be instantly fulfilled.*



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1997, I was doing retreat in one of Vajrapani Institute's lovely retreat cabins when I heard that Zopa Rinpoche was arriving to attend an FPMT board meeting. Several questions had arisen during the retreat, and Zopa Rinpoche was kind enough to meet with me to answer them. Specifically, I was puzzled by the Eight-line Praises to Heruka and Vajrayogini, verses that I had recited daily for decades, but whose meaning was a mystery to me. Rinpoche gave a brief answer, but said that since other people in the area also did that practice he would like to explain it to the group. I was delighted, for I hardly expected that he would offer to teach.

Thus followed what Rinpoche called "a chat about Heruka," in which he explained emptiness in depth, and the Three Purifications. Only on the last day or two did he talk about practices specific to Heruka and Vajrayogini: left side conduct and the Eight-line Praises. Later, I transcribed and edited these teachings to form this book. Although Rinpoche wanted to explain the hand offering, time was limited, so he referred me a teaching he had given on this practice at Tushita Retreat Centre, Dharamsala, in 1990 and recommended that it be included in the book. I clarified questions that arose while editing this book with Rinpoche in the summer of 1999.

Please, this book is to be read only by those who have received initiation into the Highest Yoga Tantra practices of Chakrasamvara or Vajrayogini.

I recommend reading it slowly, stopping to think about each paragraph. Take the opportunity to apply Rinpoche's teachings to your life right now. The text of the sadhana is written in italics, with the commentary below.

Parts extracted from the Chakrasamvara sadhana have been italicized.

I would like to thank the residents of Vajrapani Institute for making these teachings possible, Venerable Lhundrup Ningje for proofreading the manuscript, Nick Ribush for publishing this book, and Dharma Friendship Foundation in Seattle for supporting me while I worked on it. My deepest gratitude goes to Zopa Rinpoche for his kindness in giving these teachings and for having the confidence in us that we are capable of practicing them. All errors are my own.

*Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron*

*Seattle, Washington, USA*

*30 May 1999*

## ONE

# MOTIVATION

### THE ADVANTAGES OF A PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE

At this time you have received a precious human life qualified with eight freedoms and ten fortunes, a precious human body that is like a dream. Receiving a precious human body is rare; it happens just once. This perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful. With it you can achieve the happiness of this life and whatever else you wish for. If you wish to again attain a human rebirth, you can. In addition, if you wish to have a body endowed with the eight favorable qualities, you can create its causes during your present precious human life. In *The Brief Lam-rim*,<sup>1</sup> Lama Tsong Khapa praised the precious human body as the best and only basis for achieving the supreme path. Therefore, it is essential that you create all the causes for such a body and life, without omitting any. In addition, you should try to purify any obstacles to this through cherishing the practice of confession with the four opponent powers in your everyday life. Lama Tsong Khapa said, "I the yogi practiced this way. I request you who seek liberation to practice this way." Thus he emphasized that to realize the three principal aspects of the path, to attain the supreme path, and to actualize the two tantric stages and the Mahāmudra clear light, you

should first obtain the body that has the complete characteristics and the eight qualities. In this life you have the opportunity to create the causes for each of these qualities.

In this life, you can also create the cause for the perfect body that has the four Mahayana Dharma wheels, which are:

1. Living in a conducive environment where necessities for practicing the Mahayana are easily found;
2. Being under the guidance of a virtuous friend who practices and teaches the Mahayana in general and who reveals the Vajrayana teachings in particular;
3. Having great aspiration for the Mahayana path so that you joyfully engage in virtuous actions with your three doors; and
4. Possessing qualities of upper rebirth, for example, long life, attractive appearance, and knowledge.

In order to actualize the path, it is important to have each of these good conditions.

This time you have been born from the womb in the Southern Continent of this human world, with a body constituted of six elements—bone, sperm, and marrow received from the father and skin, blood, and flesh received from the mother. In the six realms of cyclic existence, this human body is the only one with which you can achieve enlightenment in one brief lifetime. Thus, the human body that you have received now is unbelievably precious, because you have the foundation for practicing the path of Secret Mantra, particularly the wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, which is the direct cause of the dharmakaya. In addition, if you wish to attain enlightenment

in the pure land of Heruka or Vajrayogini, in Shambhala, or in other pure lands where the opportunity to practice tantra and become enlightened exists, you can create the cause with this perfect human body.

Human beings in the Northern Continent live a fixed age of one thousand years. They are unbelievably wealthy and have incredible enjoyments, making it extremely difficult for them to realize that samsara is suffering in nature. Thus, it is nearly impossible for them to renounce samsaric suffering and its causes and to aspire for liberation. Lacking this deep understanding of the nature of suffering in cyclic existence, they cannot develop great compassion toward other sentient beings, and without compassion, they cannot generate bodhicitta.

On the other hand, human beings of this Southern Continent see and experience all kinds of suffering and happiness. Our world, the Southern Continent, is called *lä-ki sa-pa*, a place where the force of karma is more powerful and its effects felt more strongly and sometimes sooner than in others. Thus, if we create negative karma in the early part of our life, it can be experienced later in this life. If we create good karma in the early part of our life, the result can be experienced later in the same life. Therefore, if we practice Dharma, the karma is very powerful; the merit we create is very powerful and can bring quick results. If we practice Dharma in the Southern Continent with this body, we can achieve realizations quickly.

Because we see so much suffering—our own and that of others—we can easily generate the mind that wants to be free of samsara and our renunciation is strong. Similarly, developing strong compassion and bodhicitta is comparatively easy. Because our compassion is stronger, our bodhicitta is stronger, and thus we can quickly attain

the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

The Southern Continent<sup>4</sup> has twenty-four holy places where Heruka and Vajrayogini and countless dakas and dakinis abide. Practicing the body mandala causes those innumerable dakas and dakinis in the twenty-four places to enter your body and to bless your channels, winds, drops and chakras. The minute you do the body mandala meditation, they see you, no matter how far away they are, and quick like the mind, they enter your body to bless the channels, winds, drops, and chakras. Blessing the channels, winds, drops, and chakras makes them serviceable so that they function exactly as you visualize when you do practices such as the Six Yogas of Naropa. In that way, you can fully release, or open, the knots in the chakras. In your meditation, you can bring the winds from the 72,000 channels in your body and the right and left channels into your central channel. When the winds enter, abide, and absorb in your central channel according to the twenty-five absorptions, the drops melt. You can control the drops and move them up and down. This enables you to absorb the gross mind and actualize the subtle mind and extremely subtle mind, the clear light, and transform it into the wisdom of bliss and emptiness. In this way, you can become enlightened in this very life during this degenerate time.

For all these reasons, this human body born in the Southern Continent is unbelievably precious, more precious than anything else in this world. You possess nothing comparable to this precious human body. Seeing that, you must also know that it is not sufficient to use it just to avoid rebirth in the lower realms and be reborn in the upper realms. Nor is it sufficient to achieve liberation from samsara just for yourself. You must attain full enlightenment in order to free all sentient

beings from all suffering and lead them to enlightenment. It is not just one sentient being that is continuously tortured by the three types of suffering by being under the control of karma and delusion—countless sentient beings in each realm suffer in this way. Therefore, you need to attain enlightenment quickly to be able to free them from all suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment as soon as possible.

Countless sentient beings depend on you to liberate them from their samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment. Even though limitless Buddhas and bodhisattvas exist, until certain people meet you, their problems are not solved. You see many examples of this in your life. Until certain people meet you, they do not meet the Dharma, even though numberless Buddhas and bodhisattvas abound. This shows that countless sentient beings depend on you for help, to be liberated from samsaric suffering and to attain enlightenment. You cannot ignore them. From your side, you should train yourself to be willing to suffer in the lowest, unbearable hell realm for eons equal to the number of atoms in the earth if necessary to benefit others and actualize the path to enlightenment. You should think, “I can experience this for others, even to benefit just one sentient being.” When thinking of others, you should feel that it is totally unbearable that even one sentient being, your kind mother, should suffer in samsara for even a second. Then, when you consider that there is not just one but innumerable sentient beings whose minds are obscured and who are experiencing unbearable suffering in samsara, you know that you must attain enlightenment as quickly as possible.

## THE DISADVANTAGES OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

Death is definite to happen, but the actual time of death is uncertain. You have been experiencing the general sufferings of samsara and the sufferings of the three lower realms in particular from time without beginning. Reflecting on this deeply cracks your heart: "Even the Buddha's omniscient mind cannot see the beginning of my samsaric suffering. If I do not practice the method of liberating myself from all samsaric suffering, if I do not make an effort to free myself from samsara, I will have to experience the general sufferings of samsara and the suffering of the lower realms in particular again and again. I will experience without end oceans of human suffering, oceans of demigod suffering, oceans of god realm suffering, oceans of hell realm suffering, oceans of hungry ghost suffering, and oceans of animal suffering. My future will hold only the endless suffering that my delusions and karma force me to experience again and again." If you think like this, you will never be able to sleep. You will be unable to eat, or if you can, thinking of all the suffering to come will make you vomit.

You have experienced every suffering and every pleasure in samsara before. There is nothing new left. You have experienced everything infinite times. Whatever pleasures exist in the human realm, you have experienced them all countless times during your infinite rebirths as a human. Similarly, you have experienced infinite times the sensual pleasures of the desire realm gods. By developing the concentration that comes through renouncing the desire realm and its sense pleasures, you have been reborn in the form realm and experienced its peace and happiness numberless times. By generating the concentrations that come from renouncing the happiness of even the



form realm, you have also been born limitless times in the various levels of the formless realm—infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness and the peak of samsara; by renouncing the happiness of the lower formless realm levels, you have attained the one above, finally attaining rebirth at the peak of samsara, the highest samsaric realm, countless times. But so far, you have not generated renunciation for all of samsara, including the peak of samsara. When you realize full renunciation, you will enter the path to liberation and begin to actualize the true path and true cessation, but so far, this hasn't happened. Now, before death comes, you must try to liberate yourself from all of samsara.

## BODHICITTA

Still, attaining liberation from samsara is not the ultimate meaning of your life. The ultimate goal of your life is to be useful to and beneficial for other sentient beings. The greatest benefit you can offer all sentient beings is to free them from all suffering and its cause and lead them to full enlightenment. To do this, you must first achieve full enlightenment yourself.

Therefore, before death comes, you must not only liberate yourself from samsara, but also attain full enlightenment for the benefit of all your kind mother sentient beings, who equal in extent the limitless sky. Your kind mother sentient beings are completely under the control of past karma and delusion, and on top of that are experiencing the suffering of pain, the suffering of change—temporary samsaric pleasure—and pervasive compounded suffering. In addition they are continuously creating more causes for samsara, particularly those for

rebirth in the lower realms, the realms of unimaginable suffering.

Sentient beings spend their entire lives completely trapped in the hallucinations of the appearance of inherent existence and the concept grasping inherent existence as true. This solid, fixed concept is extremely hard to change or eliminate. Thus, they are completely overwhelmed by the wrong concept of inherent existence and live in hallucination twenty-four hours a day, every day of their lives, from birth until death. They live in samsara in total hallucination.

In addition, they are completely overwhelmed by and under the control of other wrong concepts, such as the wrong concepts of permanence, pleasure, and purity. The concept of permanence apprehends impermanent phenomena as permanent. It makes sentient beings cling on to everything, thinking it will last forever.

The concept of pleasure makes sentient beings believe that samsaric pleasure, which is only suffering in nature, is happiness. If you analyze pleasurable feelings you will discover that they are unsatisfactory and suffering in nature, but to the hallucinating mind they appear as pleasurable and sentient beings believe them to be real happiness.

The concept of purity makes sentient beings believe that their body, which is composed of dirty things, is pure. Trapped in this hallucination and completely overwhelmed by this wrong concept, they think their bodies are beautiful and get attached to their own and others' bodies. If you analyze you will see that before food goes inside your body, you think it is clean, but when it comes out, it is dirty. In other words, the body makes anything that goes inside it filthy. That shows that the nature of the body is impure. However, to your hallucinating mind, it appears clean and pure, and your wrong concept believes that it is so. Because of these wrong conceptions, attachment arises, and in

dependence upon attachment, anger arises. This shows how these wrong concepts create the cause for samsara and produce suffering.

This is the process through which you and all other sentient beings suffer in samsara. Even gods and human beings born in fortunate circumstances are not free from suffering. So, even one of your kind mother sentient beings suffering in samsara as a hell being, human, deva, and so forth is intolerable for you. Seeing sentient beings suffer in samsara for even one second is unbearable. You can't stand it at all. But it is not just one sentient being that suffers like that. Countless hell beings who are your kind mothers are suffering; countless hungry ghosts are suffering, countless animals are suffering, countless kind mother human beings are suffering, countless kind mother gods and demigods are suffering. Therefore, you must free them from all this suffering and lead them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. To do this most effectively, you must attain enlightenment as soon as you can. For that reason, listen to these Mahayana teachings on the path of Highest Yoga Tantra, the practice of mother tantra, which contains the skillful means to achieve enlightenment in the shortest possible time.

Milarepa, Gyalwa Ensapa and many other yogis in the past achieved enlightenment in one brief lifetime by practicing Heruka. You are extremely fortunate to have the opportunity of practicing the path of Heruka at this time. Many great yogis traveled this path to develop their minds and attain full enlightenment quickly. Think, "I too can do this. Therefore, to learn the method of quickly attaining enlightenment, I will listen to the teachings on the practice of Heruka and will meditate on Heruka for the benefit of all my kind mother sentient beings."



## TWO

### INTRODUCTION

We're going to just have a chat about Heruka, not fixed teachings on the topic. Chodron asked a few questions about some aspects of the practice, so I thought that if I gave the answers to a group, more people would understand and have the opportunity of engaging in these methods that enable you to attain enlightenment quickly. She asked about the meaning of the mother tantra path and the Eight-line Praises.

I have not yet seen a complete commentary with a full explanation of the words of the Eight-line Praises for both Heruka and Vajrayogini, only a part of it. Nevertheless, I thought to go over the meditation that goes with the Eight-line Praises so that you can do it when you recite them. If you know the benefits of this meditation, reciting the Praises will not be a burden but enjoyable, like going swimming, lying on the beach, or eating ice cream. Reciting the Praises will become very important. Many great practitioners emphasize this practice, as they do the benefits and meditation of the left-side conduct that is part of the mother tantra samaya. In addition, the hand offering is a special practice of both Heruka and Vajrayogini for rebirth in the pure land. What you do before eating food is put hot soup and momos in the palm of your hand, visualize deities on your fingers and make offering. When the food has been blessed, put it on

your head. In this way, you don't need to buy hair cream; you use dal instead! Anyway, I'm joking. But these will be the bits and pieces of our chat about Heruka.

But before proceeding with that, I want to discuss the meaning of Heruka, which is extremely profound. Then we will meditate together and after that go into the other topics.

Some years ago, when I was in Spain, one of the students made an appointment for me to meet the queen. I wondered what present to give her, and it came out beneficial to offer her a large, beautiful poster of Heruka. The queen of Spain seemed delighted to receive this picture of Heruka, and I think it fit her mind. If she was pretending to be very happy, that would be different, but she appeared to be happy, and asked me, "What is the meaning of Heruka?" I was stunned, because I never expected her to ask that. Of course, I could not explain emptiness right away because it wouldn't mean anything to her. For her to have some feeling for emptiness, I would have to explain suffering and the evolution of samsara, the twelve links. So I started explaining the twelve links, and whatever I said, she responded, "I understand. I understand every single word." I'm not sure whether she was being diplomatic or if it was true. I would be very surprised if she weren't just being polite. It would be difficult to understand everything after just one explanation!

She is a very kind person. The whole family is very intelligent and nice, especially her sister, who I met the next year. Her main job is to help countries in difficulty by sending medicines, food, and so on. No one in the family wears anything made from animals skin or furs. The queen dresses simply, not in official dress. I had to make an effort to think, "This is the queen." Otherwise, you see her as simple, not as

a queen. She said she was going to keep the Heruka poster. I'm not sure if she did; I hope it is still there.





### THREE

## COMMENTARY ON THE THREE PURIFICATIONS

First I will explain the Three Purifications, an excerpt from the text of which follows.

*SHRI HERUKA*

*HE stands for the mind, which is the source of everything, and for the selflessness of phenomena, found by examining the fabricated nature of the causal mind.*

*RU stands for the selflessness of persons, found by abandoning the self fabricated by the network of wrong views that cause us to perceive an inherently existing self of persons.*

*KA stands for the object, suchness, and subjective cognition being without disharmony.*

*SHRI stands for the meaning of EVAM, the wisdom of non-duality merging with its object, emptiness, in a manner that accords with its actual mode of existence.*

*(Thinking in this way, purify the mind.)*

*From emptiness I arise instantly as dark blue Heruka with one face and two hands holding vajra and bell. With my right leg extended, I embrace my partner, red Vajra Varahi, who has one face and two hands holding a curved knife and skullcup.*

SHRI HERUKO HAM (3X)

(Purify the body by saying this three times with the thought of benefiting all living beings, while holding divine identity of this physical appearance.)

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH, KE KHA GA GHA NGA, TSA  
TSHA DZA DZHA NYA, TA THA DA DHA NA, TA THA DA DHA NA, PA PHA BA  
BHA MA, YA RA LA WA, SHA SHA SA HA KSHA HUM HUM PEY (3X)

*These three mantra rosaries stand in counterclockwise circles at my navel and shine with five-colored light. The groups of deities of the three wheels emerge from them and radiating from my right nostril, go in the ten directions, driving away all interferences. They re-enter through my left nostril and dissolve into the mantra rosaries at my navel.*

*(Imagining this, purify the speech.)*

Now we'll go into the above in more depth.

*HE stands for the mind, which is the source of everything, and for the selflessness of phenomena, found by examining the fabricated nature of the causal mind.*

HE indicates the essence of the cause, the mind—the source, or originator, of all. It refers to the extremely subtle mind, which always abides at your heart. This is the source of all. “All” means samsara—what appears to us now—and liberation, which is beyond samsara. Samsara ranges from the hell realms to the god realms, and liberation includes the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. All of this existence, all of these phenomena, arise from this extremely subtle consciousness. They are all manifestations of the pure and impure extremely subtle wind and mind, which are of one essence but labeled differently because of their different functions. The relationship of the extremely subtle wind and mind is described as “one nature with different isolates” or as “one nature, but nominally different.” According to Highest Yoga Tantra, the extremely subtle pure or impure mind is the source, or originator, of all these phenomena. This mind doesn’t have self-existence. Its lack of self-existence is called the selflessness of phenomena. Two types of selflessness exist, the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena, which principally refers to the aggregates that are the base of the label “I.” Of these, HE shows the selflessness of phenomena.

*RU stands for the selflessness of persons, found by abandoning the self fabricated by the network of wrong views that cause us to perceive an inherently existing self of persons.*

RU indicates the selflessness of persons. The person is empty of self-existence but decorated with a net of superstitious concepts holding the person as self-existent. How do superstitious concepts holding the person as inherently existent fabricate a self?<sup>2</sup> Here, an example from your childhood is useful.

When you were learning the alphabet, for example, the letter M, first the teacher drew some lines on the blackboard. Although you saw the lines, since you hadn't yet been taught that these lines were the letter M, since your teacher hadn't yet told you, "This is M," you didn't have the appearance that this design was the letter M. You didn't have the appearance, the projection, that fabricates that this is M. This is because your mind hadn't yet labeled "this is M" and believed in it. Therefore, you just saw the lines but you didn't see that this is M. However, the moment your teacher said that this was M, you believed it and your mind labeled this design M. You believed that it is M and afterwards it appeared to you as M and you saw it as M. Thus, from this example, you can see how the M came from your mind, from labeling; how the appearance of M is fabricated, or projected, on that design by your mind.

In reality, M comes into existence by being merely labeled by the mind. The M that exists, the conventionally existent M, is what is merely labeled by the mind. That is the reality of how M exists; there is no other M besides this merely labeled one. However, after your mind has merely labeled M, when the M appears back to your mind it doesn't appear as if it has been merely labeled by your mind. It appears back to you as if there is something extra there, an M there that hasn't merely been labeled by your mind, an M that exists from its own side.

In reality, an M that exists from the side of its base is not there. There are four lines that make up the M, but M is not on the first line, nor the second, the third, or the fourth. There is no M on any of those pieces. If you look for M, you cannot find it even on the collection of the lines together. M doesn't exist on any of those lines individually, or on the collection of them arranged together in this way.

The four lines that are arranged in that particular fashion are the base that is labeled M, but they are not M. Because they are the base, they are not M. The base that is labeled M and the label M<sup>3</sup> do not exist separately, but they are different. That is, they are one in nature but they are not exactly the same—the lines are the base of the label and M is the label, that is, the labeled object. If you searched for the M and found it on those lines, the M would inherently exist. An inherently existent M is one that can be found on its base. That would mean that M existed from its own side and was not merely labeled by mind.

However, when you search, you discover that this is totally false; completely untrue. There is no inherently existent M that can be found on its base. In fact, we cannot find even the merely labeled M, the M that does exist, on this design. If we can't find the merely labeled M, the one that does exist, there on the base, how can we find an inherently existent M? How can we find an M that is not merely labeled by mind there? There is no way. The M that is not merely labeled by mind does not exist, there or anywhere else. It does not exist there on that base, that design of four lines, or anywhere else away from that base. The M that appears to us as not merely labeled by mind does not exist at all.

This example of how we learned the alphabet as children is very

useful. At that time we did not know the letters, so the evolution is clear. Actually, even now, every time you write a letter of the alphabet, first you see the base, then your mind labels, for example, M. Your mind makes up the label. First you write the base—that design of lines—and due to that particular design on the paper, your mind makes up the label M. You create the idea, the name, the label M. After that, the M appears back to you and you see the M there on the base. This happens instantly and constantly when you type a letter. Every day, when you write letters, first you create the base, then your mind makes up the label.

This analysis should help you get an idea of the refuted object, the one the false view grasps as existing. As a child learning the alphabet, first you saw the lines, the base to be labeled M, then, following what the teacher said relating to that design, your mind made up the label M and believed in that. After that, the M appeared on that design. There was an M there.

Even though your mind just creates the idea, makes up the label and believes in it, afterwards you have the appearance of an M there, on that design. There is an M on that design, an M there on the base. That M is a total hallucination. The M that you see on the base is the refuted object. It is a total hallucination. That M is totally non-existent.

If you analyze, you cannot find a real M there on the base, that arrangement of four lines. However, when you do not analyze, it looks like it's there. It appears as if the M is there on that design. But if you analyze and look for it, you cannot find it there. You cannot find it on that base.

Just like this example, whatever you see as there on its base, all

these are objects to be refuted. Anything that appears to you as there—all the billions of objects that you see in everyday life, in the supermarket and department stores, the things you see everywhere around you—are the refuted object; they do not exist. Instead of realizing that these things are merely labeled by mind and are therefore like illusions, you see everything as there. Just like the M, they appear and you believe that they are there from their own side, on that design. They are total hallucinations. They are empty.

All phenomena, including your I, appear to you in this way and you hold that appearance to be true. When you look at a road, the road is there. When you look at the sky, the sky is there. When you look at a tree, the tree is there, on its base. When you see your friends or enemies, they are there on their base. You do not see that they are merely labeled by your mind. For example, you do not differentiate the base of the carpet from the label, carpet. When you look, you do not see the difference between the base and the object labeled on that base. The labeled object appears mixed with the base; you cannot differentiate it from its base. All such things are the refuted objects.

When you look at a light, the light is there. “There” means on the base. In this instance, the base is that particular phenomenon that functions to eliminate darkness. In relation to that base, your mind makes up the idea and the label “light.” There is the base, and then there is the label “light.” But you don’t see it that way. How the light appears to you and how you apprehend it is that the light is on that base; the light is on that phenomenon that functions to dispel darkness. In the case of all these phenomena around you that appear to you and that you apprehend, you do not differentiate between the base and the label. All these are the refuted objects. They are hallucinations.

They do not exist and are totally empty of being there.

This includes the I. Just as a real M appears on this design, from the side of the base, so too does a real I appear there, on the aggregates. All these things that appear real from there—I, actions, objects of the senses, everything—do not exist from there. Each one is empty of existing there on its base. This is the refuted object, and is what things are empty of.

All these things—including the I, action, object—that appear as real from there and that you believe to be there on their base exist just in your mind. They exist just in your mind because they aren't there. The entire supermarket that you see is in your mind. All these shops and businesses are in your mind. Your friend is in your mind. The enemy that you see—the person who appears so mean to you—is in your mind.

What some people understand when they hear “everything is in your mind” may not be quite right. We are not denying the existence of external objects and people; what we are denying is that they exist in the way they appear and in the way we believe them to exist. It is in that sense that they are in our mind. When we have a hallucination or a dream, the false objects that appear to us are in our mind. Thinking in this way about other things as well is useful, because they do not exist there the way they appear to exist. The way they appear to us is not the reality of how they exist. For that reason, it is helpful to meditate, “All these things appearing from there, these things that appear to exist on their base, are just in my mind. They are just my own concept.”

Take, for example, a person wearing blue glasses looking at a snow mountain. He sees a blue snow mountain and believes one to be there, but it is just his own concept. In reality, no blue snow mountain



exists. However, the mountain exists. In the same way, things appear to you as inherently existent and you grasp at them as existing in that way, but it is just your own concept. Those inherently existent things you believe to be real are just in your mind. However, conventionally existent, dependently arising things and people do exist.

What makes you apprehend things as not merely labeled by mind? Now we come to the meaning of “self fabricated by the network of wrong views.” This network of wrong views, or superstition, refers to the concept of inherent existence, or self-existence. Seeing other designs doesn’t cause you to make up the label M. Only seeing that particular four-line design causes you to decide on the particular label M. For your mind to label M, you have to see something first, and that particular design is the reason that your mind labels M. The reason is the base. First you see the base, then you make up the label M. After that, you see the label.

Even though the M is merely labeled by your mind, what makes you see the M there on that design, on the base? In other words, what makes the M appear and you to believe that it is not merely labeled by mind, that is, that it exists from its own side? It is the negative imprint left on your mental continuum by past ignorance, the concept of inherent existence. Right after your mind makes up the label M and believes in it, the imprint fabricates, or projects, inherent existence on the merely labeled M. That is why when the M appears to you, it appears as not merely labeled by mind but as existing from its own side. Because you are not aware of this, you apprehend this appearance as true. At that time you create the concept of inherent existence, ignorance. This self-grasping ignorance that apprehends the appearance as true becomes the basis for other disturbing attitudes—

anger, attachment and so forth. These motivate karma, and thus you continue to take rebirth in samsara.

The evolution of the appearance and concept of an inherently existent I is similar to the above. You think, "I'm here in the gampa on this cushion." First your mind thinks of the aggregates. The aggregates are at Vajrapani Institute, in the gampa, on this cushion. The same mind that thinks of the aggregates—the base—makes up the label I. Because the aggregates are here, it says, "I'm here." The mind that thinks of the aggregates and uses the reason of where the aggregates are, imputes the label I—"I'm here." The mind merely imputes I, and you believe in that. After that, the negative imprint left by past ignorance—the net of superstition, the concept holding the I as inherently existent—projects the appearance of inherent existence on the merely labeled I. The imprints of ignorance project, or decorate, inherent existence on top of the merely labeled I, just like you decorate a wall with pictures. Unaware of this, your mind apprehends, or grasps, this appearance as true.

Now you can understand the meaning of "selflessness of persons, found by abandoning the self fabricated by the network of wrong views that cause us to perceive an inherently existing self of persons." Selflessness means empty of self, empty of the inherent existence fabricated by the net of superstitious concepts holding the person as self-existent. The person, the I, does not have inherent existence at all. It is completely empty of inherent existence. The inherent existence that appears is a hallucination fabricated by the hallucinating thought, the net of superstitious concepts holding the person to be inherently existent.

Why is it called a net? Because it binds us to samsara. Just as a net

traps fish and does not let them be free, the net of superstitious concepts holding the I as inherently existent does not let you be free. Again and again, your mind grasps on to inherent existence projected on the merely labeled I by the previous net of superstitious concepts. Then, this present ignorance, the present net of superstitious concepts holding the person as inherently existent, ties you to samsara. If you realize the meaning of RU, the selflessness of the person, you will be able to free yourself.

*KA stands for the object, suchness, and subjective cognition being without disharmony.*

The wisdom realizing emptiness never sees inherent existence. The object it sees is completely empty of inherent existence. In Tibetan, *yül* means “object” and *yül-chen* means “having object,” which refers to the subject, this wisdom itself (subjective cognition). The object of the wisdom realizing emptiness (suchness, or emptiness) and the subject (the wisdom itself) are not disharmonious. They do not abide as opposites. The object, emptiness, and the subject, wisdom, are not in opposition to each other. The subject sees that object exactly as it is. There is no contradiction. For example, the object, emptiness, and ignorance, the concept of inherent existence, are not harmonious because the object is empty of inherent existence. However, the way ignorance holds, or apprehends, the object is as inherently existent, as existing from its own side. Therefore, they are not harmonious; they contradict each other. Ignorance is not harmonious with the object. The object, emptiness, is itself empty of inherent existence. If you think in this way, you will easily understand the meaning of the

statement that the object (emptiness) and the wisdom realizing that object to be empty, the wisdom realizing emptiness, are harmonious. The wisdom is harmonious with the nature of the object. Therefore, they do contradict or oppose each other.

*SHRI stands for the meaning of EVAM, the wisdom of non-duality merging with its object, emptiness, in a manner that accords with its actual mode of existence.*

Here, the object is emptiness, which is also empty of inherent existence. The non-dual transcendental wisdom sees, or enters, the object, emptiness, exactly as it is. This is what EVAM means.

SHRI emphasizes this as well. In exactly the same way the object emptiness exists, the subject (the transcendental wisdom of great bliss) has also abandoned all objects of the concept of inherent existence—it has completely abandoned all inherently existent objects. The concept of inherent existence, on the other hand, apprehends all phenomena as existing from their own side. Inherent existence is the object of this concept. The wisdom of great bliss not only realizes the nature of the object. It also realizes that all inherently existent objects are completely non-existent. This wisdom sees that the inherent existence that appears on merely labeled phenomena is non-existent and totally empty.

In addition, the wisdom of great bliss enters into emptiness in one taste, uninterrupted by even the subtle dual view, the appearance of inherent existence. There is no feeling of duality—that the wisdom realizing emptiness is the subject, and emptiness is the object. The wisdom of great bliss enters into emptiness like water poured into water.

The subject, your mind, which is the wisdom of great bliss, is inseparable from the object, emptiness. Hold the divine pride, or divine identity, that this is your future Heruka's holy mind, the dharmakaya, at the time of the result. Think, "This is me." This dharmakaya is the ultimate guru, and thinking like this is the way to understand and maintain the connection with the compassionate guru. This, too, is the meaning of EVAM, which is so extensive that the whole commentary of Guhyasamaja, all method and wisdom of the path, can be included in it.

*Student:* You said that all the phenomena we now perceive do not exist. What does exist?

*Rinpoche:* What exists is that which is merely labeled by the mind in dependence upon a valid base. Now, if I were to simply say, "What exists is that which is merely labeled by the mind," it could create confusion. Why? Because the things we see in a dream are also merely labeled by the mind, but they don't exist. Similarly, all the objects in a hallucination don't exist either—they, too, are merely labeled by the mind. Therefore, to make it clear, we have to add the phrase "in dependence upon a valid base" or "in relation to a valid base." This gives the complete idea. Being merely labeled by mind is not sufficient for something to exist. That alone does not make something exist. You need a valid base. However, a base alone is also not sufficient for something to exist. It has to be a valid base. For example, there can be a round red fruit, but it is not a valid base to be labeled elephant because it cannot function as an elephant.

The phenomenon that exists is merely labeled by mind on a valid base and is totally non-existent from its own side. It exists, but it's

like it doesn't exist. This applies to the I and everything around us; things exist, but it's like they don't exist. That which does exist is extremely subtle.

The proof that an object exists is that it is merely labeled by the mind in dependence upon a valid base. We have to be satisfied with that. There is nothing more there than that which is merely labeled by the mind in dependence upon a valid base, and this is sufficient for something to exist. People, actions, and objects perform functions that exist in mere name, and we can experience their effects—happiness or suffering. Although karma exists merely in name, we still experience happiness and suffering as the results of virtuous and non-virtuous actions respectively. Karma functions and affects our lives.

For example, the tea that exists is that which has merely been labeled by the mind and it is totally empty of existing from its own side. The tea that appears as existing there, from its own side, is totally non-existent. Yet, the tea exists in mere name and can produce effects. When we drink it, it has an effect. If it is very delicious tea, it has a very good effect; if it is horrible tea, it has a bad effect! In this way we have the coming together of emptiness and dependent arising. When you analyze and look for ultimately existing phenomena, you discover that they do not exist, but when you do not search analytically for the ultimate nature of phenomena, they appear and affect our lives. So, they do exist.

*Student:* With conceptual mind, we create this view of emptiness that is based on a philosophical system. Isn't that system ultimately non-existent conceptually? Is emptiness ultimately existent? Can we say that ultimately nothing exists, but ultimately everything exists? A geshe who

has realized emptiness can still stub his toe on a rock, can't he?

*Rinpoche:* Nothing is ultimately existent, be it emptiness or the view of emptiness. If something exists, it must exist conventionally. That is the only type of existence that is possible. Thus, emptiness, like all other phenomena, exists conventionally. The fact that ultimately nothing exists means that nothing exists inherently, including emptiness. When we think of emptiness, we have an idea of real emptiness existing from its own side. That is the refuted object. Emptiness is also merely labeled, and thus it, too, is empty.

Although nothing ultimately exists, things do exist conventionally. The geshe who has realized emptiness can stub his toe on a rock if he doesn't practice mindfulness! The geshe exists and the rock exists, but neither of them exists inherently, there on their bases.

What someone experiences when he stubs his toe or bangs his head depends on his level of mind. There are many different levels of realization of emptiness—those of aryas, arhats, and Buddhas. I cannot say one hundred percent, because I am not someone who has realized emptiness and then stubbed his toe on a rock, but my guess is that the mind of the person who has realized emptiness reacts differently from that of the person who hasn't. The person who hasn't realized emptiness doesn't see the rock or his I as empty. He holds on to the rock, his body, and his I as real and existing from their own side. But the person who has developed the wisdom realizing emptiness sees everything as an illusion. That makes a big difference as to how he experiences and reacts to stubbing his toe.

Gen Jampa Wangdu mentioned that according to his experience, after realizing emptiness, you don't immediately see everything as illusion.<sup>4</sup> He said that once you have initially realized emptiness, if you

meditate on emptiness strongly every day, after fifteen days you will start to see things as like an illusion, as similar to a dream. Of course, that would make a huge difference to your life, because whenever a problem happened, you would see it as an illusion, like a dream, as nothing real. For example, if someone praised you and someone else criticized you, you would not grasp what they said as real and therefore wouldn't develop attachment to the one or aversion to the other.

*Student:* His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that he did not begin to understand emptiness until he was thirty years old. Even now he says he hasn't realized emptiness. Of course, he is modest, but what he said interests me.

*Rinpoche:* His Holiness has said that although bodhicitta is extremely difficult to realize, he has strong faith in it. In Bodhgaya, and on a few other occasions, His Holiness has mentioned that the understanding that everything is empty comes to him for short periods. He has also said that it is extremely difficult to realize emptiness. Many years ago, at Drepung Monastery, His Holiness was giving teachings on the lam-rim and the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, and once, in between sessions, he said, "I don't have gross delusions. The subtle defilements, that needs to be checked." This came out in a break between teachings. I'm not sure how many people noticed.

This is not well known, but I thought to mention it because His Holiness has taken an ordinary aspect. That means that whatever happens to ordinary people—problems, mistakes, sickness, and so forth—also happens to him. You should expect these occurrences in the life of someone who has taken an ordinary aspect. "Expect" doesn't mean you wish them to happen. It means you have the knowledge and



understanding that they will happen. That helps you to practice guru devotion continuously without being disturbed or generating disrespect. Understanding that your guru has taken an ordinary aspect only becomes a cause to develop inspiration and devotion.

His Holiness once spoke about a very high lama showing an ordinary aspect. I think it was Serkong Dorje Chang, not the one who passed away in Nepal a few years ago but his previous life in Tibet, who was a lharampa geshe and a great yogi and one of the few Gelug lamas that His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama allowed to have a consort, a wisdom mother.

*Student:* According to the meaning of HE in Highest Yoga Tantra, everything comes from the very subtle mind. Please explain this. How do tables, windows, and all these other things come from the very subtle mind?

*Rinpoche:* According to Highest Yoga Tantra, things manifest from the pure or impure extremely subtle mind. Samsara manifests from the impure extremely subtle mind and mind. For example, in past lives, you got angry. That anger left imprints on your mental continuum. Because of that, even though you weren't angry yesterday or this morning, suddenly anger arises tonight. If you don't apply the meditations to protect your mind and control anger, then when the conditions come together, anger arises. Because the imprints of anger are there on your consciousness, when you meet a particular object or person, anger arises. Anger, that gross, violent thought manifests out.

In a similar way, the gross mind manifests again from the subtle mind when you go from one rebirth to the next. In past lives, you created much karma that left imprints on your mind. At the time of

death, your gross mind absorbs and at the time of the clear light of death, your extremely subtle consciousness arises. When that clear light ends and your mind passes into the bardo, the intermediate state, again a more gross mind starts. What that gross mind experiences in the intermediate stage or in another rebirth is due to the imprints left on the mind-stream in previous lives.

The gross mind absorbs into the extremely subtle mind at the time of death and again comes out of that extremely subtle mind in the next rebirth. In this way, you experience the results of past lives' karma in future lives. This is how imprints are carried from one rebirth to the next. It is not only the gross mind that carries the imprints. From the extremely subtle mind at the time of death come gross mind and mind in the bardo and next rebirth. After the consciousness enters the fertilized egg, the gross mind experiences the results of the past karmic imprints. If you think about this, you will understand how everything comes from the very subtle mind. This is what I think, but it needs to be checked.

I hope what I've said doesn't make it sound as if I have realized emptiness. I hope that by giving teachings I'm not opening the door into the big hells.

## FOUR

### PRACTICING IN DAILY LIFE

Rising yoga is one of the yogas that you practice in the break time. When you get up in the morning, arise from emptiness and generate bodhicitta motivation as your attitude for living. Cultivating the motivation of love and compassion is one of the five powers taught in the section about integrating practice for an entire lifetime in *The Seven Points of Thought Transformation*. Think, “From now on, until enlightenment is achieved, until my death, especially this year, this month, this week, today, I will never allow myself to be under the control of the self-cherishing thought and I will never separate from bodhicitta for even a second. The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from suffering and bring them perfect happiness, and especially to lead them to enlightenment. To do this, I must achieve full enlightenment myself. Therefore, today I will make all my activities and actions virtuous.”

You can think briefly like this when you get up in the morning. Or, you can think more elaborately by meditating on the shortcomings of self-centeredness and the benefits of cherishing others, coming to the conclusion that you must attain enlightenment to be able to benefit all sentient beings and generating the following motivation: “Therefore I’m going to do all my activities of body, speech, and

mind with bodhicitta motivation.” You can then engage in virtuous actions such as prostrating, making offerings, and meditating, and normal activities such as walking, sleeping, sitting, and working, your reason for doing all of these being to attain enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings most effectively.

There are two motivations for doing an action, one being the motivation at the time of the action (timely motivation), the other being the motivation before doing it (causal motivation). If you cultivate bodhicitta in the morning, it becomes the causal motivation for all the activities you do from then on during that day. By training your mind with effort in bodhicitta each day, it will gradually transform into the thought to benefit others, and one day naturally, without any effort, you will be able to live your life with bodhicitta arising spontaneously. All your daily life actions will be transformed into virtue. This was the reason for Kedrubje’s praise of his guru, Lama Tsong Khapa, “Even your breathing in and out benefits all sentient beings.”

In the same way that you generate bodhicitta in the morning, you can also make a strong determination to meditate on emptiness. When you wake up, you can think, “Everything, including I, action, object, and all other phenomena from form until enlightenment—hell, liberation, samsara, happiness, problems, virtue and non-virtue, and so forth—appear to the mind as real, from there. But they do not exist in the way that they appear.” These phenomena appear to your mind as being there on the base. They are all decorated by the imprint of ignorance, fabricated, or projected, by your mind. How? Because of negative imprints left on your mental continuum by the past concept of inherent existence, all these things appear inherently existent. It’s like what happens to a person whose mind is affected by

disease or drugs or who is wearing blue glasses. Someone whose mind is unaffected realizes that the snow mountain is white; one with a non-defective valid cognizer sees a white snow mountain. But one whose mind is affected by drugs or disease or who is wearing blue glasses has the view of a blue snow mountain. He has that projection, that hallucination, that view of a blue snow mountain. His hallucinating mind projects that view. In reality, no blue snow mountain exists; there is no blue color there.

The teachings often give the example of a piece of rope appearing like a snake. You believe it is a snake and become terrified, when in fact there is no snake there. A woman in Singapore or Malaysia told me that once, near her house, she saw a piece of rope. She went to pick it up, but it was a snake! It was the other way around! She thought it was a rope and discovered it was a snake. Because it looked like a rope, her hallucinating mind made up the label rope. Her concept projected rope. Then rope appeared and she saw a rope. But the rope didn't exist anywhere at all.

When you do retreat on the *Heart Sutra* or train your mind in emptiness daily, view things in a variety of ways so that you don't become bored with just one technique. In the morning, make the plan, "I'm going to practice meditation on emptiness." Decide at that time what you are going to practice the rest of the day, or during the breaks if you are doing retreat. By the way, break time does not mean you take a break from virtue. You don't get even a second's break from samsara, so you shouldn't take even a moment's break from virtue! For the benefit of yourself and other sentient beings, you need to practice Dharma constantly—this precious human life may be the only chance you'll get. If you take rebirth in the lower realms, not only will

you be overwhelmed by unimaginable suffering for an incredible length of time, but you will also have not the slightest opportunity to practice Dharma. Even future rebirth in the deva or human realms is no guarantee that you'll have the opportunity to practice Dharma. For these reasons, it is important to use every moment of your life to practice, that is, to transform your mind, as much as you possibly can. In other words, break time simply means a break from sitting meditation. Meditation practice is divided into session time and break time. The breaks are another type of meditation time.

When in the morning you make a strong determination to practice mindfulness of emptiness during the rest of the day, it becomes easier to do so. Maintain awareness that "The I, action, and all phenomena appear as something real, there on the base, but this is all fabricated, or projected from negative imprints left on my hallucinating mind. Everything I perceive is projected by my hallucinating mind. None of it is there; it does not exist at all." Think of the examples that I explained before.

In this way, practice the mindfulness that all these things are projections of your hallucinating mind and appear because of negative imprints left on your consciousness by previous ignorance. Practice this mindfulness with whatever appears in front of you right now. For example, you are looking at me and a real Lama Zopa appears from there. When you look at the flowers on the altar, real flowers appear from there. All existent objects—even the mind itself—appear as real, existing there, from the side of the base. They are all projected by your hallucinating mind because of the negative imprints that have been left on it. You do not need many words to practice this mindfulness. The most important thing is to practice it one-pointedly. When

you do, the understanding that all these things are not true will arise in your heart. You will understand that they do not exist in the way that they appear to you. They are not there. Emptiness arises in your heart. This is an extremely effective way to practice mindfulness in everyday life.

Then, the next day, practice a different technique. For example, think of other beings' point of view—how they see you, how they see everything. That also helps you understand that your view is completely wrong. Things appear to you and you apprehend them as one hundred percent real, just as they appear, but this is not what all the Buddhas, arhats, or arya bodhisattvas see. What they discover in

meditative equipoise on the nature of reality is not this. What they discover is that all this is completely non-existent. Buddhas, arhats, and arya bodhisattvas see that everything—I, action, and object—is totally empty of the way that it appears to your mind, totally empty of existing in the way that you believe. Those who have perceived reality directly see the total opposite of what appears to you. They see that everything is totally empty. In the view of ignorance, everything exists from its own side, but in the view of wisdom, the reality of phenomena is emptiness. Wisdom realizes that nothing exists from its own side.

Another day, practice mindfulness of things being merely labeled by mind. For example, while walking, ask yourself, "What am I doing?" Answer, "I'm walking." Ask yourself again, "Why do I say I'm walking?" You will see that there is no reason at all other than the body is doing the action of walking. That is the only reason. Because the body is walking, your mind labels and believes, "I'm walking." Thus, the I is merely labeled by mind. Here, you can see clearly that the base, the aggregates, and the label, I, are different. You see the

difference between the base, the aggregates, and the label, I, very clearly, and suddenly, the label I becomes very subtle; so subtle that it seems almost non-existent. It's not that it doesn't exist, but suddenly, to your mind, it is as if it doesn't exist. You can differentiate the base, the aggregates, from the label, I, but much more than that, suddenly, for your knowledge, the label I seems like it is non-existent. It is not non-existent, but it becomes so subtle that it seems as if it is.

When the limbs of the body are moving, you call it "walking." The action walking is merely imputed by the mind's making up the label "walking." Here again you can see clearly that the base (the limbs of the body moving) and the label (walking) are different.

Similarly, certain marks on the ground indicate that some people passed that way. In dependence upon this, your mind makes up the label "road." Without those marks, there's no reason for you to make up the label "road," nothing to cause your mind to make up the label "road." However, when you see the base—those marks on the ground indicating that other people have gone that way—it causes your mind to make up the label "road." The base and the label "road" are different. Road is merely imputed by mind. Be mindful of this process with every object you encounter and every action you do throughout the day.

Similarly, what causes you to make up the particular label "tree"? There is no reason other than your seeing that particular phenomenon that has a trunk, branches and leaves and can be used to make things or burned to make fire. Seeing that particular phenomena causes your mind to make up the label "tree," not "fire," "water," "wind," or "earth." You see the base, and your mind merely imputes the label "tree" in dependence upon it. Aside from the tree that exists



by being imputed in this way, no other tree exists. There is no tree existing from its own side.

The tree is not there on the base. There are lots of trees at Vajrapani Institute, but there is no tree on that base. There is no tree on that association of the trunk, branches and leaves. But there is a tree at Vajrapani. In fact, there are lots of trees here! However, there is no tree stuck on the base. The tree appearing from there—the tree that cannot be differentiated from the base—is the refuted object. That is what you need to realize is empty, totally non-existent. As it is totally non-existent, you have to realize that that is how it is.

In such ways, train your mind in emptiness by thinking of subtle dependent arising, how everything is merely labeled by mind. Practice awareness of this. You can choose any of these methods, depending on which you find more effective.

Another way is to see the object of ignorance, the object of the concept of inherent existence, as false and empty. This applies to the I, action, object, all phenomena—anything that appears in your view. Here you practice differentiating the label from the base. You see the label—whatever phenomenon—is empty. It is not that it's non-existent. It exists but it's empty; it is empty of existing from its own side. Think of the examples. After realizing that what you labeled rope is really a snake, how do you feel about that object? When you realize that it's a snake, how do you feel about the rope that you labeled before? How do you see that rope? Or use another example. After someone dies, people still talk about that person. However, that person does not exist. His or her collection of aggregates does not exist, so who or where is he or she? People talk about the label, the person, but how do you feel about that?

Another technique is to practice mindfulness of all phenomena—I, action, object, all sense objects—as being like a dream or a hallucination. All these inherently existing objects are a hallucination, a dream. You must make a subtle, but important distinction here. Inherently existing objects do not exist at all; they are a dream. However, conventionally existent objects are like a dream. They are not a dream. In other words, conventionally existent phenomena appear one way—as truly existent—but they do not exist as they appear. Similarly, dream objects appear real but do not exist in the way they appear.

In daily life, this mindfulness practice will help you when you face problems or difficulties. If a problem happens—for example, someone criticizes you—look at it like a dream. What is happening isn't real. It is like having a problem in a dream. A different feeling arises in your heart; it is like someone causing you a problem in a dream but you are aware that it is a dream. How do you feel about that? How do you feel when you dream that someone is criticizing or abusing you, and at the same time you are aware that it is a dream, that it is not real. It doesn't bother you. It doesn't disturb your mind or cause anger to arise. Why? Because you know it's not real.

Similarly, you can practice mindfulness that this is like an illusion created by a magician. Here, the magician is your own ignorance. What is like an illusion is the I, action, object, and all other phenomena appearing as not merely labeled by mind but as something real, appearing from there. In reality, there is no real enemy, no real problem, no real I who experiences problems. As the bodhisattva Togme Zangpo said in *The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*,

All forms of suffering are like a child's death in a dream.  
Holding illusory appearances to be true makes you weary.  
Therefore, when you meet with disagreeable circumstances,  
See them as illusory—

This is the practice of bodhisattvas.

All the various sufferings and problems you have in life are like a child dying in a dream. You dreamed that you got married and had a child, and later that child died. You had a dream of your whole life; so many things happened, so many problems occurred. Even your body became old and your hair turned gray in the dream. But you didn't recognize it as a dream and instead believed it was true. As a result, you suffered so much.

Even though Togme Zangpo spoke only of a child dying in the dream, he implies that your whole life with all its problems are like thirty, forty, or eighty years in a dream. It is very useful to reflect on this verse when you have problems in life, and reciting it is better than reciting a mantra, because you understand what it means. This is why it is very effective to recite a verse or a Dharma text to remind yourself of what to practice when problems arise. It changes your view of life by changing your concept. If your concept is that you are suffering or having problems, you feel miserable. If you change this concept, you have peace.

All this gives you an idea of how to meditate on emptiness. Whether you are in retreat or living a normal daily life, it is very important to practice bodhicitta and the wisdom understanding emptiness. These are the fundamental practices of the entire Mahayana teaching, and you can bring them to whatever you are

doing. When you awaken in the morning, plan, “Today I will practice this technique for understanding emptiness.” The next day, think, “I will practice that one.” You do not need to divide the practices rigidly. Just use whichever technique is more beneficial for your mind at the time. All these techniques come to the same point.

Sometimes it may seem as if you are just saying the words “inherent existence” or “emptiness” without much understanding of what they mean. However, even if you cannot get the exact idea of emptiness in your meditation and it all seems like just a bunch of words, continue to meditate on emptiness by relying on and using these teachings. Since those words are unmistakable, each time you think of them, you leave a positive imprint on your mind. Even if you cannot practice precise meditation or concentration on emptiness, if you reflect on the unmistakable words, especially those of Lama Tsong Khapa’s teachings, you still leave positive imprints on your mind-stream. Then, sooner or later, when the conditions of strong guru devotion, strong purification, and the collection of strong, extensive merit come together, then, one day, unexpectedly, experiences and realizations will happen. Cultivating realizations of the path requires many imprints, so be happy to plant those seeds in your mind-stream and do not be discouraged if your understanding does not grow as quickly as you would like.

## FIVE

### PRACTICING PATIENCE

*Student:* I'm not yet at the level where I can use meditation on emptiness or the illusory nature of phenomena as an antidote to my anger. When a problem is right in front of me, I try to remember emptiness, but the problem still seems enormous. What are some other tools I can use to counteract anger and avoid creating more negative karma?

*Rinpoche:* If you meditate on emptiness, it doesn't help? The problem arises while you're meditating on emptiness? The problem arises while it's empty? Maybe I'm also involved in the problem!

When you meditate on emptiness, the anger will stop because emptiness is a remedy for all the delusions. Why? Because it is the antidote to ignorance, which is the foundation of all the other delusions. Therefore, the minute you meditate on emptiness, anger will stop. Anger arises when you believe in the false object, the false I, the false enemy—all these things that do not exist. When you believe that they are true and that they really exist, anger arises. When you meditate on emptiness, you look at the truth of the I, the truth of the other person, and you find that no foundation for anger exists. Thus emptiness is the most powerful antidote to the delusions. If anger arises after you have meditated on emptiness it is because there is no continuation of the meditation. Since the mindfulness of emptiness

has stopped, anger can arise.

First, you have to remember to use a meditation technique when you have a problem. Often the problem is forgetting to use the technique. But once you remember the technique and use it, it works. If you do not remember to apply a meditation technique, the delusion will usually overwhelm you.

The first technique I recommend is to think about karma. This brings you back to the fundamental philosophy of Buddhism—no creator other than your own mind exists. Buddhists do not believe in God. Buddhists do not believe that there is a creator of your life who has a separate mind from yours. This basic Buddhist tenet differentiates Buddhism from other religions that believe in a creator God. From the Buddhist viewpoint, no external being who creates your life exists. There is no other creator besides your own mind, your own karma.

Whatever happens in your life comes from your own mind. Your aggregates (this association of body and mind, which includes your senses), the way you view objects of the senses (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects), and the feelings that arise by the senses contacting these objects are suffering in nature. Your whole world comes from your mind because of the imprints of past karma—the positive, negative, and neutral karmic imprints left on your mindstream. The events and experiences of your life are manifestations of those karmic imprints. Because of karmic imprints, you now have a human body, human aggregates. Your feelings of happiness or suffering are also due to the ripening of particular karmic imprints. Ultimately, all your experiences come from your mind.

Your aggregates, your senses, your view of sense objects, and the feelings you experience through contacting them arise from karma.

Karma is the mental factor of intention. Where does karma come from? From ignorance. When we speak of the twelve links of dependent arising, ignorance is the first. From it comes karma, and from karma come all the results you experience. All these come from your mind, not only from karma—the mental factor of intention—but also from the ignorance that is the root of samsara, the concept of an inherently existent I. This is how your happiness and suffering evolve.

If your meditation on emptiness is not yet firm, then thinking about karma can be a very powerful way to stop anger. The minute you think about karma, there is no place in your mind for anger because you see there's nobody and nothing to blame. Thinking of karma is putting into practice the basic Buddhist philosophy that there is no creator other than your mind. You need to apply that philosophy in your life. You shouldn't just leave it as philosophy, written in a notebook that you keep on the top shelf of your bookcase, but remember and apply it in your daily life, especially when you have problems. The philosophy of karma is very effective not only to discuss as a philosophy but also to use in your life to calm your mind.

The moment anger arises, your mind believes in a creator. You think that someone else is creating your problem. "The problem I'm experiencing came from that person." That is similar to believing in an external creator. You hold two contradictory attitudes—you talk about and believe karma and the philosophy of Buddhism, but when you encounter a difficulty in your daily life, you think that there is an external being who created it! Instead of practicing that there is no creator, you practice that there is a creator because the problem came from somebody else. "That person created my problem." In daily life, you become just like practitioners of other religions; you practice that

there is a creator. Even though you do not use the word “God,” you believe that there is a creator, somebody else who created your problem. With this as the basis, anger arises.

But the minute that you think that you are the creator, that your mind is the creator, that whatever you are experiencing comes from karma you yourself have created, you know that there is nothing external to blame, so there is no basis for anger to arise. The wish to retaliate and harm someone else is based on the belief that the other person is harming you, that you are an innocent victim who has nothing to do with the problem.

#### GENERATING COMPASSION AND THE BENEFITS OF DOING SO

Thinking about karma first is powerful because it sets the foundation. On top of this, meditate on emptiness or compassion or any of the other techniques. In the sixth chapter of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Shantideva said:

Previously I must have caused similar harm  
To other sentient beings.  
Therefore, it is right for this harm to be returned  
To me who is the cause of injury to others.

Thinking in this way is useful. It stops the mind that thinks that we should be able to harm others but should not receive any harm from them. That thought is very illogical. That is why Shantideva advised us to think, “I deserve to receive this harm. That is, it is natural for me to receive harm, because I harmed others in the past.” In the same



text, Shantideva also said:

Having been instigated by my own actions,  
Those who cause me harm come into being.  
If by these (actions) they should fall into hell,  
Surely isn't it I who am destroying them?

In other words, think, “Who started all this? It’s not the other person. I started it because my karma—the harmful actions I did in previous lives—made this happen. In the past, I mistreated this sentient being, and that made the connection for me to receive harm now. My karma has persuaded this person to harm me now. By the other person harming me, he is creating negative karma, and that will cause him to take rebirth in the lower realms.” Question yourself: “Didn’t my action instigate what will be a very unfortunate situation for the other person?” Thinking like this will help you generate compassion for the other person, and when your mind feels compassion, there is no room for anger.

In this way, you use the fact that the person is harming you to develop compassion for him. You use the problem to generate compassion and bodhicitta for him. By generating bodhicitta, you will be able to actualize the entire Mahayana path to enlightenment, including the six paramitas, the sutra path and the tantra path. You will be able to cease all the mistakes of mind, complete all realizations of the path, and attain enlightenment. Depending on this person who is harming you, you will receive all these benefits. Due to his kindness and your generating compassion for him, in the future you will be able to free all sentient beings from suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. Being able to offer such incredible benefit to all

sentient beings in the future is due to the kindness of this person. By his harming you, he causes you to generate compassion, which is the root of the Mahayana path.

You can also think, “This person is so precious and kind because due to him I can receive all the benefits of practicing patience. Developing compassion for this one sentient being now will enable me to generate compassion for all sentient beings later.” This person is so kind and precious because he is helping you to stop harming all sentient beings and have compassion for them. By your ceasing to harm them and benefiting them instead, sentient beings will receive much peace and happiness. The opportunity for you to offer all this peace and happiness to all sentient beings comes from this one person who gave you the chance to practice patience.

The Dharma contains many different ways of thinking to counteract anger. We have already discussed thinking of karma, cultivating compassion, and remembering the benefits of practicing patience. There are others as well. You should apply the ways that are most effective for your mind. In *The Door of Liberation*, Geshe Wangyal translated into English a collection of advice from the Kadampa masters. Included in it are six techniques for practicing patience. You may want to write them down or memorize them so that you can use them when the need arises.

Shantideva explained, as did Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo in *Liberation in Your Palm*, a technique that is very effective for using the harm received from another person to develop compassion for him. If someone beats you with a stick, you usually do not get angry at the stick because it has no freedom; it is under the control of the person. Similarly, the person harming you is under the control of her anger.

She isn't free; she has become a slave of her anger. Therefore, this person, who is not free and who is controlled by her anger, is only an object of compassion. Don't just leave it at that, but take the responsibility of pacifying that person's anger. "I must do something to pacify her anger by whatever means I can find to help her mind." If at the moment there is nothing you can do to help directly, then pray to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha to pacify her anger.

### I NEED SOMEBODY TO HATE ME

His Holiness the Dalai Lama normally encourages us to meditate on the kindness of the angry person, to see that he is as precious and kind as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Guru. Why is that person kind? If nobody ever gets angry at you, you can never develop patience. Think, "If everybody loved me, if nobody ever got angry at me, I would never be able to develop patience, that precious and essential quality of mind on the path to enlightenment. Therefore, I *need* somebody to be angry at me. I really need this in my life. It's so important that somebody be angry at me."

That person's anger is not precious to that person, but it is for you. For the other person, his anger is torture. It throws him into the lower realms. "For that person, his anger is terrible, but for me, his being angry at me is so precious, so essential." Normally, you say you need somebody to love you. You feel that need so deeply inside. But in the same way, think that you need somebody to hate you—having somebody dislike you is even more important than having somebody love you. Why? Because somebody loving you does not help you actualize the path to enlightenment, does not help you cultivate the

qualities needed to benefit all sentient beings. But if somebody harms you and you use that experience to transform your mind into patience, the path to enlightenment lies open in front of you. If you practice patience, your anger evaporates and other sentient beings do not receive harm from you. Through your great patience, they receive only peace and happiness from you. Thus, the angry person is most kind because he gives you the precious opportunity to do this. His being mad at you is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

### THE DISADVANTAGES OF ANGER

Reflecting on the disadvantages of anger is also useful. Anger destroys your merit. It destroys not only your happiness now, in this life, but also your long-term happiness, your opportunity to attain liberation and enlightenment. Anger is a great obstacle to your realizing bodhi-citta, because you can't have great love and compassion for sentient beings if you can't stand them. In addition, depending on who you get angry at, your receiving realizations may be delayed for many thousands of eons. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* mentions that getting angry once delays realizations by one thousand eons. However, this person being angry at you gives you the opportunity of practicing patience. Think, "Due to this, I will be able to overcome my anger. I'll be able to complete the paramita of patience, fulfill the two collections, cease all obscurations in my mind, and realize the entire path to enlightenment. I'll be able to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them to enlightenment." All this infinite benefit that you can offer to all sentient beings comes from practicing patience for that person, and that depends on her harming you. So you

can see that her anger at you is very important and necessary in your Dharma practice.

When you are upset, you can also think about impermanence and death. You could die today, so what's the point of getting angry? Thinking in this way is very powerful. Also, think that the angry person could also die at any time. This helps you let go of your anger and generate patience and compassion for the other person.

Practicing patience does not mean withdrawing or hiding. It does not mean avoiding finding solutions to problems. You have responsibilities, so you have to use your compassion and wisdom to solve problems as much as possible. As His Holiness says, when it is beyond your capacity to solve a problem, you have to rely on higher objects, the Triple Gem, for aid, but otherwise, use your own abilities and do whatever you can do yourself. Most importantly, cultivate patience, the ability to remain calm in the face of problems and harm. To do this, use whichever techniques are most powerful for you.



## SIX

# MEDITATION ON THE THREE PURIFICATIONS

Earlier, I explained the text of the Three Purifications. Now we will do a short meditation on this.

## PURIFICATION OF THE MIND

### SHRI HERUKA

*HE stands for the mind, which is the source of everything, and for the selflessness of phenomena, found by examining the fabricated nature of the causal mind.*

The meaning of HE is the selflessness of phenomena—the emptiness of the aggregates, and in particular the emptiness of the extremely subtle mind, which is the creator of all samsara and nirvana, of all phenomena. Before meditating on the emptiness of the mind, we'll meditate on the emptiness of external phenomena.

Look at the forms, the objects of the visual sense consciousness, that appear to you. Look around here—all the forms that you see are merely labeled by your mind. That is how they exist; that is what form is. But in your view, do all these forms appear as merely labeled

by mind or not? Check. Analyze. Do all these forms—colors, shapes, what is called this and that, all these things that are objects of your visual consciousness—appear to you as merely labeled by your mind or not merely labeled by you mind? [Meditation.]

When you examine, you find that they appear as not merely labeled by mind. Open your eyes and look at some of the forms around you and check: do they appear as merely labeled by the mind or as not merely labeled by mind? They appear as not merely labeled by mind. Any form that appears to your mind to exist from there—“from there” means on the base—is the refuted object. That is a hallucination. All these forms are empty; the forms that appear to be not merely labeled by the mind do not exist. [Meditation.]

Let's use another technique to identify the refuted object. Again, look at the forms around you. There is a ceiling appearing from its own side. There is a light appearing from the side of the light. The beams and pillars appear from their own side. The carpet appears from its own side. So does the table. Whatever you look at appears to exist from its own side. When you don't analyze, you don't see all these things as coming from your mind, you don't see them as merely labeled by your mind. All these things around you, whatever you look at, appears from its own side.

Another way of expressing this is to say that all these phenomena appear “there, on the base.” The table is there on the base of the table; the carpet is there on the base of the carpet. There is a light on base of the light. Everything is there on its base. All these forms are the refuted objects. All these are hallucinations. All these are fabricated or projected by your own superstitious mind, ignorance, the concept of inherent existence.



To summarize, we used two techniques to identify the refuted object:

1. We examined things to see if they appeared as merely labeled by the mind or as not merely labeled by the mind, and
2. We recognized that they appear there on the base, as existing from their own side.

All these are the refuted object; they are all hallucinations. All these inherently existent things that are there on their bases are fabricated, or projected, by the negative imprint left on the mental continuum by the superstitious mind, ignorance, the concept of inherent existence. All these things that you have believed to be true, to exist just as they appear to you, all these phenomena that appear to be there on their bases do not exist. Think, “Every day of my life, this is what I have believed. All the time, I have been apprehending things in this way. Actually, in reality, all these things are just in my mind. They are not there. Nothing is there on its base. All these phenomena that appear to me and that I believe to be there on their bases are not there. They are just fabricated by my own concept. In reality, there is nothing there.” Meditate intensively on this. [Meditation.]

Everything that appears from there as not merely labeled by the mind, including the base, does not exist. In other words, the base, the parts of each phenomena, down to the atoms of which it is composed, all appear to be real, to be out there, existing independently of the mind that labels them. When you think of atoms, you think of real atoms—there’s an atom on the base of the atom. There’s a real atom appearing from there. Even this is totally empty. It is not there.

Think, “Even the atoms appearing as something real from there are just a hallucination of my own mind, a projection of the negative imprint of ignorance. They are not there. There’s nothing there, not even real atoms appearing from there.” All forms are totally empty of existing from there. They are empty of existing from their own side. Concentrate strongly on this. [Meditation.]

Now use the same technique to meditate on sound. Pay attention to whatever sounds you hear and analyze these objects of auditory consciousness—coughing, cloth moving, and so forth. How do they appear? The sound that exists is that which is merely labeled by the mind, but does it appear as merely labeled by the mind or as not merely labeled by the mind? If it appears as not merely labeled by the mind but as real sound appearing from there, that is the refuted object. That is a hallucination. Meditate on the meaning of hallucination—it means that that sound doesn’t exist at all. It is totally empty. That inherently existent sound does not exist at all. [Meditation.]

Listen to the sounds of the insects. They appear to be real sounds appearing from there. That is the refuted object and is a total hallucination. Meditate on the meaning of hallucination—that is, while you are recognizing it as a hallucination and labeling it as a hallucination, contemplate the meaning of hallucination. It means non-existent. All those inherently existent sounds do not exist at all. They are totally empty. [Meditation.]

There is sound. There is something here, but there is no real sound appearing from there. That kind of sound doesn’t exist. [Meditation.]

Try to differentiate the base of the sound from the label sound. The sound that cannot be differentiated from its base is the refuted object. That is a hallucination. That doesn’t exist. To clarify, for us

sentient beings, the particular function of the auditory consciousness is not to see forms, smell scents, or contact tangible objects such as soft and rough. The particular function of the auditory consciousness is to listen and hear. The particular object that the auditory consciousness hears is the base. After the auditory consciousness hears that base, the mind makes up the label sound. For instance, for the mind to be able to make up the particular label “interesting sound” or “disturbing sound,” the auditory consciousness has to hear something first; it has to contact that particular phenomenon. Otherwise there is no reason for your mind to make up the label “interesting sound” or “unpleasant sound.” The phenomenon that your auditory sense hears is the base. After that, your mind makes up the label sound. Sound is the label, the phenomenon that the auditory sense hears is the base. What causes your mind to make up the label sound is the base. Without the base, your mind cannot label sound. Thus there is the base—the object that your auditory consciousness hears—and there is the label—sound—that comes into existence after the base has been heard. [Meditation.]

This is similar to the example of the letter M. First, you see the base, the design of lines; after that, your mind makes up the label M. Then you see the M. In the same way, first you see the aggregates, then you see the label, person. For example, first you see your mother’s body, that particular shape and color with those particular characteristics. She performed a particular function—she gave birth to you. First seeing the base—her aggregates—gives you the reason to choose the particular label “my mother.” After that, you see your mother.

It is the same with sound. The bell is rung and your auditory sense hears that phenomenon. That makes you choose the particular label

“sound of bell.” After you create the label “sound of the bell,” you believe in it.

You may think that you label “sound of bell” at the same time as the auditory consciousness hears the base. If that were the case, there would be no cause to inspire your mind to choose the particular label sound. If there were not a specific cause, you could label anything as the sound of a bell. Labeling “sound of the bell” wouldn’t depend on the bell ringing. When someone beat a drum, you could label “sound of bell.” After you label “sound” on a suitable base, an object of the auditory sense, it appears back to you as if there were a sound there on the base. Even though the sound is merely labeled by your mind, it appears to your mind as if it exists from its own side, there on the base.

Now examine the sounds that you hear—insects buzzing, people coughing. All these sounds appearing from there are fabricated by the negative imprints of your superstitious mind, ignorance, the concept of inherent existence. None of them are there. They are just your own concept, just in your own mind. They are completely empty. Meditate on emptiness by relating this to each sound. [Meditation.]

Sounds exist—the sounds of people moving and insects buzzing and so forth—but sounds appearing from there, sounds existing on their bases, that part is in your mind. It is just your own concept. They are not there. They are empty. If you are able to hear the sound that is empty, the sound that doesn’t exist from its own side, that is the correct view.

Now meditate on the emptiness of smells, the objects of the olfactory sense, using the same technique as before. Recognize the refuted object on the merely labeled smell, think that is a hallucination, and

meditate on the meaning of hallucination. The hallucinated object is totally non-existent. It is empty. Use whichever of the techniques I described before to understand that smell is empty of existing from its own side. [Meditation.]

Examine the strong smell of perfume, a sweet smell appearing from there. Or meditate when someone offers that scented smell from the lower part of his body, the fart. When you're meditating on the emptiness of smell, if someone farts, it only benefits you. It helps you meditate on emptiness. That strong smell, that real smell appearing from there, is the refuted object. It is a hallucination. It is totally empty. It doesn't exist from there. It is false. It's just in your mind; it's just your own concept. [Meditation.]

Now meditate on the emptiness of tastes, using either of the two ways to identify the refuted object. Use different examples of tastes, such as hot and spicy, sweet, salty and so forth. Recognize the refuted object as a hallucination. Taste appearing there on the base is just in your own mind, just your concept. All these tastes are empty. All these tastes that we believe to be real and true are false tastes. They don't exist. They're totally empty. [Meditation.]

Now meditate on the emptiness of tangible objects. While you're sitting on your cushion, analyze, "How do tangible objects appear? Do they appear soft or hard, not merely labeled by the mind? Do they seem to be real ones appearing from there?" This is the refuted object. It is a hallucination. It is totally empty. It doesn't exist there at all. Something hard or soft on its base, hard or soft appearing from there, is just a projection of your superstitious mind, ignorance. It is a hallucination, decorated on the merely labeled soft and hard. It is not there. It is just in your mind; it is just your concept. It is empty

there. Hard and soft appearing there are not there. [Meditation.] It is similar with the tangible object, clothing. Meditate that it is also empty. [Meditation.]

In the view of ignorance, your hallucinating mind, an inherently existing I is doing the inherently existent action of drinking inherently existing tea. In reality, all of this is empty. Ignorance interprets the agent, action, and object to be real, independent, out there. In reality, an empty I is doing the empty action of drinking empty tea. According to the view of wisdom, a non-existent I is doing the non-existent action of drinking non-existent tea.

Here, non-existent means non-inherently existent. It does not mean totally non-existent. This is similar to what the *Heart Sutra* means when it says, “no eye, no nose, no tongue” and “no form, no sound, no smell.” “No” applies to the inherently existent I, the real I from there, the real action of drinking from there, the real tea appearing from there. In reality, the merely labeled I is doing the merely labeled action of drinking the merely labeled tea. What exists is the agent I, action drinking, and object tea that are merely labeled by the mind and empty of existing from their own side. In this way, emptiness and dependent arising are unified. They are not contradictory. Now let’s take a tea break!

Permanent phenomena, such as emptiness or space, are likewise empty. They are what is merely labeled by mind, so they do not exist from their own side. They are completely empty.

Now we’ll gradually meditate on the meaning of HE, which refers to the selflessness of phenomena, specifically the five aggregates. Whenever one of the aggregates—form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, or consciousness—appears to you, it appears to be

there on its base, on the collection that is its base. Also, when you see them together—the aggregates—they appear to be on their base, the collection of the five. Similarly, this is a hallucination. It is just in your own mind. It is simply your own concept. In reality it is not there. What are the aggregates? They are that which is merely labeled by the mind. Therefore, real aggregates appearing from there are the refuted object—a hallucination and totally non-existent right there.

[Meditation.]

Now meditate on the emptiness of the aggregate of form in the same way. What is the aggregate of form? It is that which is merely labeled by mind. The aggregate of form appearing to your hallucinating mind as not merely labeled by the mind is the refuted object. It is a hallucination. Meditate on the meaning of hallucination. By doing this, try to see the aggregate of form as totally empty, non-existent.

[Meditation.]

Now do the same meditation on the aggregate of feeling.

[Meditation.]

Now do the same meditation on the aggregate of discrimination.

[Meditation.]

Next meditate on the aggregate of compositional factors, which includes all mental factors other than feeling and discrimination. What is this aggregate? It is that which is merely labeled by the mind. If it appears as not merely labeled by the mind, that is the refuted object. That is a hallucination. Meditate on the meaning of hallucination—it is totally non-existent and empty there. It is not there. It is just in your mind. It is just your concept. Meditate intensively on this emptiness. [Meditation.]

Next is the aggregate of consciousness. Your mind has six primary

consciousnesses—the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness—and fifty-one mental factors, such as intention, anger, faith, and so forth. Consciousness and mental factors are differentiated by their functions. Both focus on the same object, but mental factors perform mainly the function of perceiving specific aspects or qualities of the object. Consciousness, on the other hand, functions to cognize the essence of the object. Due to this function, which is the base, the mind makes up the label consciousness. There is the base, and there is the label consciousness. But when it appears to your mind, it appears as if the consciousness is there on the base, as if there is a real consciousness on the mind that does that particular function. Although real consciousness appears from there, it is not there. It is just in your mind. It is just your concept. That consciousness is false. Therefore, it is totally empty; it doesn't exist there. Intensively concentrate on this emptiness. [Meditation.]

Even the extremely subtle consciousness, which is the creator of all samsara and nirvana, is empty. However, when you think of subtle consciousness, a real subtle consciousness appears from there. That is refuted object. That is a hallucination, which means it is totally non-existent. It is totally empty right there. [Meditation.]

If you feel uncomfortable and fear arises or you have the feeling that you are losing the object you are meditating on, that is positive. It means your concentration is getting close to emptiness. I don't think that fear would arise if you were going towards nihilism.

The subtle consciousness is totally empty. It doesn't exist at all from its own side. It's not space, but it's empty like space. This is the meaning of HE.



*RU stands for the selflessness of persons, found by abandoning the self fabricated by the network of wrong views that cause us to perceive an inherently existing self of persons.*

To meditate on the meaning of RU, look at the meditator, the I who is meditating. What is the I? It is that which is merely labeled by the mind. But the I appears as something not merely labeled by the mind. There seems to be a real I, a real meditator, existing from its own side, something more than that which is merely labeled by mind. It feels like somewhere there, a real I is meditating on emptiness. That I is not there. It is just within your mind; it's just your own concept. In reality, it is totally non-existent. Concentrate intensively on this emptiness. [Meditation.]

If that approach is not so effective, think that the solid I that appears is the refuted object. That is a hallucination, which means it is totally non-existent. It is totally empty there. [Meditation.]

If you have had the experience of losing the I in the past, bring that experience of the I being totally non-existent from its own side into your present meditation. Try to recollect that experience. [Meditation.]

*KA stands for the object, suchness, and subjective cognition being without disharmony.*

*SHRI stands for the meaning of EVAM, the wisdom of non-duality merging with its object, emptiness, in a manner that accords with its actual mode of existence.*

Now meditate on the meaning of KA. Emptiness and the wisdom realizing that emptiness do not abide in disharmony. They do not oppose or contradict each other. This wisdom is harmonious with emptiness. [Meditation.]

There is no dual view. There is no object, emptiness, or subject, the wisdom seeing that emptiness. There aren't two things; they are non-dual. In the view of this wisdom realizing emptiness, no subject or object exists. Although this pertains more to the meaning of SHRI, it helps you understand the meaning of KA. [Meditation.]

Your wisdom sees emptiness, which is similar to space. Nothing exists from its own side, not even an atom. Just in case ordinary space and not emptiness appears to you, think that even space is empty. It doesn't exist from its own side at all. I often mention this during the wisdom initiation. When you think of space, it does not appear as merely labeled space. Rather, real space appears from there. That space is the refuted object. It is a hallucination. That means that space is totally non-existent. So here, you can get some idea of emptiness. Even space does not exist from its own side. Nothing whatsoever exists from its own side. [Meditation.]

We have just meditated on emptiness. Now, the subject (*gyül-chen*), the wisdom realizing emptiness, experiences the greatest bliss, infinite bliss, unlimited like the sky. At the same time, that wisdom enters into emptiness in one taste, like pouring water into water, without interruption by even the subtle dual view. In the view of that wisdom, there is no object emptiness and no subject wisdom. It is like mixing water with water. There are not two things; they are of one taste. [Meditation.]

The object emptiness is inseparable from the wisdom of great bliss. While holding this experience of the wisdom of great bliss

non-dual with emptiness, think, “My mind, this wisdom of great bliss non-dual with emptiness, is my future, resultant Guru Chakrasam-vara’s holy mind of great bliss, the actual dharmakaya. This is me.” Determine this strongly. [Meditation.]

This process of meditating on emptiness—within emptiness arising as your resultant Guru Heruka holy mind, dharmakaya, and holding the divine pride, “This is me”—purifies your mind. It frees your mind from dualistic concepts.

## PURIFICATION OF THE BODY

*From emptiness I arise instantly as dark blue Heruka with one face and two hands holding vajra and bell. With my right leg extended, I embrace my partner, red Vajra Varahi, who has one face and two hands holding a curved knife and skullcup.*

SHRI HERUKO HAM (3X)

*(Purify the body by saying this three times with the thought of benefiting all living beings, while holding divine identity of this physical appearance.)*

Now your transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, which is the resultant holy mind of dharmakaya, instantly manifests out as Heruka. Heruka is blue, with one face and two arms, holding a bell and a vajra. His right leg is outstretched, his left leg bent. The mother, Dorje Pagmo, has one face and two arms, holding a curved knife and a skull cup filled with nectar, blood. She embraces you the father, Heruka. What you are, your essence, is the transcendental

wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, the resultant Guru Heruka's holy mind, the dharmakaya. Continue the previous experience of great bliss; continue the wisdom experiencing great bliss non-dual with emptiness. Put effort into the great bliss that this wisdom is experiencing. [Meditation.]

This form arose in this particular aspect and color and relating to that base, your own mind made up the label Heruka. Just as before, there is a base and a label. Here, the entire holy body and all its parts are the great bliss non-dual with emptiness, the dharmakaya. Because this appears in different forms, you label it this deity or that. The holy body and each part of it is empty of existing from its own side. Everything about them is merely imputed on the base by the mind. [Meditation.]

At the same time as your wisdom is concentrating on the holy body of Heruka, you are aware that nothing exists from its own side. You understand that the holy body of Heruka does not exist inherently. You are aware that no aspect or part of the holy body—arms, legs, head, and so forth—exists there on the base. Although Heruka's body appears to exist from its own side, it is not true. At the same time as this wisdom is experiencing infinite bliss, it is focusing on the deity's holy body and understanding that it does not exist inherently. This wisdom is aware that everything—including Heruka father and mother—is merely labeled by the mind. In this way, your meditation becomes Vajrayana, in which method and wisdom are unified into one consciousness. By focusing on the deity's holy body, your wisdom is practicing method, and by simultaneously understanding the emptiness of the deity's body, it is practicing wisdom. Unifying method and wisdom in this way creates the cause for both rupakaya

and dharmakaya.

Now, while you are in the form of Heruka, think, "Vast numbers of sentient beings have not realized emptiness. I will lead them to Heruka's enlightenment right now. By taking this Heruka form body I will offer extensive benefit to all the sentient beings who are under the earth, on the earth, and in space above the earth."

With this thought of offering extensive benefit to all sentient beings, recite SHRI HERUKO HAM three times. Holding the divine pride of the holy body frees you from the ordinary concept and ordinary appearance of this body. Thus, it purifies the body.

#### PURIFICATION OF THE SPEECH

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH, KE KHA GA GHA NGA, TSA  
TSHA DZA DZHA NYA, TA THA DA DHA NA, TA THA DA DHA NA, PA PHA BA  
BHA MA, YA RA LA WA, SHA SHA SA HA KSHA HUM HUM PEY (3X)

*These three mantra rosaries stand in counterclockwise circles at my navel and shine with five-colored light. The groups of deities of the three wheels emerge from them and radiating from my right nostril, go in the ten directions, driving away all interferences. They re-enter through my left nostril and dissolve into the mantra rosaries at my navel.*

*(Imagining this, purify the speech.)*

Meditate on the mantra of the vowels and consonants. The first circle (the outermost) is white, the second is red, and the third is blue. The letters stand counterclockwise at the navel. Beams radiate from them,

carrying the deities of the three wheels; the deities of the body wheel are white, the deities of the speech wheel are red, and the deities of the mind wheel are blue. Radiating from the mantra letters, they leave your body through the right nostril, go in the ten directions, and dispel all the interferers that harm you and all other sentient beings. The deities of the three wheels lead all sentient beings to Heruka's enlightenment. After that, they come back into you through your left nostril and reabsorb into the mantras at your navel. Imagining all the sounds of the vowels and consonants as being deities in essence purifies the speech. Meditating in this way frees your mind from ordinary appearance and ordinary concepts regarding your speech. The appearance and concept that your speech is ordinary are purified through this practice of reciting the mantras and visualizing in this way. Now recite the mantras. [Concluding meditation.]

Every time you meditate on emptiness, unbelievably powerful purification occurs. Just having doubt about the nature of reality—"Things might not be inherently existent" or "Maybe things don't exist from their own side"—is said to break samsara into pieces. The *Condensed Sutra* says that simply having interest or faith in emptiness or the wish to realize it purifies the ten non-virtuous actions. I cannot remember if it also purifies the five uninterrupted actions. In one sutra it says that if you compare the merit of practicing the first five paramitas—generosity, ethics, patience, joyous effort, and concentration—for ten thousand eons with that gained by listening to teachings on emptiness, the latter creates the greater merit; explaining teachings on emptiness to others creates much more merit than listening to teachings on emptiness for ten thousand eons—in this case, I think that

the profit is mine, my business profit!—and meditating on emptiness for even one second creates much more merit than explaining teachings on emptiness for ten thousand eons.

Therefore, each time you think about emptiness, beginning with recognition of the false object, the refuted object, you create great merit. Without identifying the refuted object, there is no way to meditate on emptiness. Accurately recognizing the false object, the refuted object, gives you an unmistakable view of emptiness, and reflecting on the emptiness of each category of phenomena as we just did gives you great merit. This also becomes meditation on the *Heart Sutra*, the essence of all the Buddha's Prajnaparamita teachings, the Wisdom Gone Beyond. It is meditation on the essence, or heart, of the entire Buddhadharma and, therefore, highly worthwhile.





## SEVEN

# GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEITY PRACTICE

Knowing some of the general procedures for deity practice—be it Vajrayogini, Heruka, Yamantaka, Tara, or other deities—is helpful. Not only during sitting meditation but also during the break time, visualize yourself as the deity you are practicing. Hold the divine identity (divine pride) of yourself as that deity. Practicing pure appearance and divine pride are fundamental practices in all four classes of tantra. Practicing pure appearance (clear appearance) and pure view (divine pride) involves stopping the impure (ordinary) appearance and impure (ordinary) concept respectively.

For example, if you visualize your enemy, the person you hate and wish would die, as the deity, you no longer have a problem with him or her. Why? Because you have transformed the object. Before, it was an impure, ordinary person; you had an ordinary view or concept of him, so it was easy to get angry. But when you transform that person into the pure appearance of the deity, your view of him changes. Visualize your enemy as the most wrathful deity, Yamantaka. You don't get angry at Yamantaka, do you? Then, there's no question of getting mad at a peaceful deity such as Tara, who is calm and smiling. This is incredible psychology. By transforming the object into something pure, your negative emotional reactions and ordinary, troubling, impure

thoughts and delusions won't arise.

The philosophical texts speak of three conditions causing a consciousness to arise—immediate condition, objective condition, and dominant condition. Here you are working with the objective condition, the object of your perception. Transforming this into the pure appearance of a deity helps your mind; it purifies your mind. You can then easily transform your thoughts and have pure, useful, and beneficial thoughts, which protects you from creating negative karma and thus from rebirth in the lower realms of samsara. You also create merit, and right at that moment, you experience peace. All those other ordinary, superstitious thoughts and troubling emotions are stopped because you are visualizing the object as pure.

In addition, cultivating pure appearance and pure view results in enlightenment. When you are enlightened, you will have all the qualities of a Buddha and the four purities, which are:

1. Having a completely pure holy body of a deity;
2. Seeing the environment, the place where you are, as pure, that is, as a mandala, which is a manifestation of the deity's wisdom;
3. Having completely pure enjoyments, with no higher bliss to experience; and
4. Engaging in completely pure actions, such as liberating sentient beings from suffering and leading them from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. This is the ultimate goal and result of practicing pure appearance and pure view.

The kind of emotional thought arising in you—pure or impure—

depends upon how you look at the object, whether you see it as ordinary and impure, or as pure. This is how it normally works in your daily life. The way you look at things affects your mind. How your mind looks at sense objects, how it thinks of them—in other words how your mind creates them—reflects back on you, having either a negative or positive effect. Depending on this, ordinary thoughts or pure thoughts arise. The kind of thought that arises makes you look at the object in a particular way, and that again has an effect back on you, causing a particular emotion or attitude to arise. It is like a circle. The kind of life you experience—ups and downs, suffering feelings and pleasant feelings—depends on how your mind creates the object, what kind of concept or interpretation your mind projects on the object. Then, when your senses meet the object, it affects back on you and you experience different feelings, pleasant and unpleasant. The key is your own mind. Your mind is like a key, or perhaps a TV remote control, which can open the door to enlightenment or the door to samsara. The whole secret is your mind, how you think. How your life will turn out this hour, today, from now on, depends on what you do with your mind, what kind of thoughts you generate.

The other night we talked about patience, and I explained how everything comes from your mind. How people treat you, whether or not they help you, all comes from your mind. This relates to the twelve links—what you experience comes from your consciousness (the third link), which arises from your karma (the second link), which comes from your ignorance (the first link). In your daily life, what makes you encounter problems, what makes you believe that something is beneficial or harmful, is your mind. But normally, you do not see things that way. Normally, you never think that good

opportunities and success come from your own mind. However, when you look deeper, you'll see that the evolution is indeed like that. Your experiences come from your mind, from your karma. Your mind is the creator. Looking at things in this way only helps. It immediately cuts off all the unreasonable expectations you project on others, thus stopping the disappointment, frustration, and anger that you experience when things do not work out the way you want or expect. Viewing things in this way stops many of your life's problems; they do not occur when you are aware of the role your mind has in creating your experiences. But when you think purity and happiness come from the side of the object and not from your mind, difficulties always arise.

This is connected to the practice of guru devotion as well as to your daily life's interactions with other people. Both individual problems and world problems come from not relating experiences to the mind, to karma, thinking instead that they come from outside, from things or other people. In fact, if something is harmful or helpful, desirable or undesirable, a success or a failure, it all has its origins in the mind.

Your thought makes up the good and the bad that you believe about another person. Therefore, if you have a problem with somebody, if you change the way you look at that person, your upset will go away, even if the other person does not change his or her attitude or behavior towards you.

This is an example of transforming the way you look at an object in relation to tantric practice. The practice of transforming the way you think of an object also exists in the lam-rim teachings, in the part about thought transformation. Here, in relation to tantra, you visualize your enemy as the deity. This does not mean that Yamantaka or whatever deity you're visualizing appears to your eyes. Yamantaka does not

come up to you, but your own mind creates, or projects, that person as pure, as the deity. Then all those other impure, ordinary thoughts, which arise on the basis seeing people and things as impure and ordinary, especially anger, get stopped. You have, instead, a pure thought on a pure object. That pure thought plants the seed of enlightenment, purifies the mind, and creates merit, thus enabling you to attain the four complete purities—pure body, environment, enjoyments, and activities—of the result.

First, see your environment as the mandala and all the sentient beings in it as the deity. Generate this pure appearance and think that it is a manifestation of the deity's wisdom, of your mind that has become the ultimate guru, the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. Visualize all sentient beings—particularly those who are the object of your anger and attachment—as the deity. Thinking of the people of whom you are jealous in the aspect of the deity is especially beneficial. All the above mentioned benefits accrue from doing this. If people bring you food, see yourself as the deity and enjoy it as such.

Second, think of all sounds as the deity's holy speech, the mantra. Whether someone praises you or criticizes you, whether you hear an interesting sound or an unpleasant one, think of it as the deity's holy speech.

Third, whatever thought, memory, or concept arises in your mind, think of it as the deity's holy mind, as non-dual bliss and emptiness in nature. Even when attachment, anger, or other superstitious thoughts arise, look at them as the dharmakaya, the deity's holy mind of bliss and emptiness.

This is called the yoga of the three transformations or the yoga of

the three utilizations—whatever form you see with your eye consciousness, see it as the manifestation of the deity's form, as either the mandala or the deity's holy body; whatever you hear, think of it as the deity's holy speech; whatever you think, view it as the deity's holy mind, the dharmakaya. In this way, since your mind likes happiness, it is able to keep the feeling of bliss and emptiness longer. When your mind is continuously occupied by bliss and emptiness, less opportunity exists for the delusions and superstitious thoughts to arise. In this way, you utilize whatever you see, hear, or think in the path to enlightenment. You use these experiences to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. Extensive benefit comes from doing this practice, especially in the break times.

In the practice of Highest Yoga Tantra, try to focus on everything causing great bliss within you. Try to transform everything you see, hear, or think about so that it causes great bliss. Then, use that bliss to understand emptiness. This is an important point. When you have sense enjoyments, think that you, the deity, are making offering to you, the deity. In this way, you enjoy the sense objects and also use that experience to develop the bliss that realizes emptiness. Thus, your enjoyments will increase your concentration on bliss and emptiness.

Then you will become like a snow lion, who has no fear of being attacked by other animals. All other wild animals have enemies, so they are always afraid, constantly aware, and can never relax. Their ears are always pricked up, listening for danger. But snow lions have no enemies, so they can be at ease. Without fear, their ears droop and they relax. Therefore, when you use these tantric techniques to transform whatever you encounter, you can enjoy everything like a snow lion, without regret or fear.

## EIGHT

# BENEFITS OF THE EIGHT-LINE PRAISES

### THE MEANING OF PILGRIMAGE

The thirty-eighth chapter of the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* says, "If, when one sees the vajra master, one continuously says this mantra, the mind will always be joyful. This mantra is the root, secret, sublime mantra of the hero and heroine. It should be recited seven times." In other words, when you meet your guru, the vajra master, it is good to recite the Eight-line Praises either seven times or three; at least once. Doing so will inspire you and make your mind joyful. When you go on pilgrimage and see holy objects, representations of the holy body, speech, or mind, such as paintings, stupas, or texts, you should recite and practice these praises.

There are three special holy places of Heruka, one each for the holy body, holy speech, and holy mind. One is Mount Kailash, an unbelievably precious place. Another is Tsari, also in Tibet. It is said that if you circumambulate this mountain barefoot, because of the hardship you happily endure, you will purify so many obscurations that you will attain clairvoyance. There are many holy places in the area around this mountain. When Kyabje Song Rinpoche did pilgrimage there, he offered tsog in many places and continuously recited the Eight-line

Praises. The third holy place is a snow mountain called Lapchi, which I think is close to Solo Khumbu. I believe this is the place where Milarepa passed away and where his holy body was offered to fire.

Around the time Kyabje Song Rinpoche went on pilgrimage in Tsari, a girl in Lhasa who was a dakini told some people, "In these days, Heruka is making pilgrimage in Tsari." When the people checked who was in Tsari at that time, they heard Kyabje Song Rinpoche was there. This is one of Rinpoche's secret life stories.

If you practice Heruka and Vajrayogini, it is not essential to make pilgrimage to these places. Of greatest importance is doing the practice, especially that of the body mandala, wherever you are. The main thing is to practice the complete path of Heruka and Vajrayogini on the basis of bodhicitta, understanding emptiness and keeping pure samaya with the guru, the qualified virtuous friend. One very high Sakya Lama, Drogön Chögyal Pagpa—the guru of Kublai Khan, who granted him supreme authority over Tibet—wanted to leave Tibet for pilgrimage in India. His disciple, a great yogi named Ling Repa, requested him not to go but to stay in Tibet. He said, "All the holy places are in your body—in your chakras. You don't have to go away. If you want to purify and create merit by going on pilgrimage, do it in your chakras, in the holy places in your body."

Therefore, meditating on your own vajra body is the main thing, but if you are able to go to the external holy places, they do bless your mind, chakras, channels, winds, and drops. You also purify and collect merit by making pilgrimage to holy places. You can see this from the example of Kyabje Song Rinpoche and other yogis going there and every day making tsog offerings, reciting the Eight-line Praises, and meditating on the body mandala of Heruka or Vajrayogini as



their main practice.

Many reasons explain why Mount Kailash is such an incredibly holy place. Gampopa told one of his disciples to take many disciples there to meditate. Since so many hundreds of meditators went there to practice and received realizations, they blessed the place. It is not so difficult to gain realizations there because you receive blessings more quickly and it is therefore easier to tame your mind. Heruka's mandala—perhaps the holy body mandala of Chakrasamvara's mandala—is there. Bathing in or drinking water from Lake Manasarovar, which is near Mount Kailash, purifies negative karma and liberates you from the lower realms. At the time of death, Vajrayogini will guide you, and you will be born in her pure land. Vajrayogini is the possessor of this lake; she is the one who owns it. I drank some water from there. It was good, so I tried to get some more to give to people who are dying to help them have a good rebirth. You can also put water from Lake Manasarovar into stupas and statues when you fill them.

Once when I was in London, I stayed at the home of Sean Jones, the former director of Jamyang Centre. He had a book on Mount Kailash. When I read it I realized this is an unbelievably holy place and thought, "I have to go there." Sean had been there twice before, and when he and his wife got married, they went to Kailash for their honeymoon. Usually people go to some nice place, like a luxurious island with many samsaric perfections, but they went to Kailash. He has a connection to this place, so he likes to go there and finds it very inspiring.

That is how the idea came to go there, but I haven't decided yet. Maybe a group can go on pilgrimage to Mount Kailash, perhaps as part of a Dharma Celebration. But Tsari is not so easy to visit. Many

vicious animals live in the forest and you need to be a good practitioner to go on pilgrimage there. Recently a Tibetan nun gave me the story of that holy place, and even that is not easy to find.

## BENEFITS OF RECITING THE EIGHT-LINE PRAISES

Before reciting the Eight-line Praises, visualize yourself as Heruka. Think that you are the embodiment of all the dakas and dakinis, the essence encompassing all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Then recite the Eight-line Praises. In this way, you will collect extensive merit and benefit in that very moment by making offering to and praising the Buddhas.

The Tibetan words *Pal Korlo Dampa* mean *Shri Chakrasamvara* in Sanskrit. *Pal* is *Shri* and means glorious. *Korlo Dampa* is *Chakrasamvara*; *Shri Chakrasamvara* means all the chakras or wheels of existence united, or integrated, into one. For example, in the Three Purifications, we meditated on the emptiness of all existents, the ultimate nature of all phenomena, which includes the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of persons. The wisdom of great bliss non-dual with emptiness arises as, or takes the form that is labeled, Heruka. This is the meaning of *Chakrasamvara*. From this meditation you understand that chakra refers to all phenomena being integrated into one. That is, the empty nature of all phenomena is integrated into one. From this, the form that manifests is labeled Heruka, or *Chakrasamvara*.

By reciting the Praises, the practitioner receives many benefits.

1. You create extensive merit, immediately, in that minute, by

making offerings to and praising all the Buddhas of the ten directions. When you recite the Praises, see yourself as the embodiment, or essence, encompassing all the Buddhas of the ten directions; that is, you are the essence encompassing all the dakas and dakinis. Imagine all places as the mandala, all living beings as Heruka, and all holy objects as Heruka, and recite the Praises. In this way, in a minute you will receive extensive benefit from making offering to and praising all places and living beings, by thinking of them as pure, as the essence of Heruka.

2. All the time, Heruka will happily abide within you. You will always be with the great hero Heruka and enjoy great bliss. You will become a fortunate being, an object of Heruka's compassion and love. This helps to increase the bliss because it enables you to receive the blessings of Heruka Father and Mother. To attain enlightenment, you have to cease the gross mind because it does not continue to enlightenment. Even the gross minds of the arhats and arya bodhisattvas who realize emptiness directly do not go on to enlightenment. Only the extremely subtle consciousness continues on to enlightenment, so you must be able to make that mind manifest. The extremely subtle mind of clear light that has been transformed into the entity of the transcendental wisdom of inseparable bliss and emptiness is the direct cause to attain the dharmakaya of a Buddha. It is like an atomic bomb, the quickest way to cease the two obscurations—the obscurations of delusion and the obscurations to omniscience, which are the dualistic view and imprints left on the

consciousness by the delusions. Various techniques, such as the Six Yogas of Naropa and other completion stage practices, make manifest this extremely subtle mind and transform it into the wisdom of inseparable bliss and emptiness. By reciting the Praises, you will become a fortunate being cherished by Heruka and will enjoy great bliss, being always together with the hero Heruka.

3. The bhagavan Shri Heruka, Vajra Varahi, the four heart yoginis and the countless dakas and dakinis from the twenty-four holy places will actually enter into your body.
4. Having entered into your body, Heruka, Vajra Varahi, and all the dakas and dakinis will bless you.
5. All the countless dakas and dakinis including Heruka and Vajra Varahi will be delighted with you and with compassion, will hold you dear.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained that at the moment, most of us do not have the fortune to actually meet Heruka Father and Mother and the dakas and dakinis. You might be entertaining the doubt, "If I practice this, will I achieve it or not? If I invoke the dakas and dakinis, will they descend or not?" But if you recite these Eight-line Praises taught by Vajradhara, Heruka Father and Mother will always abide within you, in your heart, in your mental continuum. They will always bless you. Buddha Vajradhara confirmed this. Therefore, do not question whether Heruka Father and Mother and the countless dakas and dakinis will descend into you or not, whether they will abide in your heart or not. Have stable faith in and definite understanding of these quotations, which are the words of Buddha

Vajradhara. When you recite the Eight-line Praises, generate strong faith, "All the dakas and dakinis have actually descended and are abiding in my heart, in my mental continuum." Generate special joy in your heart. Meditate in this way when reciting the Praises.

First recite the Praises. Second, offer confession of all the negative karma, obscurations, and degenerated vows and commitments that you have accumulated from beginningless rebirths. Third, from the bottom of your heart, make whatever requests you may have for this and future lives. From your side, meditate that Guru Heruka has completely accepted your requests.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained that thinking in this way is not fatiguing as is going on pilgrimage to faraway places with great hardship. It is not time-consuming as is making thousands of offerings to the holy objects of Buddha's holy body, speech and mind. It does not require tormas or other external substances as do protector pujas and offerings to the landlord spirits. Recitation of the Eight-line Praises is a very secret technique that instantly enables you to accomplish all this. You accumulate extensive merit and make great purification; it is a powerful method for eliminating obstacles and achieving great success in the things that you request.

When sick people used to come to see Lama, he would put his mala on their back and recite the Eight-line Praises. That made me think, because I had not seen other lamas do that. It was not a normal practice. But when I read the benefits of the Praises, I understood why Lama treated sick people by reciting the Praises. It is an important healing technique, similar to doing pujas for the sick. When you recite the Praises, all Buddhas, dakas, and dakinis enter you and bless the sick person, eliminating their spirit harm or contagious disease.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said to cherish this practice as a means of achieving success in whatever you do and whatever you wish for in this life, future lives, and the intermediate state. If you are completing a Dharma practice or project, if you want to help the living or the deceased—whatever you want to be successful—doing this practice of the Eight-line Praises is worthwhile.

The *Heruka Root Tantra* states that all the dakinis will be will attracted to and like the person who recites the Eight-line Praises. Whether you recite it at the beach, near a pond, in the mountains, at a crossroads, at a well, on the road, in a house, or in a swimming pool, all the dakinis will be happy and will all pay attention to you. They will eliminate all your obstacles and help you gather all the conditions that you need. Even though the dakas and dakinis of the ten directions may be far away, they will always pay attention to you without distraction and will bless you. If you make prostrations, it will become an offering to all the Buddhas. You will also enjoy with the great hero, Heruka. Heruka, Vajra Varahi, and the messenger yoginis will abide in your heart.

The *Heruka Root Tantra* says that other people who were born at the same time as the person reciting the Eight-line Praises will also collect merit. Beings who see Heruka practitioners, hear their voice, remember them, touch them, or make connection with them—whether it is an animal or a human being—will definitely collect great merit. These are the condensed benefits of doing this practice.

To summarize, when you do the practice of the Eight-line Praises, think that Guru Heruka enters your heart. That is, your root guru, who is one with all the gurus and the countless dakas and dakinis from all the holy places, absorbs into you. All the Buddhas of the ten

directions enter within you. Generate great happiness and joy. Then confess all the obscurations and negative karma that you have accumulated from beginningless rebirths until now, in particular transgressions of the pratimoksha, bodhisattva, and tantric vows. Especially confess the heaviest negative karma, those created in relation to your gurus in this and previous lives—not following their advice, disturbing their holy minds, harming their holy bodies, or criticizing or turning away from them. Confess all the unkind thoughts and mistakes in relation to the guru, especially the heaviest one, degenerated samaya vows. Think that Guru Heruka completely accepts and that all of this is purified.

Then request Guru Heruka, “From now on, Heruka, be my direct guru. May I be able to do only what pleases you. May I do nothing displeasing for even a second.” All success now and in the future depends on this. Developing all realizations depends on this. Being able to attain enlightenment and do perfect work for all sentient beings depends on this. Therefore, making these requests is extremely important.

After that, make strong requests from the depths of your heart to actualize the entire path to enlightenment, Lama Tsong Khapa’s complete teaching. Make extremely strong prayers, because this is the most important project. Nothing is more important than this, because having done this, you will be able to benefit other sentient beings most effectively. Also request, “May whatever I experience and whatever I do benefit sentient beings. May all the sufferings of whoever merely sees, hears, remembers, thinks about, or talks about me be pacified immediately. May all sentient beings—whether they help me or harm me—have temporal and ultimate happiness forever. May all the wishes

of my gurus be accomplished immediately. In all my lives, may I offer great benefit to the teachings and to sentient beings just like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Lama Tsong Khapa did.”

After making these important requests, request success for other things. For example, when I am not lazy, I request the success of various projects to benefit others, such as the Dharma centers and the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue. I pray for the people who rely upon me and those for whom I promised to pray. If you are going to do a long retreat, pray for it to be successful and free from obstacles. At this time, you can pray for someone who is extremely ill, dying, or having many problems. From your side, think your heart Guru Heruka completely agrees and promises.

## ONE ESSENCE

All the Buddhas of the ten directions are one essence, one holy mind. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo uses the example of all streams and rivers flowing into the ocean. When all those different forms of water come into the ocean, they become one. Similarly, when you become enlightened, you become one with all the Buddhas, one mind. Some lamas follow this way of thinking, while other lamas say that the Buddhas have separate mental continua. I find the way Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained it more comfortable and easier to accept. Thinking that all the Buddhas have separate mental continua is more difficult for me. The ultimate guru, the dharmakaya, the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, is eternal. It is the primordial savior (liberator), the originator (source) without beginning or end, that pervades all existence.



In Christianity, God is explained as being eternal, with no beginning and no end. But Christianity does not clearly explain this: On the other hand, Buddhism explains what dharmakaya is and how to attain it. It is a more complete, detailed, and scientific explanation that you can actually experience. Countless people have meditated on the path and have experienced it.

The ultimate guru is the completely pure, extremely subtle mind that is the wisdom of simultaneously-born great bliss realizing emptiness non-dually. This pervades all phenomena and is without beginning or end. When any sentient being becomes enlightened, their mind becomes this. All the countless Buddhas are manifestations of this. Thinking like this, you can understand why the ultimate guru, the dharmakaya, is called the source, originator, or creator. All the beings in the merit field are this transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. All the Buddhas, Dharma, and Sangha can be condensed into this one, and this one can manifest into many forms to benefit sentient beings. This wisdom, the ultimate guru, appears out of emptiness in whatever forms are necessary to benefit the sentient beings to be subdued. Whenever sentient beings' mind streams are ripe, the dharmakaya manifests out of emptiness as the rupakaya without delay, because the Buddhas' minds are bound with compassion.

For example, the *Guru Puja* begins with the words, "Within great bliss...." The practice begins with this wisdom of great bliss. Later in the practice, the guru absorbs into you, and you become one with the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, the ultimate guru. This is what manifests in the various aspects of deities, sutra aspect Buddhas, tantric deities, bodhisattvas, dakas, dakinis, and protectors. The ultimate guru, this wisdom, can even manifest in the

aspect of ordinary beings, such as conventional gurus, according to the karma of sentient beings.

The meditation of the guru absorbing into you and your becoming the guru concerns the ultimate guru, the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, which you will experience in the future. You imagine that it has actually happened now and that you have become that. With that experience of enlightened wisdom, you begin the *Guru Puja*. You train the mind in this way now, and by doing this, one day, when all the subtle defilements on your mind stream have been completely ceased, you will actually experience this. Your mind will actually become the ultimate guru. When you become enlightened, you will become all the Buddhas. Even though you are practicing Heruka now, when you become enlightened, you will also become Tara, Yamantaka, and all the other Buddhas. You will be able to manifest as all those Buddhas in countless forms. This is the meaning of saying the ultimate guru is the originator, or the source.

If you say that each Buddha has a separate mind stream, then if Tara is guiding you—be it in an ordinary aspect or in the aspect of the Buddha—you would have to say that not all the Buddhas are guiding you. That becomes a problem—which Tara is guiding you? Is it just the Tara that is the same mind stream of a particular sentient being who became enlightened? Other sentient beings who became Buddhas aren't guiding you? They can also manifest as Tara, so why aren't they guiding you? It becomes difficult to understand. This is my guess.

## NINE

### MEDITATION ON THE EIGHT-LINE PRAISES

We will do the practice of the Three Purifications together according to the sadhana, beginning with the Vajrasattva meditation. In this way, you can put into practice the teachings you have received. From time to time I will give additional instructions as you meditate.

*At all times I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, in all three vehicles, in the dakinis of secret mantra yoga, in the heroes, heroines, and powerful goddesses, in the great beings, the bodhisattvas, and above all, at all times, I take refuge in my spiritual master. I myself will become Heruka for the sake of all living beings and then I will lead all of them to Heruka's supreme state. (3X)*

*On the crown of my head a syllable PAM transforms into a lotus and AH into a moon cushion, upon which, from HUM, emerges a white five-pronged vajra marked by a HUM at its center. The HUM radiates light and the two purposes are accomplished. The light returns and transforms into white Vajrasattva with one face and two hands holding vajra and bell. Seated in the vajra posture, he embraces the Lady, white Vajra Bhagavati, who has one face and two hands, holding curved knife and skullcup. Both are adorned with silks and various precious ornaments. On their crown is an OM, at their throat an AH and at their*

heart a HUM. From the HUMs at their hearts light radiates, inviting wisdom beings similar to themselves. DZA HUM BAM HOH. They become inseparable.

Once more light radiates from the HUMs at their hearts, inviting the empowering deities. "O Tathagatas, I request you to bestow upon them the actual empowerment." Having been thus requested, they hold aloft vases filled with wisdom nectar, with which they bestow the empowerment.

OM SARVA TATHAGATA ABHISHEKATA SAMAYA SHRIYE AH HUM.

Their bodies are filled with wisdom nectar. The surplus overflowing their crowns transforms into Akshobhya, the crown ornament. On the moon disc at Vajrasattva's heart stands the syllable HUM encircled by the one hundred syllable mantra.

"O Bhagavan Vajrasattva, please clear away all negative karma and obscurations of myself and all living beings and purify all degenerated and broken commitments."

Having been thus requested, Vajrasattva radiates light from the HUM and mantra rosary at his heart. The light purifies the negative karma and obscurations of all living beings and presents offerings to the Buddhas and their spiritual children. All qualities of their body, speech, and mind collect in the form of light and dissolve into the mantra rosary and HUM, from which a stream of white nectar begins to flow down through the joined organs of Vajrasattva Father and Mother. This wisdom nectar enters the crown of my head and fills my whole body, completely cleansing me of all negative karma and obscurations of body, speech, and mind.

OM VAJRA HERUKA SAMAYA MANU PALAYA HERUKA TENOPATISHTA DRIDHO  
MEBHAVA SUTOSHYO MEBHAVA SUPOSHYO MEBHAVA ANURAKTO MEBHAVA

SARVA SIDDHI MEPRAYATSA SARVA KARMA SUCHAME CHITTAM SHRIYAM  
KURU HUM HA HA HA HA HO BHAGAVAN VAJRA HERUKA MAME MUNCHA  
HERUKA BHAVA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA AH HUM PEY (21x)

*“Through ignorance and delusion I have broken and degenerated my commitments. O spiritual master be my protector and refuge. Lord, Holder of the Vajra, endowed with great compassion, in you, the foremost of beings, I take refuge.”*

*Then Vajrasattva says, “O child of the family, your negative karma, obscurations and all broken and degenerated commitments are now cleansed and purified.” After saying this, he dissolves into me and my three doors become inseparable from Vajrasattva’s holy body, speech and mind.*

*HE stands for the mind, which is the source of everything, and for the selflessness of phenomena, found by examining the fabricated nature of the causal mind.*

Meditation on emptiness is the essence of the practice of the Three Purifications. As explained in the previous chapter, begin by meditating on the emptiness of the forms around you—the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangible objects. Then, meditate on the meaning of HE, the selflessness of phenomena, which principally refers to the aggregates. Think that the general aggregates are empty, then that each particular aggregate—form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness—is empty. Then meditate on the specific meaning of HE, that even the very subtle consciousness, the source of samsara and nirvana, hell and enlightenment, is empty. All phenomena are totally empty. [Meditation.]

*RU stands for the selflessness of persons, found by abandoning the self fabricated by the network of wrong views that cause us to perceive an inherently existing self of persons.*

To meditate on the meaning of RU, investigate how the self—the person, the meditator, the I who is meditating on the Three Purifications—exists. It is empty. Even the I who is meditating on emptiness is totally non-existent there on the base. [Meditation.]

If in the past you have had an experience in which you felt that the I was lost or totally non-existent (from its own side), bring that experience here. Remember that, recollect that, generate that feeling again. [Meditation.]

*KA stands for the object, suchness, and subjective cognition being without disharmony.*

Your wisdom sees emptiness exactly. Your wisdom perceives the nature of phenomena exactly how it is. It is not contradictory to or disharmonious with that emptiness. No disharmony exists between the subject, wisdom, and the object, emptiness. They do not contradict each other. That is the meaning of KA. [Meditation.]

*SHRI stands for the meaning of EVAM, the wisdom of non-duality merging with its object, emptiness, in a manner that accords with its actual mode of existence.*

The wisdom realizing emptiness is infinite bliss in nature, like the limitless sky. The blissful mind is non-dual with emptiness, like water

mixed with water. Your wisdom is of one taste with emptiness.  
[Meditation.]

On this experience—the wisdom of great bliss non-dual with emptiness—hold divine pride, “This is my future resultant Guru Heruka’s holy mind, the actual dharmakaya. This is me.”  
[Meditation.]

*From emptiness I arise instantly as dark blue Heruka with one face and two hands holding a vajra and bell. With my right leg extended, I embrace my partner, red Vajra Varahi, who has one face and two hands holding a curved knife and skullcup.*

Your transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, which is your resultant Guru Heruka’s holy mind, the dharmakaya, takes the form of Heruka Father and Mother in order to benefit sentient beings. While meditating on this form of Heruka Father and Mother embracing, continue the experience of your mind being infinite bliss non-dual with emptiness. Your mind is still in that state. The experience of infinite bliss non-dual with emptiness continues, but now it appears in this form; it manifests as Heruka Father and Mother embracing.

In dependence upon this, the mind makes up the label Heruka. Because of this pure base, the mind just makes up the label Heruka. The holy body, these pure aggregates, this association of body and mind, and all the parts of the holy body are the same; they all exist by being merely labeled by mind. All these things appearing from there, from their own side, are not true. They are like a dream or an illusion. In reality they are empty. All these things appearing as something real

from there are false. [Meditation.]

Although these merely labeled things appear, they are empty. All these merely labeled appearances are empty of existing from their own side. They exist, but they are empty at the same time. This is the unification of emptiness and dependent arising. [Meditation.]

Your wisdom manifesting as the deity's holy body is the method, the cause to attain the form body of a Buddha, the rupakaya. At the same time, that wisdom knows that this aspect of the holy body is non-self-existent. It is without nature; that is, it does not have the inherently existent nature that your ignorance perceives. The nature, or reality, according to the view of ignorance is inherent existence. The nature, or reality, according to wisdom is the absence of inherent existence, the emptiness of inherent existence. That is why the text says that the aspect of the holy body is absent of nature, devoid of nature. It means it is empty of inherent existence. That wisdom becomes the cause to attain the Buddha's mind, the dharmakaya.

In the Highest Yoga of the Secret Mantra, the wisdom of great bliss non-dual with emptiness is the most skillful method to attain enlightenment quickly, because with this one mind, you practice method and wisdom simultaneously. Method and wisdom are unified in one mind. Imaging this on the generation stage prepares you for the completion stage, when the mind of clear light and the illusory body are unified into one entity. That unification on the path of the completion stage is the direct cause to attain the unification of no more learning, the completely pure, extremely subtle wind and mind, the holy body and mind of a Buddha, the rupakaya and the dharmakaya. Meditating like this now—imagining that your mind, the wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness appears as the



deity and that although this deity appears, it is empty—prepares you to actually unify method and wisdom simultaneously on the completion stage and to eventually actualize the unification of no more learning, Buddhahood.

Now bring to mind all the sentient beings who have not realized emptiness. Because they do not realize that phenomena and they themselves are empty, they constantly suffer and create the causes for more suffering. Because they apprehend that everything that appears to them exists from its own side, they wander endlessly in samsara. Think, “I must lead them to full enlightenment right now.” With this great thought to offer extensive benefit impartially to all the countless sentient beings, recite,

SHRI HERUKO HAM (3X)

*(Purify the body by saying this three times with the thought of benefiting all living beings, while holding divine identity of this physical appearance.)*

OM A AA I II U UU RI RII LI LII E AI O AU AM AH, KE KHA GA GHA NGA, TSA TSHA DZA DZHA NYA, TA THA DA DHA NA, TA THA DA DHA NA, PA PHA BA BHA MA, YA RA LA WA, SHA SHA SA HA KSHA HUM HUM PEY (3X)

*These three mantra rosaries stand in counterclockwise circles at my navel and shine with five-colored light. The groups of deities of the three wheels emerge from them and radiating from my right nostril, go in the ten directions, driving away all interferences. They re-enter through my left nostril and dissolve into the mantra rosaries at my navel.*

The deities of Heruka's holy body, speech, and mind radiate from these mantras at the navel. They leave through your right nostril and dispel all the interferers who cause disturbances to yourself and to others. They purify all sentient beings and bring them to enlightenment. All hell beings are brought to Heruka's enlightenment. All hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demigods, and gods are also brought to Heruka's enlightenment. Then the deities of the three wheels return through your left nostril and absorb into the mantras at your navel.

### ACTUAL MEDITATION ON THE EIGHT-LINE PRAISES

The Eight-line Praises are contained in the practice of mother tantra. They can be recited in Sanskrit, Tibetan, or English. Visualize yourself as Heruka. Those who have not received Heruka initiation should instead visualize a small Heruka Father and Mother at their heart. By visualizing Heruka and reciting these Praises, all the Buddhas of the ten directions as well as the countless dakas and dakinis from the twenty-four holy places will absorb into your heart. Think that this happens, and feel great joy. Feel extremely fortunate and blissful.

*OM I bow to the Bhagavan, powerful lord of the heroes HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who are as bright as the fire that ends a great eon HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who have a powerful crown of knotted hair HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who grin showing fangs and a terrifying face HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who have a thousand arms of blazing light HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who have an ax, noose, trident and khatvanga HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM to you who wear a tiger-skin loincloth HUM HUM PEY*  
*OM before your great smoke-colored body that destroys all obstructions,*

*I bow HUM HUM PEY*

*OM I bow to the Bhagavati Vajra Varahi HUM HUM PEY*

*OM to you who are the queen of the female arya practitioners invincible  
in the three realms HUM HUM PEY*

*OM to you who destroy all fear of evil spirits with your great vajra HUM  
HUM PEY*

*OM to you whose eyes empower those sitting on the vajra seat not to be  
overcome by others HUM HUM PEY*

*OM to you whose wrathful body of psychic heat desiccates Brahma HUM  
HUM PEY*

*OM to you who terrify and burn demons and conquer the other forces  
HUM HUM PEY*

*OM to you who conquer all that makes one dull, excited and confused  
HUM HUM PEY*

*OM I bow to Vajra Varahi, the partner who overpowers lust HUM HUM PEY*

While reciting the Praises, hold your bell and damaru, or put your palms together at your heart. Bowing down with your entire body is not the only way to prostrate; you can also prostrate by simply putting your palms together. Those who have received the Vajrayogini initiation can visualize her body mandala at their heart while reciting the Eight-line Praises to the Mother. In that way, praise and prostrate to Vajrayogini and the body mandala deities, seeing them as the embodiment of all Buddhas.

As you recite the Praises, think that all Buddhas absorb into you and bless you. Since all Buddhas are of one essence, one holy mind doing the same beneficial actions, when Heruka absorbs into your heart, all the other deities and different aspects of the Buddhas absorb

into you as well. Don't think that it is only Heruka who enters your heart, while Yamantaka and the other deities don't. It's not like that. Rather, countless Buddhas absorb into your heart.

Next, make confession and requests. You can do this while saying the Praises, in the middle, between the praises to the Father and those to the Mother, or afterwards.

Confess all the general obscurations and negative karma that you have created from beginningless rebirths until now. "I confess the negative karma I have created by breaking the pratimoksha, bodhisattva, and tantric vows from beginningless rebirths until the present. I especially confess the heaviest negative karma and obstacles, such as breaking the advice of my gurus, disturbing their holy minds, harming their holy bodies, having negative thoughts about my gurus, and criticizing or renouncing them." Guru Heruka hears your confession. Think that all that negative karma has been completely purified.

Make the requests to Guru Heruka from the bottom of your heart. After each request, think that Guru Heruka responds, "Yes, yes." "Guru Heruka, please be my direct guru in all my future lifetimes. From now on, may I never displease you for even a second and may I only act in ways that please your holy mind. May I keep pure samaya vows, even the subtle ones, in all my future lives. Please help me to actualize the entire path from relying on a spiritual friend up to enlightenment. Especially help me to generate bodhicitta and the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra in my mind-stream without even a second's delay. When death comes, may I immediately be born in the pure realm of Tagpa Kachö without any obstacles. May I become enlightened there and then work to enlighten all sentient beings."

You can also pray to be born wherever it is most beneficial. You do

not have to pray to be reborn only in the pure land of Buddhas. “May I be born wherever it is most beneficial for other sentient beings.” Actually, that is an important prayer. It means that you are willing to be born even in the hells if it is most beneficial for sentient beings.

Next, pray for the success of whatever studies or projects you wish to complete. If somebody is extremely ill or dying or is experiencing any other problem, you can pray to Guru Heruka to immediately pacify their suffering. If someone has died, pray that they be born in a pure land and become enlightened there, or pray for them to have a perfect human rebirth, meet a completely qualified Mahayana guru, and attain enlightenment as quickly as possible by practicing the Mahayana and Vajrayana teachings.

At this time we are going to pray, “May all FPMT meditation centers become like wish-fulfilling gems, bringing the greatest benefit to all sentient beings. May they help pacify the physical and mental suffering of all sentient beings and spread the complete teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings. May the centers receive all the necessary conditions to be able to do this. May His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Ösel Rinpoche, and all our other virtuous friends have stable lives and may their holy wishes be actualized immediately. May all students and benefactors of this organization, especially those who dedicate their lives and bear so many hardships to serve others and the teachings of the Buddha, have long lives. May all their virtuous wishes be actualized immediately according to the holy Dharma. Most important, may the entire path to enlightenment be realized in everyone’s mind without even a second’s delay. May the families of each student meet the Dharma and have faith in the Three Jewels and the working of karma, and may the rest of their lives

become most beneficial by their practicing bodhicitta. May all FPMT projects, including the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue project, be actualized immediately and benefit others by receiving all the conditions necessary to do so. May all the projects of this organization be most beneficial for all sentient beings.”

Think that Guru Heruka responds by saying, “Yes, yes,” accepting all your requests to bring success.

## TEN

### LEFT-SIDE CONDUCT

After you take a mother tantra initiation, one of your samayas is left-side conduct. There are many reasons for and benefits of this practice. Nagarjuna's *Root Wisdom* says, "Whatever has emptiness has everything." This is a literal translation. It means that if things are empty, they can perform functions and have effects; while empty, they function. What functions do they have? Arising, abiding, and disintegrating. After a thing arises, or is born, and before it ceases, it abides; that phenomenon continues. For example, in our lives, we are born and we die, and in between, we abide, or exist. Even though our life changes every split second, it is said to abide because there is the continuity of a similar type of phenomenon.

Causative phenomena arise due to causes and conditions, disintegrate due to causes and conditions, and abide due to causes and conditions. Emptiness, on the other hand, is not like that; it is not under the control of causes and conditions. The emptiness of a clock, for example, has a beginning and an end. It begins when the clock comes into existence and ends when the clock is destroyed, but it is not under the control of causes and conditions. When Nagarjuna said, "Any phenomenon that has emptiness has everything," he meant that because something is empty, empty of existing from its own side, it

exists. If it were not empty, it could not exist. Everything comes into existence out of emptiness. Your life, your self, all phenomena come from emptiness. Because they are empty, they are able to arise, abide, and disintegrate. Because they are empty, they are able to perform various functions and have effects—various types of suffering, temporary happiness, or ultimate happiness.

Generally speaking, the right hand signifies method and the left, wisdom realizing emptiness. The left, therefore, signifies that all animate and inanimate phenomena—all living beings and their environments—come from emptiness. They exist because they are empty; they do not exist from their own side. When practicing tantra, you meditate that all animate and inanimate things are manifestations of the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. This is also included in the meaning of left-side conduct.

All meditational deities and pure lands, deities and mandalas, are the play, or the manifestation, of the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. They are all transformations of this wisdom, so they too come from the left side. For this reason, one of the mother tantra samayas commits us to begin all actions with our left side. This helps us remember emptiness.

Once we went to meet Kyabje Song Rinpoche at the London airport. As he stepped onto the moving walkway, he put his left foot on first and said, “Oh, this time the left-side conduct happened!” Even to the ordinary view, he was no doubt a great yogi, but in reality, he was an enlightened being, Heruka. There is no need to speak of his practice of the vows. His holy mind was beyond that. He did not need vows and samaya to help him to practice Dharma because his mind was already completely subdued.



We were all sitting on chairs waiting for his luggage when an older lady, a tourist, came to shake Rinpoche's hand. Of course, Rinpoche did not normally shake hands with people, but in this case he did. He said, "This also becomes meaningful," meaning that the lady received some benefit from holding his hand. Remember what the *Root Tantra* said when discussing the benefits of reciting the Praises—anybody who sees or touches the Heruka practitioner purifies negative karma and creates merit. Even a person born on the same day as a Heruka yogi collects merit. When a Chakrasamvara practitioner crosses a bridge, any insects beneath it receive benefit that will result in liberation. If this is so, there's no question that any people, animals, or insects that are in the same area as a yogi who has realized the meaning clear light get purified.

When Kyabje Song Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe were around, we received great benefit just being near such great lamas who, even to the ordinary view, were highly realized yogis. Because of their realizations, just being around them, we purified much negative karma. Therefore, this lady who came out of the crowd and shook hands with Song Rinpoche received great benefit; much of her negative karma was purified. It was a simple occurrence, but if you were to explain it in depth, the commentary would be huge! You would have to explain all Rinpoche's realizations, which would mean explaining the entire path to enlightenment.

Because Kyabje Song Rinpoche came to the West, many people had the opportunity of meeting the Mahayana and Vajrayana teachings and receiving initiation into the Lower Tantras and Highest Yoga Tantra. Rinpoche gave many initiations and teachings. In particular, apart from Gomo Tulku, Song Rinpoche was one of the few lamas

who gave initiation into and taught Chöd practice in the Gelug tradition. Lama requested him to give it at the Dharma Celebration in 1982, and from then on, the Gelug tradition of Chöd began in the West. Anyway, I'm just telling you some stories.

You can practice left-side conduct in many daily situations. I remember to do it when eating, but not at other times. However, if you make a plan, it is easy to remember. For example, when you begin eating, pick your fork or spoon up with your left hand and eat a few spoonfuls. When you pick up your bell and vajra, start with your left hand. When you begin some work, touch the object or begin the task with your left hand. This does not mean that you only ever use your left hand and leg and that your right hand and leg are paralyzed! It just means that you begin an activity with your left. If you watch, you will see some practitioners of Heruka or Vajrayogini do this. When you start walking, take the first step with your left foot. You can apply this to many circumstances in your daily life, and each time you do, it helps you remember emptiness.

Many benefits accrue from practicing the mother tantra samaya vow of left-side conduct. The commentary does not enumerate them; I made the following numbers up.

1. You will accumulate the merit needed to attain enlightenment more quickly. You will not need to spend countless eons completing this.
2. You will not need to practice many paths but will be able to integrate everything into one. The left side signifies the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness, which is what makes this path extremely profound and special.

3. You will be able to draw to yourself the mudras, or messenger dakinis, who will enable you to actualize the clear light and thus the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. To generate this path into which everything is integrated—the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness—you need to be one of the fortunate ones who can draw to themselves the special mudras, or messengers, because practicing with them makes the path much quicker. As well as physical mudras, or consorts, mind mudras exist. Mind mudras are ones you visualize during the secret and wisdom initiations, for example. Physical mudras are the mantra-born, field-born, or simultaneously-born mudras. Different commentaries may define these mudras in different ways. According to the *Lama Chöpa* commentary, mantra-born mudras are human beings who have realizations of the generation stage; field-born mudras have realizations of the completion stage up to and including the impure illusory body; and simultaneously-born mudras are female beings who have realized the actual clear light, the state of union, or full enlightenment.

4. The yoginis abiding in the special places, such as the twenty-four holy places, see from afar that you have a special yoga practice. They will come to meet you and will predict when you will attain enlightenment. Thus, the left-side conduct is highly admired to create the cause for Vajrayogini and the dakinis in the holy places to guide you.

5. It creates the cause to have the outer, inner, and great Kachö. The outer Tagpa Kachö is the outer pure land; this practice

helps you create the cause to be led there by Vajrayogini. The inner Kachö, or inner pure land, is the clear light, the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness. The great Kachö is enlightenment, the unification of the completely pure body and mind. If you are a highly realized practitioner, like Lama Yeshe or Song Rinpoche, then even if physically you are here, it is like being in the pure land. You have overcome the cycle of death and rebirth by realizing the meaning clear light—the inner pure land, the inner Kachö—and will become enlightened in this life. The outer Kachö is Vajrapani Institute, among the redwoods, so one benefit of left-side conduct is always being at Vajrapani Institute! Pabongka's commentary says that there is a small Vajrayogini pure land right above each of the twenty-four holy places.

## ELEVEN

# THE HAND OFFERING

The main practice of left-side conduct is the hand offering.<sup>5</sup> This commentary advises you to bless your food with the hand offering every time you eat. I noticed that when we used to offer tsog, Kyabje Song Rinpoche would bless it in both hands. He was probably doing this meditation.

By doing this practice, you will avoid many shortcomings and create much merit, resulting in happiness for yourself and others. If you eat with attachment, with every spoonful you take, you receive the vice of transgressing one of the secondary bodhisattva precepts. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said that the karma of transgressing a secondary bodhisattva precept is 100,000 times heavier than breaking a root pratimoksha vow. Kyabje Song Rinpoche mentioned that if somebody who has taken initiation does not bless the food before eating it, the karma is sixteen times heavier than a monastic breaking all four root pratimoksha precepts. Thus, by doing the hand offering, you avoid such heavy vice.

By doing this food yoga, you will not experience untimely death, ulcers, or the incurable phlegm disease in which hair grows in your throat. You will not be harmed by poison or receive pollution from the wrong livelihood of not being worthy of receiving offerings that

others give you with faith. Each time you eat, you will receive the extensive benefits of offering to the deity with the mind of guru yoga seeing the deity and the guru as being the same in nature. Doing the hand offering also creates the cause to attain the outer and inner Kachö.

First generate bodhicitta motivation. Then generate yourself as Chakrasamvara. Think of the food being between your two hands. Begin as you do for blessing the inner offering by dispelling the interferers. Recite OM KHANDAROHİ HUM HUM PEY and emanate wrathful Khandarohi from your heart to do this. Then purify the food into emptiness.

In the center of your right hand is a white HO, which transforms into an eight-spoked white wheel marked in the center with a white HO, which becomes Vairocana in nature. In the palm of your left hand there is a red HA, which transforms into a eight-petaled red lotus marked in the center with a red HA, which becomes Amitabha in nature. Between your two hands your wisdom of bliss and emptiness appears as the syllable AH, which transforms into an extensive skullcup that is white on the outside and red within. Inside this skullcup are the five meats and the five nectars. Above them, in the center, is a sun disc on top of which is a blue HRI, which becomes Akshobhya in essence.<sup>6</sup> Then recite HA HO HRI three times. This purifies the faults of color, smell, taste, and potential. All the bad color, smell, taste, and potential are destroyed, and the substances become nectar.

On the right side of the HRI is a white OM, on the left side a red AH, and in front a blue HUM. Light rays radiate from those three letters and hook the nectar of transcendental wisdom from the heart syllables of all the dakas and dakinis of the ten directions. This absorbs into the OM AH HUM. These three syllables melt, absorb into the skull

cup, and bless the substances as you recite OM AH HUM three times. The nectar is blessed and increases limitlessly.

Now the actual practice of the hand offering begins. Dip the ring finger your right hand into the inner offering and while reciting OM AH HUM, put a drop of the inner offering onto each of the five fingers and each nail of your left hand. Then put a drop in the palm of your hand, in the center of a five-petaled red lotus. Put the drops on the five fingers starting in front and going counter-clockwise. On your thumb is a moon seat and on each of the other four fingers and nails is a sun seat. On them visualize the Father's armor deities:

- On your thumb, white OM HA, essence of Vajrasattva
- On your index finger, yellow NA MA HE, essence of Vairochana
- On your middle finger, red SVAHA HU, essence of Padma-narteshvara (Padma Karpo, White Lotus)
- On your ring finger, black VAUSHAT HE,<sup>7</sup> essence of Shri Heruka
- On your little finger, orange HUM HUM HO, essence of Vajrasurya (Dorje Nyima, Vajra Sun)
- On your nails, green PEY HAM, essence of Parameshva (Tag Chog, Supreme Horse)

In the palm of your left hand imagine a red, five-petaled lotus. On it appear the six heroines of the Mother's armor:

- In the center, on the sun disc is red OM BAM, essence of Vajra Varahi (Dorje Pagmo)
- In the east (that is, in front of that), on a sun is blue HAM YOM, essence of Yamini (Shinjema)

- In the northeast, there is a moon disc with white HRIM MOM, essence of Mohini (Mong Tsema)
- In the north, on a sun disc is yellow HRIM HRIM, essence of Kshobini (Kyo Chema)
- In the west on a sun disc is green HUM HUM, essence of Trasini (Tag Chema)
- In the south on a sun disc is smoke-colored PEY PEY, essence of Chandika (Tsendika)

On the back of your hand, visualize the five Chakrasamvara deities—Chakrasamvara, Vajrayogini, and the deities of the body wheel, speech wheel, and mind wheel. Like a reflection in a mirror, they appear instantly. In addition, visualize the five element dakinis:

- The earth element of the hand is the dakini, Tung Chema
- The water element is So Chema
- The fire element is Gug Chema
- The wind element is Kargi Wongchugma
- The space element is the essence of Peme Tawa Chin

Flicking a drop of the inner offering with your right hand, now offer the inner offering:

1. To the armor deities as you say the mantra OM AH HUM, OM OM HA, NA MA HE, SVAHA HU, VAUSHAT HE, HUM HUM HO, PEY HAM, OM BAM, HAM YOM, HRIM MOM, HRIM HRIM, HUM HUM, PEY PEY, HUM HUM PEY, OM AH HUM. The mantra syllables correspond to the armor deities. Offer to each deity as you say



his or her syllables;

2. To the assembly of deities of the five Chakrasamvara deities, as you say the mantra OM AH HUM, OM HUM BAM, RIM RIM LIM LIM, KAM KHAM GAM GHAM NGAM, TSAM TSHAM DZAM DZHAM NYAM, TAM THAM DAM DHAM NAM, TAM THAM DAM DHAM NAM, PAM PHAM BAM BHAM, YAM RAM LAM VAM, SHAM SHAM SAM HAM HUM HUM PEY, OM AH HUM. Think that your hand becomes essence of the five Chakrasamvara deities, who embody all the dakas and dakinis. Generate strong faith that they are the actual deities; and
3. To the five element dakinis, who are included in the five Chakrasamvara deities.

Now offer the liquid part of your meal:

1. To the armor deities on your left hand while you recite the same mantra as you did when you offered the inner offering and the Eight-line Praises to Heruka Father and Mother. Offer to the deities in the order you visualized them—first those on the top of the fingers, then those on the fingernails, and finally the deities in the palm. Offer clockwise to the Father's armor deities and counter-clockwise to the Mother's armor deities. Offer counter-clockwise to the direction deities and clockwise to the corner deities;
2. To the assembly of deities of the five Chakrasamvara deities as you recite the same mantra as above and the Eight-line Praises; and
3. To the five element dakinis, who are included in the deities of the three wheels.

As you offer to all these deities, put a little liquid from your meal in your palm.

Then offer the solid portion of your food:

1. To the armor deities while reciting the mantra and Eight-line Praises as before;
2. To the assembly of deities of the five Chakrasamvara deities while reciting OM AH HUM, OM HUM BAM RIM RIM LIM LIM...OM AH HUM (as above) and the Eight-line Praises; and
3. To the five element dakinis, who are included in the deities of the three wheels.

As you offer to each, put a little of the solid food in the palm of your hand.

Then with the ring finger and thumb of your right hand, offer the inner offering, first to the armor deities while you recite their mantra and then to the five Chakrasamvara deities while reciting their mantras.

Offer the eight offerings while reciting OM ARGHAM PRATITSA SVAHA...OM AH VAJRA SHABDA AH HUM SVAHA. I don't know why, but when you make the light offering in the Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini practices, you say DIPE instead of ALOKE.

Offer the five sense objects—the mirror (OM VAJRA ADASHAY HUM), cymbals (use the same mantra, substituting WINI for ADASHAY), scent (GANDHE), food (RASA), divine dress (SPARSHAY)—and the sixth offering, the triangle shape, chö-jung (OM VAJRA DHARME HUM). At the conclusion of these offerings, again recite the Eight-line Praises.

While making all these offerings, remember that all the deities are your guru in essence. In that way, it becomes a guru yoga practice. Since the guru is the highest object with which you create merit, you will accumulate great merit in this way.

While saying the Praises, make strong prayers. Even if you cannot do this each time you recite the Praises, do it at least the first time or the last. As discussed before, you receive vast benefit from reciting the Praises, and those around you will benefit from your becoming a Heruka practitioner.

Then recite the Vajrasattva mantra and ask for the deities' patience for any mistakes you may have made in the practice, such as not having found the proper offerings, not having understood well how to make them, not having the capacity, and so forth. Do the same prayer that is usually found at the end of sadhanas:

"Whatever I have done incorrectly because of not finding the proper materials, not fully knowing, or lack of ability, please be patient with all of these. Any additions and omissions, whatever part of the ritual that went wrong, and whatever else I forgot, please be patient with this, too."

Then request,

"Oceans of dakas and dakinis abiding in the twenty-four places of our world, please spontaneously accomplish the two works without delay. Please guide us, and give us outer, inner and secret help.

"By the force of these praises and requests made to you,

may all disease, poverty, fighting and quarrels be calmed. May the Dharma and all auspiciousness increase throughout the worlds and directions where I and all others dwell.”

Then, with your left thumb and ring finger, touch your heart, neck, and crown while saying HUM AH OM. Do the lotus turning mudra and put your left hand on your head. All the deities you had imagined there now enter through your crown, and by absorbing into your heart, they bless and inspire you. While visualizing this, recite OM YOGA SHUDDAH SARVA DHARMA YOGA SHUDDHO HAM.

If you like, you can put some of the food offered in your palm onto your body. This becomes the best protection. If you are ill or have pain somewhere, put it there.

If you like, after making this offering, you can put part of the food from your palm into another container and save it as a blessed relic. Keeping it as an object for blessing helps you to receive requisites such as food, clothing, and bedding without effort. Gyalwa Ensapa and his disciples mentioned the benefits of doing this.

Then, from the HUM at your heart, light rays emanate and invoke all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions in the form of the sixty-two deities of Heruka, and they absorb into your body. Recite OM SAMAYA SHUDDAH SARVA DHARMA SAMAYA SHUDDHO HAM. Your tongue becomes a HUM, which transforms into a white three-pronged vajra the size of a barley grain. This is what the text says, but perhaps it means the usual visualization, that there's a small HUM on the tip of your tongue. Light rays radiate from it, and you take in the essence of the food, like drinking Coca-Cola through a straw. All the deities abiding within you are pleased by the nectar, experience

uncontaminated great bliss, and are satisfied. Then eat your meal, starting with your left hand. Afterwards, you can switch to your right if you want.

After finishing your meal, recite whatever dedication you like. Dedicate all the merits accumulated in the past, present, and future by the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, yourself, and other sentient beings for all virtuous goals. Especially think of all the people with whom you come in contact, those who rely on you, people you promised to pray for, and all the sentient beings who created negative karma, suffered or even died for this food.

If you eat meat, dedicate strongly that the animal or animals from which it came immediately be free from the lower realms and all suffering in the intermediate stage. Praying like this does have power, and for that reason, I explain it. Sometimes when you pray for those around you, for those who see, hear, or think of you, or for people who are sick or who have severe problems, they do recover, and their problem is resolved. One verse I recommend is:

“May we and those around us, in all future lives, never be separated from the Three Jewels, continuously make offerings to the Three Jewels, and receive the blessings and inspiration of the Three Jewels.”

Requesting the blessing and inspiration of the Three Jewels is for the purpose of generating within your mind all the realizations of the path from guru devotion up to enlightenment. Transforming your mind into the path is real blessing.



## TWELVE

### DEDICATION

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by myself, Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and all other sentient beings, may I, who exists but is empty, attain Heruka’s enlightenment, which exists but is empty, and lead all sentient beings, who exist but are empty, to enlightenment, which exists but is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but is empty.

“Due to all these merits may I quickly enlighten all sentient beings. In order to follow the excellent examples set by the wisdom of the bodhisattva Manjushri and the always sublime Samantabhadra, I dedicate all virtues to their peerless ideals.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits created by myself, Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and all other sentient beings, may the complete teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa, the unified path of sutra and tantra, be actualized without delay in my mind, in the minds of my family members and all the students and benefactors of the FPMT, and especially in the minds of all those who have dedicated their lives to benefit others and serve the teachings of the Buddha through this organization. May they immediately actualize, without even a second’s delay, the entire path to enlightenment that Lama Tsong Khapa realized and taught.

“May all the Dharma projects and activities of all FPMT centers be successful immediately. May all our meditation centers and practitioners become like wish-fulfilling gems for all sentient beings by immediately pacifying their physical and mental suffering and spreading the teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings, and may they receive all necessary conditions to be able to do so. May all the Dharma projects to benefit others, including the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be immediately successful and of greatest benefit to all sentient beings. May we be able to spread the teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings and lead them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.”



## NOTES

1. Also called *Songs of Experience* or *Lines of Experience*. An English translation has been published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
2. Here, “self” means self-existence, or inherent existence.
3. Here, “the label M” does not refer to the name or the sound of the letter “M, but to the object labeled—the merely labeled M.
4. An important distinction exists between saying “see X as an illusion” or “as like an illusion” and “see X is an illusion.” All phenomena are like an illusion in that they do not exist in the way they appear, but they are not illusions; that is, they are not totally non-existent. Although the masters encourage us to see everything as illusion, they do not say to see everything is illusion, because that would be falling into the extreme of nihilism.
5. This teaching on the hand offering was given at Tushita Retreat Centre, Dharamsala, India, in 1990. Rinpoche translated the text, adding a little commentary where needed. Although she was not present at these teachings, the editor reworked the transcript and checked unclear points with Rinpoche. The colophon of the text reads, “I have written how to do this hand offering for my daily practice. Use this recitation of the hand offering, adorned by the tradition of Lama Rinpoche (Pabongka Rinpoche) and practice it continuously. It was written at the supreme holy place of Heruka, Rewahading, by the incarnated yogi, Dharma Vajra, whose three doors are undisciplined.”
6. When seeing syllables as the essence of a deity, visualize the syllables, not the deity, thinking that in nature, or essence, they are the deity.
7. The way Tibetans pronounce VAUSHAT HE is “bo-ka-ta hey.”

## RESOURCES

If you have received the Heruka Body Mandala initiation in the Ghantapa tradition and would like a copy of the sadhana, tsog, and Lati Rinpoche's commentary, please contact:

Ang Hwee Lay, [hlang@singnet.com.sg](mailto:hlang@singnet.com.sg)

Blk 227C, Compassvale Drive, #12-234, Singapore 543227, or

Dharma Friendship Foundation

Box 30011, Seattle, WA 98103, USA

The cost is US\$15, which includes domestic postage. If you would like it sent internationally, please include more for postage and indicate whether you want it sent by sea or air. The book is complimentary for monks and nuns, although a donation for postage would be helpful.

# THE LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

The LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE (LYWA) is the collected works of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. The ARCHIVE was founded in 1996 by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, its spiritual director, to make available in various ways the teachings it contains. Distribution of free booklets of edited teachings is one of the ways.

Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970. Since then, their teachings have been recorded and transcribed. At present the LYWA contains about 6,000 cassette tapes and approximately 40,000 pages of transcribed teachings on computer disk. Many tapes by Lama Zopa Rinpoche remain to be transcribed. As Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of tapes in the ARCHIVE increases accordingly. Most of the transcripts have been neither checked nor edited.

Here at the LYWA we are making every effort to organize the transcription of that which has not yet been transcribed, to edit that which has not yet been edited, and generally to do the many other tasks detailed below. In all this, we need your help. Please contact us for more information.

THE LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

PO Box 356

Weston, MA 02493, USA

Telephone (781) 899-9587

email [nribush@cs.com](mailto:nribush@cs.com)

[www.LamaYeshe.com](http://www.LamaYeshe.com)

# THE ARCHIVE TRUST

The work of the LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE falls into two categories: archiving and dissemination.

*ARCHIVING* requires managing the audiotapes of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche that have already been collected, collecting tapes of teachings given but not yet sent to the ARCHIVE, and collecting tapes of Lama Zopa's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. Tapes are then catalogued and stored safely while being kept accessible for further work.

We organize the transcription of tapes, add the transcripts to the already existent database of teachings, manage this database, have transcripts checked, and make transcripts available to editors or others doing research on or practicing these teachings.

Other archiving activities include working with videotapes and photographs of the Lamas and investigating the latest means of preserving ARCHIVE materials.

*DISSEMINATION* involves making the Lamas' teachings available directly or indirectly through various avenues such as booklets for free distribution, regular books for the trade, lightly edited transcripts, floppy disks, audio- and videotapes, and articles in *Mandala* and other magazines, and on the LYWA Web site, [www.LamaYeshe.com](http://www.LamaYeshe.com). Irrespective of the method we choose, the teachings require a significant amount of work to prepare them for distribution.

This is just a summary of what we do. The ARCHIVE was established with virtually no seed funding and has developed solely through the kindness of many people, some of whom we have mentioned at the front of this booklet.

Our further development similarly depends upon the generosity of those who see the benefit and necessity of this work, and we would be extremely grateful for your help.

THE ARCHIVE TRUST has been established to fund the above activities and we hereby appeal to you for your kind support. If you would like to make a contribution to help us with any of the above tasks or to sponsor booklets for free distribution, please contact us at the address above.

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The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) is an international organization of Buddhist meditation, study and retreat centers, both urban and rural, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 120 FPMT activities in twenty-five countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general, and the Tibetan Gelug tradition, founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsong Khapa, in particular, for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Every two months, the Foundation publishes a magazine, *Mandala*, from its international office in the United States of America. For a sample issue of the magazine or for more information about the organization, please contact:

FPMT

PO Box 800

Soquel, CA 95073, USA

Telephone (831) 476-8435; fax (831) 476-4823

email [fpmt@compuserve.com](mailto:fpmt@compuserve.com)

or check out our Web site at [www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org)

Our Web site also offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition; details of the FPMT's educational programs; a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world and in your area; back issues of *Mandala*; and links to FPMT centers on the web, where you will find details of their programs, and to other interesting Buddhist and Tibetan home pages.





Lama Zopa Rinpoche  
*Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat*

Edited by Ailsa Cameron and Nicholas Ribush

This book is an edited transcript of Rinpoche's teachings during the Vajrasattva retreat at Land of Medicine Buddha, California, February through April, 1999. It contains explanations of the various practices done during the retreat, such as Vajrasattva purification, prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas, Lama Chöpa, making light offerings, liberating animals and much, much more. There are also many weekend public lectures covering general topics such as compassion and emptiness. The appendices detail several of the practices taught, for example, the short Vajrasattva sadhana, light offerings, liberating animals and making charity of water to Dzambhala and the pretas.

It is essential reading for all Lama Zopa Rinpoche's students, especially retreat leaders and FPMT center spiritual program coordinators, and serious Dharma students everywhere.

704 pp., detailed table of contents, 7 appendices

6" x 9" paperback

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Available from the LYWA, Wisdom Publications (Boston), Wisdom Books (London), Mandala Books (Melbourne), Snow Lion Publications (USA) and FPMT centers everywhere. Discount for bookstores. Free for members of the International Mahayana Institute.

OTHER TEACHINGS OF  
LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE  
CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY WISDOM PUBLICATIONS

*Wisdom Energy*, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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*The Door to Satisfaction*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*The Tantric Path of Purification*, by Lama Yeshe

*The Bliss of Inner Fire*, by Lama Yeshe

A number of transcripts by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa are also available. For more information about these transcripts or the books mentioned above, see the Wisdom Web site ([www.wisdompubs.org](http://www.wisdompubs.org)) or contact Wisdom directly at 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144, USA, or Wisdom distributors such as Snow Lion Publications (USA), Wisdom Books (England), or Mandala Books (Australia).

VIDEOS OF LAMA YESHE

Available in both PAL and NTSC formats.

*Introduction to Tantra*: 2 tapes, US\$40

*The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*: 2 tapes, US\$40

*Offering Tsok to Heruka Vajrasattva*: 3 tapes, US\$50

Shipping and handling extra. Available from LYWA, Mandala Books, Wisdom Books, or Meridian Trust (London). Contact LYWA for more details or see our Web site, [www.LamaYeshe.com](http://www.LamaYeshe.com)



# WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA TEACHINGS

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this show you how to put the teachings into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings or the names of your teachers is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes such as propping up wobbly tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped in cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in the rubbish but burned in a special way. Briefly: do not incinerate such materials with other trash, but alone, and as they burn, recite the mantra OM AH HUM. As the smoke rises, visualize that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six samsaric realms, purifying their minds; alleviating their suffering, and bringing them all happiness, up to and including enlightenment. Some people might find this practice a bit unusual, but it is given according to tradition. Thank you very much.

## DEDICATION

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may every thing needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have only love and compassion for all beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

## LAMA THUBTEN ZOPA RINPOCHE

Rinpoche was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1946. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thami home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction* (Wisdom Publications). At the age of ten, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found on the FPMT Web site, [www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org). Rinpoche's other published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems*, and a number of transcripts and practice booklets (available from Wisdom Publications at [www.wisdompubs.org](http://www.wisdompubs.org)).

VENERABLE THUBTEN CHODRON, a graduate of UCLA, has studied and practiced Tibetan Buddhism under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Zopa Rinpoche, Serkong Rinpoche and other Tibetan masters for many years in India and Nepal. Ordained as a Buddhist nun in 1977, she is resident teacher at Dharma Friendship Foundation in Seattle, WA, and teaches Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and meditation worldwide. Her books include *Open Heart, Clear Mind*; *Taming the Monkey Mind*; *Blossoms of the Dharma: Living as a Buddhist Nun*; and *What Color Is Your Mind?*