

TEACHINGS ON CHÖD



## TEACHINGS ON CHÖD

#1 - Today you are going to receive Chöd empowerment. Chöd empowerment is something that is going to help on getting rid of all negativities.

You have received Tara empowerment.

Generally people have the tendency of wanting to be choosy about which Tara empowerment, for example; we talk in terms of white, green and all the rest of it. That is OK, but today when we talk about Chöd, the core of this teaching is nothing else but Tara. Again, we came to the same thing we were talking about Tara, just as the monks when they perform, one item (the mask) will be an aspect of the performance and as soon as the performance is finished they will take off the mask, put another set of costumes and masks. So just like that when you receive Tara empowerment (whether be white or green) it is just a matter of changing costumes. The essence, in the case of the monk's dances, is the one that is doing all the enacting, one who is behind the masks; the mask changes but the essence doesn't change. The same is when you receive teachings – sometimes you put on the Tara mask sometime is white, sometime is green ... other times you'll be putting on Machig Labdröm mask and that is what we will be doing. In the case of the teaching the essence is the Buddha nature. That doesn't change, all other aspects we put on, the masks, those do change. So today it will be Machig Labchi Drolma.

Now in giving you the empowerment, the empowerment itself is the Dakini's secret words and this is what the text of the Chöd practice is all about. It is profound, it is secret, it is an empowerment, which is the empowerment of all conceivable forms of Chöd, and once you have received this you have received the empowerment of all forms of Chöd practice. In order that the disciple may have a firm rooted faith and belief in this teaching I am going to give a brief of background of Chöd empowerment.

In giving you this empowerment, first of all the location is the state of Dharmadhatu. In talking about the state of Dharmadatu, in order that we can relate better to it, we refer to it as the palace of the state of Dharmadatu and that is the location and who resides in this location it is Samantabhadri. And that is who, so therefore today the mask that we put on ourselves starts with Samantabhadri. Now you can call her the Samantabhadri or you can call her Vajravarahi or you can call her Vajrayogini, you can still call her simply Tara. These are all different names, different masks, but the essence is the state of emptiness, the essence is the Dharmadhatu, and this is what we'll be talking about. Now when we talk about the palace or Dharma state of Dharmadatu, it is something beyond our conception, it is the miraculously generated state. There can be many different ways - body, speech and mind manifestations there may be any one of these or a combination of these, so the location and the deity are those.

Now imagine this - this palace of the state of Dharmadatu, once you have visualized that, in the middle of it is the Prajnaparamita. Prajnaparamita is surrounded by a host of deities. At first we have the location, the palace of the state of Dharmadatu, in that state is Samantabhadri and from there a light emanates and that creates or manifests itself into Prajnaparamita. The Prajnaparamita is also in a state of emptiness, but we refer to it as a wonderful, miraculous palace. From Prajnaparamita manifests Khros ma nag mo, Khros ma nag mo literally meaning the feminine wrathful deity, so we have this from one to the other, like those Russian made dolls, all the state leaders hidden one inside the other. There is a whole succession of deities coming.

Now from the all conquering the wrathful feminine deity Khros ma nag mo she manifests herself as dakini Selema, yet again we take another and it comes Selema. She has taken 170 different lives doing work for the benefit of all sentient beings in different forms and shapes. One of these 107 lives was the Machig Labchi Drolma.

Now Machig Labchi Drolma took two lives simultaneously, she reincarnated as Anphrotise princess who was married to King Songtsen Gampo and also of one of the indigenous Tibetan borne consort. These two - the reincarnation of both emperor princess as well as the Tibetan consort when they passed away both of them reincarnated as Dakini Yeshe Tsogyel. Machig Labchi Drolma had three other sisters who also were reincarnations of Dakini Selema. So who was Machig Labchi Drolma? What were the essences – what kind of outer, inner, secret and most secret? Outer was the Tara, inner essence was Prajnaparamita, the secret aspect is Vajravarahi and the inner most secret aspect is Khros ma nag mo or wrathful black feminine deity.

During the time of Buddha Sakyamuni Machig Labchi Drolma manifested herself as Ganga Devi and she was a Bodhisattva.

Then you might want to ask about what is the historical basis of Machig Labchi Drolma. We base that on the historical Buddha Sakyamuni's own words, it is written in the Sutra, literally translated as a kind of purifying Sutra. In it Lord Sakyamuni has written - in the degenerated age Machig Labchi Drolma will come as emanation of the enlightenment and she will be born in a place called Labchi, that is the name of the place in Tibet. Her own personal name would be Drolma or Tara <sup>1</sup>.

Buddha Sakyamuni said that her name would be Drolma and have the complete understanding of both the generation stage as well as the completion stage of Buddha's practice. She will be wandering from village to village, hamlet to hamlet, for all kinds of wilderness and practice, she would go and visit every form of cemetery and practice and her teaching will flower everywhere.

Now this degenerated age is this current time and age. Not only this prophesy was written in the Sutra already mentioned but again Buddha Sakyamuni has recapitulated all his prophesy in yet another Sutra called Manjushri Root Sutra. In this he has clearly mentioned that during the degenerated age the reincarnation, or manifestation, of Prajnaparamita would be born and she would be carrying out the Buddha activities. To whomsoever these teachings are imparted they will reach the ultimate Buddha state.

There is also another prophesy made by Guru Padmasambhava and this particular prophesy is in this text called "Guru Padmasambhava's general prophesy". In it Guru Padmasambhava has clearly written that there will come in a "called and uncalled girl"<sup>2</sup> will come who is expert in cutting through ego and conceptual thoughts and appearances and she will be the reincarnation of Dakini Yeshe Tsogyel Her name will be Labchi Drolma or Machig Labdrön. She, among a countless number of sentient beings have shown the path and not only shown but because of her teachings 16 outstanding disciples have reached enlightenment.

Machig Labchi Drolma herself has said that all the huge range of Buddha Sakyamuni's teachings, every single conceivable teaching has been translated into the Tibetan script, Tibetan language, and they were brought to Tibet and they were taught to Tibetan people. So the origin of Tibetan Buddhism is India, but Machig Labchi Drolma said herself that

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<sup>1</sup> When you put these two together – Lab, the name of the place and Drolma, the Tara and Machig that is a kind of title meaning the mother gives – the mother Tara who was born in Lab.

<sup>2</sup> This (girl) is Rinpoche's word.

"mine is the only Dharma teaching that originated in Tibet and flourished in India". It became so because when the name and the fame reached all parts of India and neighboring countries three "speedy" humans were sent<sup>3</sup> to Tibet.

So three of them were sent to Tibet to bring to India Machig Labchi Drolma's teachings; those were sent from Bodhgaya and these teaching were taken and also teachings like the Chöd.

Dealing with the former lives of Machig Labchi Drolma in the main the Root Text here there is a mention of 4 former lives. Prajnaparamita would certainly be one. Tara is a manifestation of Prajnaparamita and Machig Labchi Drolma is a manifestation of Tara. So whether you are talking of Machig Labchi Drolma or Prajnaparamita or Tara the essence is the same, do we carve in stone and say – yes this is absolute? Well, you don't have to do it; the fact of the matter is that Machig Labchi Drolma is an emanation of Prajnaparamita or Tara that is what matters.

Machig Labchi Drolma, the real important thing is what Machig Labchi Drolma represents, her teachings, her essence, which being the Prajnaparamita and her firm belief in that, that is very important. Otherwise, just as it is important for one to have a firm belief in the essence, it is also very important to have a positive attitude and belief and faith in the lamas that you come across, the geshe, gnakpas, lay practitioners, nuns ... Once you receive a teaching it is very, very important to have a positive attitude. Never, ever try to analyze, try to dissect and bisect these people by whom you received teaching because if you did all these, then you are going to see all kinds of negative things. In the US probably in the last couple of month there must've been at least 100 of lamas or monks that come to impart teachings, if you try to look at them in the wrong light you are going to see all kinds of negative things. Even His Holiness Karmapa, when he was alive, some of the monks didn't see him right at all. Not that was anything wrong with Karmapa but it is all to do with one's own perceptions. There should never be any negative attitude, if you do see negative things in the case of Machig Labchi Drolma, well that is because you don't see it right. When Machig Labchi Drolma was alive there were a lot of negative things said about her, for example – she had many children, she started wandering from place to place and did not particularly have a constant partner, so there were a lot of backbiting. People started saying a lot of bad things about Machig Labchi Drolma and also of the 84 Mahasiddhas (people who performed miracles, enlightened beings) a lot of bad things were said about those people too. So what really is important is to have a firm belief on the origin and the essence of Machig Labchi Drolma and practice her teachings.

What I am trying to tell you is that in Tantric practice there is not such a thing as impure. There is not impurity, in practicing Tantrayana one has to have this pure perception. When you do Bodhichita generation the motivation has to be pure and the object of worship and the offerings, whoever they are Buddha's and Bodhisattvas, the ordained Sangha, the gnakpas. Irrespective of one being celibate or not all have to be treated as pure, all mother sentient beings, all of them must be treated as sentient beings. In Tantric practice there is not a single impure sentient being. Your perception should be free from attachment and free from hatred, there should be no thought of purity and impurity. They are just two sides of the same thing; which way you want to turn up or down it is entirely up to you. The practitioners has the choice, so when practicing Tantric teaching one has to flip the right

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<sup>3</sup> When you practice certain aspects you kind specialize in different miraculous practices. One of which would be to do certain deity propitiation and when you master that, then you don't need a car because you become very speedy "Gonzalez".

side up and the wrong side down, and that is always having a pure perception.

# - Tibetan word Chöd is in Sanskrit Dharma, sometime you may just think about it, what is Chöd? All Chöd or Dharma really means is three very catchy and short Tibetan words first one is Te means to hear, the second one Som is to contemplate and the third is Gom is to meditate. That is all there is to it, that is Chöd. Hear the teachings, contemplate and once you know in which direction to go, meditate. The 84,000 heaps of all Buddha Sakyamuni's teachings are to do with kind of detaching, cutting yourselves away from attachment and hatred, that is bottom line. There is nothing else in the 84000 heaps other than those two things. So why am I talking about this – just going on and on? Because we are dealing with Chöd practice. Chöd practice is to do with detaching oneself, reduction or elimination of ego or attachment, and (literally translated) the basis of all Tathagatas, referring to one's Buddha nature or the true nature of one's mind as somehow like a very pristine and clean mirror. Leave it clean do not pollute it. From Samsara to Nirvana a practitioner should have a pure perception. Don't let this mirror to be clouded, I have said this many, many times, even if you see an end, treat that end as would your pure perception the true nature of mind, the basis of all Tathagatas. Once you have your pure perception, once you train your mind in that direction, then everything you see is going to be absolutely wonderful, it will be the huge expanse of blue sky. That is getting pretty close to the true nature of mind, in other words not being partial to anybody. When you for example have so much devotion to one particular lama or master and cling onto that, that is attachment, we don't want that. On the other hand if you keep on saying negative things about the people from whom you have received teaching that has to do with hatred. So we don't want to be falling to either of this two edges, crevices if you like. When you have a pure perception, where everything is pure not focusing on anybody's negative aspects, then you reach a certain level of mind where everything becomes very wonderful. In Chöd practice we summon all the ghosts and demons and enemies and say - come and devour me I am here for you to feast on. Why do we say that? Because we are trying to eliminate or reduce ego and attachment. So all these things tie in this particular practice that is the secret Chöd practice.

Now the actual Chöd lineage or the origin of Chöd - where does Chöd practice tie in? One lineage is of the Sutrayana lineage, one is Tantrayana lineage and there is a third lineage that is a combination of both (Sutrayana and Tantrayana). As far as the Sutrayana lineage is concerned it originates, of course, in Buddha Sakyamuni, from Buddha Sakyamuni to Manjushri, Manjushri to Nagarjuna, Nagarjuna to Aryadeva, Aryadeva to Dampa Sangye, Dampa Sangye to Kyo Sakya Yeshe and from Kyo Sakya Yeshe to Machig Labchi Drolma. That is the Sutrayana lineage. The Tantric lineage of Chöd practice originated from Prajnaparamita, Prajnaparamita being the Dharmakaya estate of Buddhahood.

Prajnaparamita passed this teaching to Vajrayogini, which is the Samboghakaya state of Buddhahood. Vajrayogini passed it down to Tara, Tara being the reincarnated form or Nirmanakaya state of Buddhahood; Tara passed the teachings to Machig Labchi Drolma. Now the combination of Sutrayana and Tantrayana lineage is first Manjushri, Manjushri passed down to Tara, Tara passed down to Dakini Sukhasiddhi, Dakini Sukhasiddhi to Aryadeva, Aryadeva to Dampa Sangye, Dampa Sangye to Sönam Lama, Sönam Lama passed down to Machig Labchi Drolma. Machig Labchi Drolma passed down her teachings to three of her sons. She did so in different categories – first she passed down to her son Gyalwa Döndrup mainly the teaching of the Sutrayana lineage. To the second son Thönyon Samdrup the Chöd practice of the Tantrayana lineage and to the third son Khugom Chöseng he passed down the teachings from Sutrayana and Tantrayana lineages. From those sons it was passed to many, many disciples and there were many enlightened

beings with experiential understanding. And thanks to Machig Labchi Drolma efforts and thanks to her sons who passed down her teaching now we have this Chöd practice - the Great Mahamudra Chöd practice, which is kind of, spread everywhere. And this particular empowerment is what we call a Torma based empowerment.

So if it is a Torma<sup>4</sup> based empowerment and the lineage is Khugom Chöseng and so and so, all these different Tibetan names and if anyone needs it I help to get them down later on. So all these different names and the last here would be Karmapa Rangjung Dorge. That would be the third Karmapa.

Coming down in an unbroken lineage I myself have received this particular empowerment from many wonderful masters from Karma Kagyu and many others. You have an unbroken lineage.

This particular Chöd teaching came to Machig Labchi Drolma. It is kind of impure vision that this teaching has come to her, what it does is that it turns negative into positive to the extent that enemies are converted or turned around as friends; inauspicious things are turned into auspicious, so it is that profound and that sublime.

Machig Labchi Drolma said these things to her sons - listen to you mother sons; no impediments will ever come if you give away the sick and the dying to the demons you can be sure that there is not going to be sickness because you don't have anything to be sick. This needs to be paraphrased – sometimes if we have a luggage and put it in a locker for a couple of coins, we leave the luggage in other peoples custody. If you have extra things you can not avail yourself to either look after or take care of, put them in the custody of your enemies, then there is nothing to fear, fear or being stolen or fear of being mugged or whatever. If you let everything go then there would not be any desire. These are my pith instructions.

She went further to tell her sons, really the message is for people like ourselves, - instead of saying save it, protect it you can keep on saying a 100 times save it, save it ... protect it, protect it ... Keep on having a cling to this. This is just futile and useless instead you should say just once - have it, take it; it is much better. She said if you can transform your body into material sustenance, this is by far greater a protection than wearing all kind of protective chakras. <sup>5</sup> So here Machig Labchi Drolma is saying - it is much better if you really need the best form of protection, chakra, then offer your body to all those out there and this is the best protection.

The idea of Chöd, the core teaching is detachment, now when we talk about detachment it is very important not to focus in "I", "me" and "mine". When we talk about Bodhichita we talk about benefiting sentient beings, benefiting others. It is the same thing, again when there is no strong "I" or when there is not strong clinging onto "I", "me" and "mine". It is only then that we can focus on others, so the real core teaching of Chöd is detachment.

In it Machig Labchi Drolma again says how important this practice is, she says the method of accumulating merits by the Kusali <sup>6</sup>. People who simply do not have anything to offer to others resort to this particular method of accumulating merits by mentally offering themselves to others. Machig Labchi Drolma says - this particular method is unsurpassed by

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<sup>4</sup> Torma is sometimes translated as ritual cake, in this case is not a cake at all, it is not edible. It is in the form of one of the ritual cake shape but is the Buddha pure land, it is the basis where the particular deity is going to come and reside in and then the empowerment is given.

<sup>5</sup> By that I mean we have all kind of protective chakras beautifully encased in brocade and then kind of flashily wear them and tell everybody how I am properly protected.

<sup>6</sup> Kusali refers to "have not", this name is sometimes used instead of Chöd

any other form of accumulating merits. The actual practice of transforming your body in the white distribution and red distribution <sup>7</sup>. So this practice of white offering and red offering, unkind of meshed by any form of banquets. When you give away the various heaps of body parts, flesh and blood to all the elementary spirits, demons and ghosts out there. That is kind of unmatched by any kind of practice to eliminate obstacles and the retreat places, she says, where one practices where there is nothing it could be a simple cave; this is better than any form of monastery. As for the hosts of nuns and monks who come there to say prayers there are not better hosts than the demons and elementary spirits and all those we perceive as aversions.

Finally Machig Labchi Drolma said - the view, the primordially pure that is totally boundless, infinite that is the tower or the view of Chöd practice. That view is kind unmeshed by any form of teachings and the teachings of Chöd practice are better than any form of pith-instructions that one can ever receive. These are the remarks of Machig Labchi Drolma.

Here it says the view primordially pure, when we talk about primordially pure nature we are talking about the true nature of mind, when we understand the true nature of mind, true nature of mind is free of conceptual thoughts, it has no clinging, it has no grasping. That state of mind is free from clinging or grasping and when one is free from clinging and grasping this is the state of Buddhahood.

Then the true nature of mind, most people have the tendency of looking outward and then viewing all phenomena, going to the movies will be an example, entertaining oneself by focusing all the senses outwardly. In Buddhist practice we should focus all the senses inwardly. The real entertainment is within one's mind not outwardly, but focus inwardly and then be entertained. When you look inwardly, when you see all the conceptual thoughts coming, when you recognize conceptual thoughts as conceptual thoughts and when you are able to train your mind to the extent that as soon as the conceptual thoughts are recognized they dissipate. When that estate of mind is reached then there is stability that translates into kind of the state of purity, the state of primordially pure that we talked before. When one reaches this state one is able to help other beings.

Aryadeva has also said a great deal about Chöd practice. Now we have this concept of the gods above, the nagas below and all kinds of other beings; by practicing Chöd one is able to get rid of all these conceptual thoughts. This notion of having devas or gods above, because of the experiential understanding of Chöd, detaching oneself from clinging and grasping, one is able to eliminate the idea of having something like devas or gods above and this idea of nagas down below. Literally it says - subjugate them just by your sheer presence or aura. What it is basically saying is that with this kind of understanding then all these are conceptual thoughts and because one has reached beyond these conceptual thoughts one is able to do whatever we want the nagas, for example, to do for oneself. The devas, if you want, can be, instead of the aversion, the beings who would be enhancing your practice of kind of carrying out the Buddha activities, that are for the benefit of others and one will be able to bring all of these different realms within ones *fault* and dictate to them the things that must be done for the benefit of others. All the lamas, deities, Yidams, Dakinis, Dharmapalas will treat the practitioner as their Dharma sons. Also because one is able to cross the barriers set up by tangible obstacles, tangible demons, then no perceptions, no

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<sup>7</sup> White is when the body is turned into nectar and offering to all the Buddha's and Bodhisattvas, deities and other beings, that is referred as white offering. Red offering is referred to when you actually visualize blood, bones and flesh and make an offering to all sentient beings.

conceptual thoughts will be a hindrance towards practice. There will be no harms coming to the practitioner from intangible demons and likewise there are so many benefits too.

Now the profound heart essence teaching in this it is written, this practice which being the intention of the victorious ones, referring to enlightened beings, whoever practices this, the benefits derived from it, towards the Path to enlightenment, would be tremendous, that is what it says.

This wonderful primordially pure, kind of boundless subduing and bringing friends to enhance our own practice bringing one in one's fault, the devas, the nagas, the humans. This special kind of power that one attains originates from the primordially pure essence of nature referred to as Mahamudra, referred also as the Great Perfection. But what we really are talking about is just, as Jigten Sumgon said, it is the true nature of mind. When the mind is free from conceptual thoughts and free from attachment, that which is in every living being, if it were to be seen might be very small in stature but all pervading and all powerful. There is nothing outside of ourselves that is doing all these miraculous things that is all powerful, it is within all of us.

What I am saying is that I am merely pointing my finger towards the right direction and directing your attention to the true nature of mind, free from conceptual thoughts etc. But if you just leave it there and say that's it; well that is not it, you have to put them into practice. The way to go into putting them into practice, probably the best example would be if you would read line by line the history of Milarepa what he did and what he achieved, how he went about practicing these teachings, that would very, very good.

You may say – I am not Milarepa, sure, you may not be Milarepa but my question would be – is there a difference in Milarepa's true nature of mind and your true nature of mind? Is there a difference between Milarepa's Buddha seed and your Buddha seed? The seed that is the basis of all Tathagatas? There is none whatsoever. All living beings in the six realms of existence, their Buddha seed and the Buddha seeds of all the glorious ones is there any difference? None, it is the same. Is there difference in the essence of the water in the ocean, the tributaries and the rain? None, the H<sub>2</sub>O is the same.

# 2 - The thing to do is trying to overcome the emotional afflictions. Of course you are going to have conceptual thoughts, but the thing to practice is not to be overcome by conceptual thoughts, do not chase these conceptual thoughts. When they come try to let them alone, let them disappear, let them go away that is the way to go.

This particular practice is good for two things: First in this present life it is going to help eliminating or, at least, reducing all kind of illnesses, all kind of demonic influences, all kind of discomfort or problems arising or brought about by elementary spirits. This practice is very profound and very sharp in cutting the ego and attachment. As for the future, this is one practice and one practice alone that can do without any others if one wishes to do just this Chöd practice. It is the kind of practice that is very, very speedy in reaching enlightenment, much speedier than many other forms of practices. To receive this practice we have the normal four components of any Buddhist practice: first Refuge, Bodhichita mind generation, the actual practice and then the completion stages including the dedication. First we will do the forth going practice – taking Refuge.

When we take Refuge we take Refuge for the benefit of all sentient beings, this is very, very important, so motivation sort of ties in also with taking Refuge. When we take Refuge our Buddha nature, the basis of all the Tathagatas and the essence of all the Buddhas are all the same, I have already told you that, if we use an analogy like this flower I have just shown you. The fully bloomed flower, lets say that is enlightenment, when you see the true nature of mind. If we come down the stem the part that is still receiving nourishment and is in the



earth is though the essence of the fully bloomed petals and the roots and the stem are the same. In that aspect as sentient beings, we are still deeply rooted in the flowerpot. By taking Refuge we want to get out of that mud and to reach the state of the fully bloomed flower. When you take Refuge think of all sentient beings rather than focussing in yourself. When you take Refuge first we have to make the seven-limb offering. To do that in the space in front of you think and visualize a jewel throne, it is a huge wonderful looking jewel and in that visualize a lotus flower and on top of the lotus flower visualize a moon disk. On this moon disk visualize Prajnaparamita, whose essence is inseparable from your Vajra master and Prajnaparamita is golden colour.

The Prajnaparamita has four arms, in her right she holds a Vajra (Dorge) in her left is holding the Scripture book and the other two are in meditating posture.

Prajnaparamita is wearing a costume very similar to that worn by Tara and then on top of Prajnaparamita on the throne in the space visualize all the Kagyu lineage lamas and in the middle all the Yidam deities and down below all the Dharmapalas.

Down you yourself sitting there, prostrating and saying to the deities (including Prajnaparamita, of course) - from this day onward until I reach enlightenment I am going to seek Refuge in you and you alone.

And then you take Refuge in the Buddha the Dharma and the Sangha. In doing that you visualize all directions and all the three times wherever the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha wherever they may be. The Buddhas and one's own Vajra master the Vidyadharas and to them you say – from this day....

You take refuge in your lama, Yidam deity and Dakinis and you also take Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha. Also you take Refuge in the three Kayas: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya<sup>8</sup>. So repeat after me...

### Words of Refuge

Next is the Bodhichita mind generation. This prayer that you will be repeating after me is translated as thus:

From all ten directions and three times all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and my Vajra master please listen to my prayers. I, the practitioner of this particular teaching, from this day onwards till I reach enlightenment I am going to generate my mind for the benefit of all sentient beings just like the way all the glorious Tathagatas generated their mind for the benefit of all sentient beings. I am going to, from this day onwards until I reach enlightenment, practice Bodhichita just the all the glorious ones and the Bodhisattvas practiced Bodhichita

For the benefit of all sentient being. By practicing this in a graduated way may I, just like all the glorious ones and Bodhisattvas, reach enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

### Words of Bodhichita prayer

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<sup>8</sup> This is to do with the outer, inner and secret, that is why you have three different sets.

When you repeated after me the Bodhichita mind generation, there is term in Tibetan, which is called Rigpagzempa that would be in Sanskrit Vidyadhara, this is very important because it deals with mind and the alert mind. The mind perceives things, conceptual thoughts and perceptions, all these start coming in and when they come in the alert mind recognizes and separates. By recognition it separates what is positive and what it is not. The alert mind by being able to separate the virtuous from the non-virtuous one is able to direct all the energy to help other sentient beings, because this ties in with Bodhichita mind generation. So when the thoughts come the alert mind separates the good from the evil, if you like, and direct all positive energy to help other sentient beings. That really is what Bodhichita mind generation is all about and therefore this Rigpagzempa or Vidyadhara ties in with the Bodhichita mind generation.

This Vidyadhara or Rigpagzempa is kind of separated, let me put it this way - when you receive Self liberation ordination, for example you will be asked to repeat your name and say - my name bla, bla, bla.... you have to add your name to it. You separate yourself from the rest of the sentient beings by given your identification, which is your name. But when you receive Tantric ordination you no longer separate yourself as somebody different from the rest of beings. You call yourself Rigpagzempa or Vidyadhara when receiving Tantric ordination, that is because we are kind of different state of mind and different practice. The one who is going to have ability to focus all positive energy towards helping others so that is a brief explanation of Rigpagzempa.

After that there is the seven limb prayer. What it does in this text when you do the seven limb prayers is first of all you say again - I am going to take Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and prostrate to you all. I am going to make offerings to the triple gem and I purify all the negative karmic accumulations that I have accumulated thus far in my many lives. Whatever every single sentient being has been able to do virtuous deeds for that I am going to rejoice. Please I request you to turn the wheel of Dharma and please do not pass into Parinirvana but stay, for the benefit of all sentient beings. I am going to dedicate all the merits for the benefit of all sentient beings.

### Seven limbs prayer words

Now we are going in the main part. The main part has two segments, the first is the mind empowerment, this mind empowerment is called Phowa Gnankagonge or the transference of consciousness that is likened to the opening of the sky light.

This Phowa or transference of consciousness the opening of the skylight, Machig Labchi Drolma has said thus. I am going to add an example here: just so that is clearer, if it were a bow string, let there be sufficient tension in the bow string and then eject, in this case the consciousness, far away<sup>9</sup>. Once the consciousness is transferred thus, then leave it in its natural state. The mind should rest in its natural state. This is something similar to the Great Perfection, cutting through, teaching and once you leave your mind in this natural state let not be expectations and doubts. Expecting to accomplish something wonderful, doubting that something terrible may happen, failure for example. Let there not be expectations or doubts.

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<sup>9</sup> You can only do that with the right kind of tension in the bowstring. That is why let it be the right amount of tension so you can eject the projectile, which is the consciousness, far away

I am going to ask you, when we recite the Chöd supplication I would like you all to stand up. Then there is a whole set up visualization and meditation, but the meditation part I am going to tell you now what you will be doing when I ask you to stand up.

Then when you stand up put your folded hands on the crown of your head. Visualize that inside of yourself there is a balloon filled with air and down below on the soles of your feet visualize a white and red drop, on your right you should visualize a white drop or a sphere that symbolizes the essence of the father essence, male essence. On your left sole you visualize a red drop that is the essence of the mother essence and the size of these two drops should be the size of a pea.

At the end of the Chöd supplication you should do these visualizations.

# - You have already visualized the white and red drop at the soles of your feet. Now gradually visualize these two drops rising upwards from the sole of your feet and these two red and white drops coming up from the sole of your feet into your private part. When the two reach your private part, these two merge and visualize, when these two merge, the size should be size of a small egg and then gradually rising to your navel. Now at that time wait for me to say the sacred PHAT sounds when I make the PHAT sounds it comes up, first from navel to heart, then from heart to throat and from throat it shoots out from the aperture on top of your head.

Because Chöd is about giving away and Chöd is about detachment, therefore you should, at that time say to your self and visualize that the composition of your body from head to toes is a web of impure tissues, muscles, sinuses, and blood. The reason for this is than there will be not any kind of attachment and without any kind of attachment to your body you are about to let go the clinging onto this. That is the visualization.

Here when the two drops merge and rise, when PHAT is said and finally it shoots out from the Bhrama aperture upward in the space and merges with the space. It is written in the 100,000 teachings of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni there are different kind of contemplations or Samadhis, when the two drops merged come up to the crown of you head there is a thought of the absolute, pure essence contemplation of Samadhi. When the two shoot out with a huge expanse of space, then there is another contemplation of Samadhi. These are all found in the 100,000 compilation of Buddha Sakyamuni teachings. Further there is a spreading of consciousness. When the two (combined) shoot out your consciousness is really merging with the true state of reality out there which in turn spreads and goes out to all pervading Just when your consciousness, in the form of red and white combined together, shoot out into the Dharmadatu state. In the Dzogchen teaching it is translated as the Great Perfection but Dzogchen in the Tibetan equivalent: rzog is something that can contain, in this particular context something which can contain, contain what? Every thing there ever is, there ever was, ever would be, so the whole thing is contained in the word rdzog. The context of this current teaching is when the white and red combined together shoots out and merges with the huge expanse of space and spreads out, there is not really any space or time left uncovered from Samsara to Nirvana your consciousness is merging with everything that there is, there will be and there was. If you can visualize like that and have your consciousness merge with the state of Dharmadatu and you remain in that state, that, of course, is the ultimate and the ideal thing we should do, but it will be rather difficult for the beginners. If you can not do that the next alternative is, for the beginners, have your consciousness coming back to yourself and by coming back to yourself all the negativities and obscurations are completely cleanse in yourself. Now your consciousness and your body become an entity, inseparable, and that

entity manifests as the Prajnaparamita. Then try to visualize Prajnaparamita, visualize it in the meditation posture like the 7<sup>th</sup> posture of Vairocana.

When we reach the supplication just stand up and focus your mind on the right sole of your feet and the left sole of your feet. By the time that is ready to bring those up I let you know. Now those of you who can, sometimes is difficult, stand up and do the like this prostration (hands on top of the head) and those of you who find it difficult just sit down and do it. You do the visualization and the monks will do the supplication.

Words of supplication (20 min)

Now collect your consciousness back and visualize that all the obscurations are cleansed and you have become the Prajnaparamita, please meditate in that way and be seated.

When the sacred word PHAT is uttered, at that time eliminates all the conceptual thoughts but mind us such this is something you cannot destroy or dissipate it is just like the huge expanse of sky. In the 100,000 compilation of Buddha Sakyamuni teachings is stated that whatever your mind conceives, all the conceptual thoughts, your alert mind can convert them into the remembering or the meditating on the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. All the energy you can turn into positive and that state is the correct way of practicing by use of alert mind.

Now in this sevenfold Vairocana meditating posture we will make the PHAT sound together. While we do this PHAT practice you don't have to be afraid, you don't have to be scared, you don't have to be modest, just let it go. Let it sound to the extent that if were to strip down naked without any reservation without any hesitation just it should be naturally done and not a tinny, weenie PHAT. No.

During the Chöd teaching, the cutting through practice, whenever we develop a very strong negative emotion; that is the time we will particularly reserve for this PHAT sound. At that time we would make a tremendous sound of PHAT just as if a thunderbolt striking. You have to let all go out, just use it utmost energy and make a sound that really shatters and destroys the negative emotion <sup>10</sup>.

PHAT

PHAT

PHAT

PHAT

PHAT

Whenever you have a strong negative emotion building up, one of the best methods for dissipating that emotion would be to make that PHAT sound.

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<sup>10</sup>The word PHAT itself is a Sanskrit word, really in the contemporary Hindi language today means either to tear apart or break it, shatter.

Machig Labchi Drolma has said these words *dinkydimla*, now I talk to you about the bow string tension and the ejecting of the consciousness but here the idea is a little bit different. Just like when you are walking through a jungle infested with enemies, armed with guns and grenades, every second ready to shoot you. In that kind of situation you are so alert, you are at the height of alertness constantly alert. Mind is single pointed, that is in this case what it means *dinkydimla*. When I talk about the right kind tension, refers to that kind of alertness you have when you practice. Once having done that, when you recognize the conceptual thoughts (this is talking in context of meditation), when the conceptual thoughts are recognized by the alert mind and when they disappear; then all of the sudden free yourself from that jungle's scenario and be totally relaxed, care free, just loosen up. Then Machig Labchi Drolma said - there is that state of the true nature of mind somewhere there. Between that total alertness in the danger zone versus the total slackness kind of letting everything loose, in between that there is a state of mind which is free from both, free from tension and free from no tension. The kind of feeling you will have is total bliss, a very wonderful feeling and that is the true nature of mind and what one should try to achieve. Now Machig Labchi Drolma says there lies the ultimate View. That ultimate View is the state of Buddhahood. Is there difference in the state of Buddhahood, the state that Buddha is in, versus when you the practitioner reach that by the state of tension and no tension? No an iota of difference. That is the same very state of mind whether is experience by the practitioner momentarily or whether that is the state of the mind of the Buddha. Now the mind empowerment is complete, now the body empowerment. To do that you have to transform yourself through meditation into a deity. Now visualize on the crown of your head Prajnaparamita and your root lama should be thought of as of the same very essence there should be no difference at all. The essence should be your root lama, the aspect is the Prajnaparamita. The reason for this is the root lama and the deity, the enlightened being, being the same is because the Buddha nature is the same. Once this is established then yourselves and the lama or the deities or the Buddhas are the same beads, like all the beads of a mala strung together. Although individually they are different beads but they are kind of strung in the same cord and the cord because is the same going through each and every bead, whether you are enlightened or not every single being has that Buddha nature. Recognizing that is very important. That is why you visualize your root lama in essence and Prajnaparamita in aspect. She has the four arms, the colour, the attire and everything, ornaments hair... visualize those.

#3 - Above the Prajnaparamita are all the lineage lamas and in between Yidam deities, underneath below all the Dharmapalas you visualize. Then offer the supplication from the core of your heart with body, speech and mind.

Machig Labchi Drolma, I have a small single painting of Machig Labchi Drolma, but all of you that not recognize Machig Labchi Drolma I have already given you a picture of Tara (white) and if you have Tara pictures just undress Tara and that would be Machig Labchi Drolma. Generally you guys like to go semi-naked anyway. In Tibet, may be is due to climate, they just want to wrap up and to hide everything in. Where here you kind of like to expose a little bit so therefore you are Machig Labchi Drolma.

Then just as the host of deities is in three layers of around Machig Labchi Drolma then you offer these prayers from bodily prostration and reciting the supplication, speech-wise and mentally generating a lot of devotion. I do notice that you have a lot of devotion and that is a wonderful thing to have.

What you will be supplicating is: the essence is the only mother, the mother Yogini, one who has mastered the six perfections and one who liberates the continuum of those of us

who are fortunate to receive your teachings. Myself included all of us who have a great deal of devotion to you, shower us with your blessings. That is what the prayer says.

#### Words of prayers

Because it is a Torma based empowerment you have this visualization of host deities. After having offered the prayer, from the host of deities, included Machig Labchi Drolma, from the OM AH HUNG three secret syllables. Now from the white syllable OM in forehead of Machig Labchi Drolma, as well as from all the deities, a profusion of white light comes forth. This light dissolves in your own OM syllable on your forehead and what it does is that purifies, gets rid of, all the bodily accumulation of obscurations and receives the bodily blessings of Machig Labchi Drolma.

One addition here – be mindful that all deities should be visualized because it is a Torma empowerment. Torma is all the embodiment of all those we are talking about; it will be the light profusion coming from the Torma. OM AH HUNG from the upper, middle and lower part of the Torma.

Just visualize and meditate that you are in this profusion of light. All this white light coming from the OM syllable of each and every enlightened being, in a cluster coming and dissolving in yourself

#### Prayers (Rinpoche singing)

By that you received the body empowerment of Machig Labchi Drolma  
Now is the speech empowerment. From the host of deities, from the individual sacred red AH in their throat centers a profusion of red light emanates and enters your throat AH syllable. When that happens visualize that all the speech related negativities and obscurations are cleansed and you are blessed with Machig Labchi Drolma and the host of deities with speech blessings

#### Prayers (Rinpoche singing)

You received the speech empowerment. Now is the mind empowerment. For mind empowerment the visualization is just as before but from the heart center of Machig Labchi Drolma and the host of deities visualize a blue HUNG syllable. This tremendous blue light coming from that HUNG syllable will dissolve in your HUNG syllable at your heart center. When it does occur visualize that all your mind relate obscurations are cleansed and receive the mind blessing from Machig Labchi Drolma and the host of deities

#### Prayers (Rinpoche singing)

You received the mind empowerment and now you are going to receive the quality empowerment. From the Machig Labchi Drolma and the host of deities navels visualize a yellow SHRI. From this yellow SHRI a profusion of yellow light comes and enters your SHRI syllable at your navel center and by that you are going to get rid of all the negativities and obscurations related to mind. Example: when you feel like having a sip from a cup, you first open the lid, bring the cup towards your lips and even when it is a bodily action what it is dictating it is the mind. So this particular empowerment is to get rid of all the obscurations originated from your mind and also seek to receive the mind blessings from Machig Labchi Drolma and the host of deities.

Prayers (Rinpoche singing)

The next empowerment is for getting rid of all negativities and obscurations accumulated by the combination of body, speech and mind. Also to receive the blessings from the host of deities; body, speech and mind blessings. To do that visualize a PHAT syllable in green colour at the private parts of all the individual deities. A profusion of green light comes forth and enters your private part visualize that all the negativities and obscurations accumulated through body, speech and mind are cleansed. Receive the blessings from the deities.

Prayers (Rinpoche singing)

The last empowerment was the empowerment of what is translated as Buddha activities <sup>11</sup>, Now you have received body, speech, mind, quality and Buddha activity empowerment. At the end we have all the Chöd lineage of lamas, at the top, in the middle all the Yidam deities and down below a host of Chöd lineage and protectors. From their five parts – the forehead, the throat, the heart, the navel and private part, a profusion of lights come forth and those lights dissolve in the Torma (which Rinpoche is holding). The deities turn into light and this light is dissolved in the Torma and there is a cascade of blessings flowing down the nectar and you are receiving these blessings  
After having visualized the cascade of blessings coming out, blessings of body, speech, mind quality and Buddha activity. When I put the Torma in your head please visualize that you are receiving all this filling up the whole system with the nectar and blessings.  
While I am giving you this empowerment the rest of you can recite the TEYATA, OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA.

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<sup>11</sup> Some of you in case you are not quite that means – Buddha activity is a term use to translate the word “tile” in Tibetan, what it means is any kind of action or activity by Buddhas, Boddhisattvas, etc. undertaken which conform to the activities of the Buddhas is a “tile”. So by Buddha activity we don’t mean necessarily an activity undertaken by a Buddha but it can be an activity undertaken by anybody which conforms to the kind perform by enlightened beings.

## Prayers

Trumpets, cymbals and  
TEYATA, OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA.

### # - Prayers

Now we have the conclusion of the empowerment to go through. The conclusion part of this empowerment has also two segments. The first segment deals with the Chöd Samaya or the fulfilling the obligation after having received the empowerment. In this the first requirement is, after having received the empowerment to put it into practice. The way about doing that is to practice Chöd in fearsome places not any kind of places. Not any kind of place but to go to fearsome kind of places: cemetery would be one example. The reason for this is that if you practice in a kind of fearsome place where you have to fear the unknown and the known as well; what happens is that you will be focused, your mind will be sharp. When mind is sharp it is less likely to be kind of intercepted by different conceptual thoughts. That is one of the reasons why it is suggested that the practitioner should take this practice to fearsome looking places. Generally all kinds of fear and other feelings are really at the ultimate level non-existent. In order to stop them coming to ourselves it is often necessary to stay single pointed and fearful places help to remain in such state of mind.

Another requirement is to go into a retreat; a retreat again is not any kind of retreat place. Here specifically mentions "rete", rete is the kind of retreat place that historically back in Tibet are found on mountain sites, it could be a simple cave dwelling. For those of you who have reached some stability in the practice could go to cemeteries and other fearsome places, but those of you who are yet to establish stability I advise you to go on a retreat into secluded areas.

If you did go on fearful looking places without building some stability in your practice there are many stories of mishaps and impediments. So it is advised that one should you go first on a retreat, I do not suggest that you go straight to cemeteries and practice.

A reason why it is difficult to go and practice in fearful looking places where there are a lot of dangers looking around is that immediately when you feel stricken the first idea that comes to mind is what is going to happen to "me". Then when "me" comes in the foreground that kind of upsets the very purpose for which you are doing this practice. That is why it is suggested that you should not venture out to fearful looking places without building some stability. When we talk in terms of building stable mind, stable mind in the sense of practicing this, putting this into practice. Then you go to practice and develop a stable mind set. Then when you go out in these fearsome dangerous places, even if a wild animal like a tiger or a leopard, or a robber, a bandit, whoever should accost you, you have already reached the state of mind when you are going to say to yourself – well, destruction of "me", my body, whatever happens to me is not of significance. The most important kind of thing is fulfilling the need of whoever would be the perpetrator. When you reach that kind of level of mind all you really have is compassion and no fears and the question of focusing on "I" and "me" does not exist.



If you have reached that state of mind where you have nothing but compassion, no fear no nothing; then you are not going to be harmed by tiger, nor leopard, nor thief, nor bandits ... No harm will come to you. The idea, that I keep on saying, that when you have conceptual thoughts do not follow those conceptual thoughts. Try to remain in a stable mind, try to recognize those conceptual thoughts and let them dissipate. There is a very profound meaning and purpose for that - when you have a kind of clinging and grasping and then everything is possible. When you don't have clinging or grasping then there will be no fear. Everything will be like a reflection in the mirror. Is there a reflection? Yes there is, but if you try to grasp or cling onto it there is nothing tangible in it. Likewise, when you see things clear, at the relative level, things are there, yet you are not following after those things. Whatever there is let there be, your mind is not chasing those. There is a very good story, apparently a real story, once a thief happened to be going on a prowling looking what he can get and he came to a Chöd practitioner who was practicing his Chöd, a drum in his right hand had a bell in his left. He slowly maneuvered towards the practitioner and the first thing that came to his mind was to finish the practitioner off so he could run away with what little belongings the practitioner had. He drew the sword and with one strike he totally decapitated the practitioner. The head fell onto the ground, yet the practitioner, headless practitioner, continued without movement kept beating the drum and ringing the bell on and on and on ... A doubt came to the mind of the thief, the decapitator, and he quickly picked up the head and put it on the practitioner's neck and still the practitioner kept on going and going and going. Convinced that this particular practitioner was a real enlightened being the would be thief kind of gently withdrew and went back to his village and told everyone he came across - that there is such a practitioner that I decapitated his head but he would not stop practicing, I placed the head back on his neck and he still went on and on. Those news spread further, at last he felt like making some offerings and brought some kind of goodies and try look for the practitioner. He finally found that he was in a cave, he went to the practitioner and said - you are really an enlightened being, and the practitioner said - well how do you know, and the man said - I decapitated you but you kept on going and going. He said - no, I don't believe it! At that instant the head fell down on the ground because the practitioner had this conceptual thought. You see, the minute the man told him that he decapitated him the practitioner was shocked and had doubts and worries. Because of that the head fell. So the moral of the story is that one should not have any kind of doubts and conceptual thoughts but be single pointed. Then if you went in a fearful looking place you could be stricken with fear and when fear strikes is going to be very, very difficult to stay in focus.

The bottom line is when you reduce grasping and clinging, that really is the time to go to places where you are likely to be frightened like fearful cemeteries. The most important of all between the body and the mind, mind is important, body is not important. It is the mind that created the body, it is because of one's grasping, one's clinging, and these are the components of ignorance, which originated or created, if you like, the body. Otherwise when you practice rdzogs pa chen po or the great completion, there is a rainbow body. The concept of the rainbow body, when you reach the rainbow body all that is left behind is perhaps the hair and the nails just as an indication that the rest of the body is dissolved in the state of rainbow. That is when all the microcosmic particles of your body are dissolved in the elements and your consciousness merges with the state of enlightened beings. That is the rainbow body. Then when you have that kind of clinging to **I, my, mine** it is somewhat like the constant snowing and drizzling in high places, the result you see is the snow cup mountain that you can see from the distance that the tip of the mountains are white, why?

Because of a kind of fairly constant snowing and the cold weather. So if you have the kind of clinging of **I, my, mine** that gives kind of birth to being reborn again and again and one is in the cyclic existence. When you can get rid of it, especially of desire, anger and ignorance what will happen then is that one will be one's state of mind. The meditating mind is stable enough to be able to distinguish the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, on one hand and those of us, the beings in cyclic existence on other. There is distinction between Nirvana on one hand and Samsara on the other hand. If you develop further, you develop your practice you achieve more stability you will become to the realization that everything is just a perception. Everything is there, but at the same time the mind is not focus on what is there but on its true nature, in its true state of mind, that would be at a higher level.

Otherwise when you are not able to practice and stabilize your mind all you are ever going to see is anomaly, the faults of the others and the qualities of one's own self. We have this tendency of saying how I am right, how I am good at things, how honest I am, how good looking I am and the other party is always the faulty one. These kind of thoughts and emotions originate from constant clinging to the ego, **I, my** and **myself**. So of the six perfections, one by one, if one could lessen by practicing this particular method reduce the amount of hatred, practice some patience, and also reduce pride, jealousy. These are all working towards stabilizing one's state of mind, for when we are able actually, to go to some fearsome places and practice.

I said a great deal about this idea of one's obligation to go and do retreats in fearsome looking places like cemeteries. That was important, but here in the same line it also asks one should go on retreat <sup>12</sup>. One has, although the text says one should take this practice, go on a retreat, here in the west if you don't have a job to hold on to, you are not going to eat. Therefore it is probably difficult to go on a retreat. Another thing I have come across people is that there is a lot of you that come to me and tell me that you would like to sometime down the road go to probably India. Nepal or wherever and take some time off and go on a retreat. This is a wonderful thing, it is a good thing to do but do not wait until you can get some time on your own and go on retreat. Even if it is a matter of just one-hour you should do that retreat just now. The meaning of going on retreat is to gain that mental rest, not to be disturbed by conceptual thoughts, let mind rest in its own natural form. If you can do that, that is the essence of retreat, there is nothing else. Going to retreat is kind of escape where you are not being to be distracted by sounds or sights. So that is the purpose, what you can do the same thing in any situation now behind closed doors sit down 1 hour, 2 hours, whatever. If you can do that try to prevent your natural mind from being distracted, that in itself is retreat, there is no other retreat. For example, you can take some time on Sundays go inside, shut the door, open your windows, think of your lama do some Chöd practice, that is your retreat Now, going on retreat shutting yourself, your body locked up in some confinement that is not retreat. What should be really confined is your mind. Confine your mind in its natural form, nor wandering off, not chasing conceptual thoughts. Mind should be in retreat not your body. Conversely if you just lock yourself in physically but your mind is just wandering like a werewolf from place to place everywhere, that is not a retreat at all. You have kind to contain your mind and therefore my suggestion is that you should not wait until you have a substantial amount of time to do retreat. You can turn your own bedroom into a retreat. You don't have to go to India or Nepal to do that. Lord Jigten Sumgon has clearly mention that the sacred places and the places of warship and pilgrimage places should be wherever you are. A lot of people go to sacred

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<sup>12</sup> I reminded you that retreat in Tibetan "re" is in a dwelling somewhere in the mountain.

places like Tsari in Southern Tibet. You should treat the place wherever you are as Tsari. Why do people go to Tsari for pilgrimage? Because Tsari is the sacred place of Vajravahni. Lord Jigten Sumgon said – one's own body has every aspect of Tsari, the 29 different sacred places and 32 places for pilgrimage every one of them are imbedded in one's own body. Therefore, what you should do is to use your body as a retreat center, retreat place and let the mind go on retreat. When your mind goes on retreat, this between the distraction with conceptual thoughts and the state of mind where there isn't distraction and interruption, there is a special feeling you are going to get and that is most important. When you put your mind on retreat you are going to experience that. When you experience that it will be something like a little baby getting so used to the mother breast that each time you feel it you know exactly that it is the very same experience that you are repeating. So it is important to practice now as opposed to waiting for the future.

Then if you have that persistent urge to go on retreat to some holy places, well that is a good thing, have it. At the same time, just as I said, keep on practicing and pray, supplicate to Tara and Avalokiteshvara so that your need and want of going on retreat to far away places may be fulfilled. If you have such a strong feeling and leave all those things to enlightened beings like Tara or Chenrezig, this kind of beings will not let you down. With full conviction things will materialize. One day you are going to have a stronger feeling of "this is it, this is the time" and you go on a retreat. That will be the right time. Even when you do your mundane, day to day, activities do whatever you can. Whatever you cannot leave this to the triple gem, pray heart and soul and have complete faith and you will know you will get the signs when there is an opportune time to put your ideas into practice.

The second line of the root text is talking about playing emphasis on the physical body itself, now as for the physical body what you should be doing is just like practicing Mahamudra when you are meditating. Normally, under normal circumstances, turning the wheels is an integral part of Dharma practice, turning the wheel is an integral part of Dharma practice. But when you are practicing Mahamudra, when you are meditating you do not tell wheels, neither do you turn the wheel, it is just walk when you walk and play when you play and you have in a meditating posture and single pointedly meditate on Mahamudra. This second line is talking about the importance of how your body should be used in practice this particular Chöd method. There should not be physical activities, by not engaging in physical activities meaning don't engage your feet and don't engage your hands in any other way as just the meditating posture. This is what is talking about.

The next two sentences deal with speech and mind. The speech-wise, while practicing you could be singing Vajra songs, good sounding melodies you could be reading supplications you could be just going through the Chöd practice itself. You can incorporate your speech, your voice, in making it more inspiring, that is how the speech is incorporated. Now as for the mind when you do this practice, or any kind of practice, first of course you go to the foregoing practices like taking Refuge, Bodhichitta mind generation, then Guru devotion and generating compassionate loving kindness towards sentient beings and those are, naturally, incorporated into the practice. But here it talks about a single pointed state of mind which after having done all these foregoing prayers then there should not even be this inclination towards wanting to meditate. Because if the mind is focused on this kind of very strong urge to meditate, that in itself becomes a conceptual thought. The mind should be totally free from the lamas, the deities, the sentient beings or the every single thing that you have. Visualize and direct all the efforts in the foregoing practice. Ultimately what should be done is that there should be no be any kind of expectation to accomplish a result towards reaching enlightenment, neither should be any doubt or fear of the consequences of failure

or the consequences that sentient beings face in Samsara. One's mind should be completely free from this. Let it just take its natural course. When it does so then you are again, as said before, you the practitioner are going to using analogy as a baby is going to kind of feel the same warmth, the same familiarity of your mother's own breast.

The topic, as you remember, was the kind of obligation to fulfill as a result of having received this empowerment. Now you just think and say to yourself that your object of Refuge you are going to take Refuge in Machig Labchi Drolma and that your ultimate practice is going to be Mahamudra practice and in thinking and saying these things to yourself please repeat after me

## Prayers

#4 - Here the essence of these Chöd teachings is, as the word Chöd indicates, to cut through attachment, attachment to one's self – ego, **I, my, mine** and that should be cut. Here there is a wonderful root text. It says this sublime Chöd practice teaching is the most potent weapon to cut the Maras or demons, if you like, it is the heart essence of all mother Dakinis. "It" referring to Chöd practice. It is the pith-instruction of all the wonderful lamas; it is the commentaries based on experiential understanding of those who have reached the unshakable stability in understanding of the state of Mahamudra. It is like the wish-fulfilling jewel, which fulfills every need and want. It is like the medicine that has the curative power to cure all kinds of diseases. It is the only weapon to counter all kinds of demonic influences. It is the wisdom that will purify the five poisons. It is the wisdom sword that will cut through all delusions. These are some of the wonderful things that are said about this Chöd practice. Now when we talk in terms of Maras and demons in the Sutrayana tradition there are four of those, the first of all is the demon associated with the Scandas, or the heaps or pumbo. In layman's terms from head to toes. How does this become a Mara or a demon? Because we associate everything to the relative level. Everything from head to toes, since we have a sense of belonging, belongs to **me**. Everything is **mine and I** am in the center of this. But when you take many, many births, countless number of births, when your mind is in a deluded way conditioned in thinking that the physical body is so important and that all this body parts are **mine** and I am the center of everything. That leaves a kind of imprint, this imprint is reinforced each time one takes another life. Because of this imprint we don't seem to realize the fact that none of us can take our bodies with us, it is something that has to be left behind, something to be discarded. It something like when you go to a motel. It is just like a motel just for a night shelter, nothing more than that. If you can train your mind in this kind of ideas that is going to help you to lessen attachment. The second of the demons is the demon of afflictions; said differently, the demon of the emotion afflictions would be the five poisons. This flirts with the first of the Maras and kind of mix them making them more potent. The third one is because one can engage in anger, jealousy, pride, and hatred all of these emotions, then the princely demon, the third one, is kind of all allured towards entertainment having good time. Spending your life in a kind of strayed manner strayed from the path of Dharma practice but rather engaging in worldly things. Then you want to be happy, entertained, in the traditional sense. Then comes the last of the demons which is the lord of death, the demon of death and when that comes everything comes too late.

In the Tantrayana teachings too there are four demons, we have just covered the Sutrayana demons but even in Tantrayana demons we can make a reference to the Sutrayana demons, the first two, the bodily demons and the emotional demons. These two work hand in hand, for example when we eat, we like what tastes good, so that is attachment. We dislike what tastes bad, that is hatred. Again there is falling down the pith-of attachment or falling down the pith-of hatred. Lord Buddha has said himself – eating food should be done in a moderated fashion, because there is a profound reason for it. We should convince ourselves that as far as the two demons is concerned in the context of eating, for example, good taste or bad taste are only felt by the tongue. Once the food substance goes past the tongue the rest of the body does not give a hood whether it tastes good or bad. It is really up to here (showing the tongue) and if we realize that, then we are kind of closer to understand this kind of body language. When we understand this then we are closer to, first, recognizing what demons are and, secondly, doing something about to reduce or eliminate them. Sometimes, I by mistake, just gulp down a really scalding hot mouthful of water and peel off my tongue, one layer, and I wouldn't know the sweet from the sour. In a way this is really good since you don't have to worry if there is enough salt or not enough salt. Just to make things less complicated, just say to yourself the tasty versus the non-tasty is just a delusion you need food for the nutrition of your body. Eat something nutritious and forget about the taste. I you could do that it would spare your mind from chasing these conceptual thoughts, but use it instead for a meaningful purpose.

The four Tantric demons. The first one would be the tangible demons. Tangible demons would be what we conceive as enemies – the thunder and the lightning, fire, tornadoes... Everything we perceive as impediments are tangible demons. The second is the intangible demons; these would be demonic influences, elementary spirits and all kind of negative vibes that are brought about by what we perceive as aversion causing elements or spirits. A third one would be a very much similar to a demon of gayety, it is something very similar to princely demon in the Sutrayana tradition kind of allured by the glitter, the entertainment and straying from the path of one's Dharma practice. The forth would be very powerful, it is the root cause of everything else. It is like the tree trunk and the rest of the tree would be branches. This is the ego clinging **I, my**, the notion of self-existence. This is ego clinging, grasping. This is the demon that we are dealing with. Once that is gotten rid off the rest it will be much, much easier.

I missed a little bit of the third demon; it is also that kind of joyous feeling about your own achievement, kind of mentally blowing your own horn. Saying – you know I have been doing this Mahamudra practice and today I did really feel the exact kind of thing that Rinpoche has explained - and you take delight in that. That too is said (at a higher lever, of course) to be attachment and nothing much more than a demon that is going to harm your own practice. Also – I reached this kind of attainment this time, thank you very much, and thanks to my wonderful lama, so and so... That too can in subtle way translate to attachment and it is an impediment rather than something conducive to your own practice. We talk in terms of ghosts and demons, the origin of so called ghosts and demons are the appearances or conceptual thoughts. Conceptual thoughts originate from literally **I** clinging that is what the Tibetan word “danzi” means, clinging on to this idea of **I** being the center of everything. The tangible and intangible, all these demons originate because one's conceptual thoughts. These are all kind of delusions and in a way it easy to say – well do not have conceptual thoughts these are demons, period. That would be very, very easy to say but when it comes to practice one has to do it step by step and to use a good example as to how to reduce or eliminate these things, the best example probably would be the steps

taken by Milarepa. Follow each and every story and try to learn between the lines and as well as the deeper and more profound meanings that each story carries. Milarepa says that - of all the powerful demons, conceptual thoughts, to me is the most destructive. It is also said when you have the own Buddha nature, it is clean, it is pristine, it is spotless it is just like a mirror. When that is tainted the out of this taintedness arise all kinds of different demons. Even if you are a deity if your mirror is clouded, if your mirror is tainted you are no longer a deity. Then it is all about when our state of mind being the mirror is tainted or not.

Going back to the root text it says: this Chöd practice is the heart essence of all mother Dakinis. What we refer by mother Dakinis, Dakinis is by definition the estate of emptiness (represents). The Dakini's body is lama, Dakini's speech is Yidam deity, and the mind is Dakini. In that respect the Dakinis are all emptiness, the symbol of emptiness. It is the pith-instruction of the lamas, it is the commentary of highly realized Siddhis. Based on the experiential and understanding and having practiced this is the kind of wish fulfilling jewel, it is the medicine that has the curative power to cure all kind of illnesses, if you look into this, this has far greater meaning than of the surface meaning. When it says - it is the medicine for all kinds of diseases. All kind of diseases, every one of them if categorized in three categories, they belong to the three poisons and they are categorized as wind related, flame related and vile related diseases. This practice is also a very potent practice as an antidote for all demonic influences. It is the five wisdoms that will eliminate the five poisons. In one side you have the five wisdoms, when you flip side you have the five poisons. Just like Manjushri's wisdom sword this practice cuts through all the delusions and that is what the root text is saying.

Lord Buddha Sakyamuni has turned the second wheel of Dharma, Guru Padmasambhava has given most profound, pith-instructions to Naropa and Padampa Sangye, the pacifist, has taught a great deal on the method of pacifying the sufferings. If you put all this different teachings, various aspects every single one of them are embodied in this practice Machig Labchi Drolma Chöd practice.

## Prayers

Here I am just going to empower you to use the drum; this is going to go around everybody.

I have asked one of the monks to bring my thighbone, ya "my" thighbone (laugh). Every one and each of you try the drum and the thighbone. That empowers one to use the drum.

Horn and prayers of empowerment.

If you cannot make a sound just pretend you make a sound saying hou, hou, hou!

It should be blown very gently with kind of love. Ideally these thighbones should come from very loving mother who passes away because of complications arising from childbirth. The idea is that there will be so much love and kindness directed towards a small little infant. All her focus would be the welfare of the baby rather on her own. That is why ideally

we should have the thigh from such a compassionate mother, when you blow it and say some OM MA NI PE ME HUNG prayers and then blow it gently. The sound will have a very positive effect on all the demonic influences out there and, certainly, this will not frighten them off.

## End of Empowerment

Chöd practice has a huge, huge volume and in it there are various aspects of Chöd teaching, to try to cover the whole range would take a lot of time. That little bit in between when Rinpoche and the monks laughed (as the translator it is my duty to translate everything if I can remember all) Rinpoche was saying: because the program today is kind of very lengthy. Therefore it is my job to fill that time slot and generally whoever feeds me I have to keep on teaching, when the food stops then it is when I stop (laughs).

Going back to this Root Text in order to give you a good, kind of all round understanding of what Chöd is all about there is a concise explanation of the Chöd practice. This is what I am going to give the commentary on, but I warn you that every single thing that is written in this Root Text I will not probably understand. What I don't understand, too bad, I will just leave it. In giving you a commentary on the root text, generally, there are two things - one particular teaching is called sky teaching and the other is called earth teaching. So we have sky teaching and earth teaching.

The Chöd practice that rained down on the house roof of one of the Indian monarchs, his name was King Zsa, that particular putzaca or that particular text or Chöd is sky teaching. We also have a number of teachings that were discovered as hidden treasures and those, which fall in the category of hidden treasures, that were found or discovered, are known as earth teachings.

This particular teaching you are receiving belongs to the earth teaching category. Most Chöd practices are composed and hidden by Guru Padmasambhava were discovered from the earth and they belong to the classification of earth teaching. Within the Chöd groupings there is one called the pronouncement type of teaching and one the hidden treasure kind. The pronouncement category is pronounced verbally from enlightened being to enlightened being but the other type is discovered in the earth as hidden treasures. For example Guru Rinpoche buried a number of texts and hidden treasure discoverers, like Ratna Lingpa and Sangye Lingpa they were the discoverers that discovered this teachings.

# - As for Machig Labchi Drolma teachings there are two different segments. One is the more expanded form and the other is a little bit abridge and concise form and these are originals and they used to be found<sup>13</sup> before the invasion in this place called Ladhak in Tibet. Chöd also has a huge, huge commentary in the Sutrayana tradition and this Sutrayana tradition commentary is translated into 42 volumes. To comment about these 42 volumes is going to take forever.

In the Tantrayana tradition there are also equal number of volumes as commentaries, that it is to say 42 volumes. The combination of the Sutrayana and Tantrayana teachings is another 42 volumes. All those teachings put together are 126 volumes of commentaries.

These teachings were hidden as hidden treasures by Machig Labchi Drolma and her sons in places like Samey Chimpo and Kiota, Lhasa. Some of the later versions of these teachings,

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<sup>13</sup> Well I don't know if they are still in the same place as they use to be.

commentaries, were discovered by enlightened practitioners like Kumpang Tsondrü Senge and Sherub Senge. They have unearthed, discovered and revealed. Yet there still remain a number of commentaries that were not hidden as hidden treasures and these belong to the pronouncement category. This particular one, if asked whether it belongs to the pronouncement type or the hidden treasure, belongs to the pronouncement category and not to the hidden treasure category.

We will talk a little bit differently in the way of classifying Chöd commentaries. In this respect there are what we call Indian Dharma and Tibetan Dharma, two classifications. For example, these commentaries by Aryadeva who wrote a commentary in verses and Naropa, he wrote a great deal on the balancing or the equilibrium of Samsara and Nirvana. This kind of esoteric practice and also Padampa Sangye, the pacifist teacher and his work, Guru Padmasambhava's elimination of delusion, all these belong to the Indian Dharma classification. Literally speaking Tibetan Dharma, in this category belong all the Chöd practice texts that arose spontaneously in the mind of Machig Labchi Drolma.

Machig Labchi Drolma said herself that there is a wide range of teachings that originated in India and were translated into Tibetan and flourished in Tibet. But my teaching is the only one that originated in Tibet and was translated into Indian language, imported in India and flourished.

Machig Labchi Drolma teachings, as was previously mentioned, when the name and the fame reached India three people were sent from India, I talked about them kind of jokingly as Speedy Gonzales. Three of them were sent to Tibet for the purpose of importing Machig Labchi Drolma teachings to India where they were translated and flourished.

We will try to classify the Chöd teachings in the two traditions, Sutrayana and Tantrayana. There are actually three different types. The teachings by Aryadeva tie in with the Six Paramitas or the six perfections that is one. Aryadeva wrote it in verses. Machig Labchi Drolma's own teachings and an extraction from those teachings are classified as teachings belonging to the Sutrayana tradition.

So those that were spontaneously arisen from the transcription of Machig Labchi Drolma teachings belong to the Sutrayana tradition. But the Chöd teachings that were passed down, transmitted to Machig Labchi Drolma and from Machig Labchi Drolma to her son, Thönyon Samdrup, these teachings fall in the category of Tantric teachings. This is the particular teaching that as result of practicing it and mastering it there were a great deal of people who attained rainbow body.

Then Machig Labchi Drolma also spontaneously composed a text that combine both the Sutrayana type as well as the Tantrayana type. It spontaneously arose in her mind. Those teachings were passed down to her son Khugom Chöseng and others and these are classified as a combination of Sutrayana and Tantrayana. But Chamir Rinpoche, the one who put together these texts which is a part of much bigger volume, he says that this particular practice that you are hearing right now is something that you can neither classify as Sutrayana nor you can classify as Tantrayana. It is a combination of both.

Then you may ask – how do they combine it? A combination of Sutrayana type and Tantrayana type is easily said but in terms of real kind of understanding, how do we understand it? These are Machig Labchi Drolma's own words – PHA is the acronym for parol tu chinpa or the Six Paramitas or the six perfections TA is the acronym for Tantrayana or Tantric practice. When you combine the two and forcefully utter this phonetic sound it produces the desired result, it becomes PHAT. This one single word has the meaning of both Sutrayana and Tantrayana teachings.



Milarepa has said – PHAT is a very powerful sacred word. Whenever there is a very negative strong emotion you pulverize, disintegrate that emotion with the sound of PHAT and get rid of delusion.

That first PHAT is to pulverize, to disintegrate, to eliminate all the strong negative emotions, this is the outer use of PHAT.

The inner use of PHAT is whenever there is monotony, whenever drowsiness overcomes you that is the time when you say this word PHAT forcefully to get rid of that monotony <sup>14</sup>.

Milarepa said – the ultimate use of PHAT is when you can dissipate all kind of conceptual thoughts and abide in the state of true nature of mind. Which being the bases of all the Tathagatas and the glorious ones, when there is no distinction between the enlightened beings and the sentient beings. That is the time when you utter the word PHAT It is called *gnanxxxx* that means cutting through that barrier that blocs you from seeing the true nature of mind, you cut it with one notch <sup>15</sup>.

We talked about the method of accumulating merit by Kusali, the ones that don't have anything material to give away. To do that in the Sutrayana tradition you necessarily have to give your flesh and blood through mental visualization and that type of giving is the red distribution. You are distributing in actual flesh and blood form. That flesh and blood charity termed red distribution is the Sutrayana tradition.

It is Sutrayana tradition to practice the red distribution as if there is kind of flesh and blood in real terms. In the Tantric tradition it is different. The practitioner visualizes the skull the size of universe. One places all the body parts of one's own in the kapala (or skull). Then by the power of Samadhi meditation one transforms the contents, which being the body parts, into not flesh, not blood, not red but anything that any sentient being can conceivable think of or need or want. It can be any form, any size, any shape, and any quantity. It can be a TV set, a radio ...whatever is needed or wanted. This kind of distribution is from the Tantric distribution.

Tantrayana teaching is different in the sense of the use and power of Samadhi, mantra and substance we can turn anything into anything we want or need. For example a bowl full of grapes, in the Tantrayana tradition one can pick a grape from here and if one desires to have a grape one can just pop it in the mouth. On the other hand if one has a stronger urge to have a piece of meat pop this grape into the mouth and just think that this is meat. If one has an urge of having a toffee, or something like that, pops the grape inside and think of it as being a toffee. So, coupled with this kind of meditation when you have the right kind of mantra, the right kind of substance there is nothing you cannot do in Tantric practice.

Going back to the red distribution when you actually through visualization distribute flesh and blood it has to have some solid basis in the bigger Sutrayana teachings. So where is the basis for this Chöd practice? The answer lies in the White Lotus Sutra, in the White Lotus Sutra when a locality was stricken with a plague and the only cure was the flesh of certain kind of fish. At that time Buddha Sakyamuni through recitation of prayers, mantras and Samadhi manifested as that particular type of fish in abundance and that got rid of the plague so you have the Samadhi, you have the mantra, you have the substance in form of fish. There is yet another one the Sutra called the Sublime Golden Colour Sutra. In that

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<sup>14</sup> PHAT means cutting through, shattering, disintegrating, depending on which context you use it.

<sup>15</sup>The idea of one notch that is very clearly written in the Tibetan text is that when you cut with a very sharp object you are not likely to make many notches. If you cut with a blunt knife then you try, you don't succeed, you make a dent, a notch, and a second and third and, maybe finally, cut.

Buddha Sakyamuni in one of his previous lives found a tigress with a lot of cubs really having a very difficult time, almost dying of hunger and Buddha gave his body to tigress and the cubs in order to save them. Those are the basis for the Chöd.

In the Sutrayana, especially the most excellent Tantra, in this particular classification of Tantras during the offering of Ghanachakra, we translate it as feast, one's body parts, through visualization, are offered as offerings. Again belonging to that particular distribution where you mentally create (in Tantric not flesh and blood) everything and anything sentient beings could possibly need or want. Those are the bases for the Chöd practice in both traditions.

In order to give you this empowerment, in order to do it right, it has to be preceded with a Chöd Ghanachakra offering, Chöd feast. That is a volume about this thick and that takes a whole day. Thank you very much for giving me yesterday a spare time so I was able to do the whole thing yesterday. I am not going to talk too much because I have to reserve a little bit of teaching to earn my bread tomorrow (laughs).

If you have questions my translator is not going to chicken out and I am not going to chicken out but sit here and answer your questions. In any case I am prepared to give myself to you for a whole week, as long as you feed me.

Chöd is classified in many different categories, just as the Tara empowerment and the Tara teaching. These have white Tara, green Tara, red Tara and all kinds of Taras. Some people wanted to know if it was OK to practice combination colors like white-green together. You have a lot of devotion and perhaps not a full exposure to these teachings, but of course it is all right. Similarly in Chöd there is different kind of classifications but the important thing to realize is the single word Chöd and its meaning. Its application, it applies to any single version of Chöd practice. A Chöd practice is a Chöd practice although there are different ways of doing things but actually it is the same thing.

Chöd practice is a method to generate Bodhichitta mind or altruistic mind, in the Buddha's Dharma teachings what is the actual view? Everything, the whole of Buddha's teachings goes to a one single thing, which is the generation of Bodhichitta mind or Buddha's mind. There are 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teachings if we had hard copies of all these Buddha's teaching it will probably amount to something like the size of this tent. Well, do we need to learn everything from cover to cover? That would probably would not be possible but the main thing is, just like this tent has certain pillars that are holding up and the tent remains pitch, likewise the pillar of the 84,000 heaps of teachings of the Buddha comes down to Bodhichitta mind generation. All the other 84,000 heaps are commentaries, teachings, and methods of how to achieve Bodhichitta mind generation. What is Bodhichitta mind?

Bodhichitta mind really is benevolent acts. Acts directed to betterment of other and there is nothing outside that. You can call it Bodhichitta mind or you can call it having kind, loving compassionate thoughts or doing kind, loving compassionate deeds for others. Chöd is that method to achieve this. It is a mean to that end.

Chöd is the single monosyllabic word, Chöd in Tibetan means to cut, to uproot. In this cut, what do we actually try to cut? We try to cut ego, attachment, clinging, grasping. In the Tibetan word Da zen, literally Da is I and zen is grasping. **I**, being the center of everything. That kind of attitude, that kind of thought should be cut away, so that is why it is called Chöd. The **I** clinging, the attachment is probably the most harmful impediment that is obstructing a practitioner path towards enlightenment, because it obscures the wish-fulfilling jewel, which is the true nature of mind. This kind of ego clinging onto a selfish **I** obscures the otherwise stainless true nature of mind which is a wish-fulfilling jewel. So, that

is why the whole practice is called Chöd and emphasis is laid on to first of all to get rid of this notion of **I, me and mine**.

There are other methods, of course, to get rid of grasping and clinging to **I**. For example one of the methods would be generation of compassion and that really ties in with relative Bodhichita. There are relative Bodhichita and absolute Bodhichita and the generation of compassionate loving kindness falls in the category of relative Bodhichita. That is one of the methods to reduce and eliminate ego clinging.

#5 - By using this method for generating loving kindness and compassion we have other methods. One of which would be to treat, in your meditation session, to treat all beings equally there should be equality in the sense of all sentient beings are mother sentient beings. When you apply the mother to all sentient beings that brings equality. Just like one's own mother you will look at all sentient beings in the same light, so much so just Milarepa has done in his life. One even would go to the extent of transforming one's own body into material sustenance and give away to the needy and the hungry. Remember what Milarepa did in his lifetime. Whenever we open our prayers we start with all mother sentient beings. When you say mother sentient beings you are not doing just a lip service but it makes absolute sense and there is logic behind that. When you see a small insect you, being a human species and the insect is of a different kind, although the Buddha nature is the same, the ignorance is the same. The fact that both, the insect as well as you yourself are in cyclic existence points to the fact that both are obscured with ignorance, without which neither the insect nor yourself would be in cyclic existences. Therefore there is equality between you and this insect. So by seeing the suffering the insect is going through one has to generate kind of mind set that looks at methods to eliminate that suffering. But then how do we actually go about doing that? We already said that the ignorance that is embodied by the insect is the same ignorance that you yourself are embodying. Because we believe in the interconnectedness of all sentient beings, the ignorance that you are born with or the ignorance with which you are in cyclical existence will also affect all other sentient beings. The amount of suffering originated from ignorance, the suffering that insects, for example, are going through is also affecting you. Because there is interconnectedness, so therefore when you try to practice apply these methods generate Bodhichita and try to eliminate all ignorance in yourself which will, just as a ripple effect, is going to have an effect on all sentient beings, including the insect. It is just like the electric wire, the wire is the same, and the flow of current is the same whatever is happening, whether positive or negative, whether is generation of Bodhichita or whether is embodiment of ignorance in all sentient beings. Just like the electric current is flowing through the copper wire is happening through every single living being. It is not an individual thing.

These are different methods of generating loving kindness and compassion. Bodhichita mind generation in trying to achieve a state of mind, a stable mind, Bodhichita mind we really have to do three things. First we have to hear what teachers or books have to say about Bodhichita, we learn from teachers. Once we learn things we look around us and look at suffering. We get ourselves kind of aware of the suffering that goes on. Once see these things we sit back and we think, we reflect on these things. So, first it is the hearing under which caption belongs all the accumulation of knowledge pertaining to whatever topic that you are focusing on. Once the information is accumulated, then contemplate. Under the caption of contemplate we try to reason, we try to look at logic, we make an analysis of things, we process this information in our mind. Once the information is processed properly, when one is partly convinced that this is white and this is black and this is what is going on. Then we sit back and meditate. The third caption would be meditation.

So we first hear, we contemplate in what is accumulated and then we sit and we meditate. First imagine all the things we see, venomous snakes, for example, the dogs, insects and all the things we come across. How many years will they last? What kind of sufferings do they go through each and every individual in different ways? And this idea that all sentient beings are interconnected, there is none individual and try to find out the logic behind it. How are we interconnected? Interconnected to the extent that there is none separated. That in all probability we have been each other's parents. We all, no matter if you are a dog or a snake or a human, each has its own problem, a problem in living, a problem in dying, the longevity, sickness, all those kind of things we all have. The famous Patrul Rinpoche has said – when I cast my mind on the suffering of sentient beings on the lower existence it just so overwhelms me that I dare not repeat it. If I cast my mind, he said, in the suffering that goes on in the three higher realm of existence it is just going to make me crazy. When you reach through reasoning, contemplation and meditation, when you reach to that state of mind what is going to happen is that it will trigger a mechanism within oneself and that triggering of mechanism is going to generate compassion and loving kindness.

In this the word PHAT compose of two letters, one is the consonant Pha, the other is the inverted Ta. The inverted Ta sounds “tá” so Pha is the method of loving kindness and compassion, which is rooted in the Sutrayana teaching. Ta is wisdom, emptiness. It would be a little bit difficult to be able to relate to this concept right now, but the main thing is the generation of loving kindness and compassion.

In practicing Chöd what we basically do is – we are inviting a host of guests to come and devour ourselves, the practitioners. This host of guests includes the four demons as listed in the Tantrayana tradition, the tangible demons, and the intangible demons. We are purposely inviting them to come and feast on our body. The tangible demons include every single form of harm causing, tangible beings out there. These could be murderers, killers, and every form of tangible aversions that one generally fears. We call them – parents; dear parents, come and devour me this is what we are saying. We are also intangible demons; intangible demons consist of all the negative influences. For example: all the elemental spirits all the spirits that are wondering around waiting to cause harm to other beings, we are inviting each and every one of them and treating them as our parents.

In the Chöd practice we said - it is written that the root cause of these elementary spirits and harm causing elements, these are the karmic results of having practiced the three poisons. That would be desire, hatred and jealousy. When you have created an excessive amount of these the net result is that you have this tendency to cause harm to others at all times, because of the negative tendencies. One may ask where do all these elementary spirits come from? From where do these demons pop up? The very cause would be ignorance. Ignorance being hatred, envy, desire and all of these.

Why do we give such a wonderful treatment to all these terrible harm-causing elements out there? To be able to do that, to be able to welcome them with open hands ones has to understand the logic behind it. Negative actions, non virtuous deeds, defilements, all these give rise to the birth of demons, ghosts, elementary spirits who go about doing harm. What is the result of going into this very vicious circle and causing harm to others? They are afflicted with all kinds of diseases, sicknesses and consequently they go through terrible suffering. When you realize that those elements out there are not willfully causing harm just for the sake of it but rather because of the accumulation of karmic imprint. They are conditioned to do whatever they do and consequently there are going through a terrible vicious circle and suffering. When realize that there is going to be compassion in our hearts, there will be loving-kindness. Then we open our arms and treat them equally as equal as

anybody in the whole realm of existence and that is why we invite them and say come and help yourselves.

When we make a feast of our own bodies and invite all these demons and elementary spirits we must see them being in terrible need. Beings fundamentally all these are hungry ghosts or pretas, they should be viewed though homeless, as beings who owe so much in their past lives to others, all this in a karmic dead load carrying on their back. Some should be seen as nothing but skeletons, hungry, thirsty, and cold, in need for care and food. In order of paying their debts we generate a mind where by offering ourselves we think to ourselves that us, the practitioners, are paying all the karmic debts ever owed to another sentient beings by all these parents with whom one, the practitioner, is interconnected.

When the practitioner sits down and holds the drum and bell and proceeds with the practice, the kind of mind set one should have it is pretty much similar to kind of attitude and mind set we are taught to generate when we go to individual families to say prayers for their wellbeing. Our masters very frequently will remind us that we should do the following things, when we go to a private family to pray for the wellbeing. Obviously the one who feeds you during the period of the prayers session is the host family, but are we going to try to appease the family at the cost of all the elementary spirits, ghosts, demons that are bringing about harm to the family? No, that is not the thing to do, we think it in these terms, we are taught to do that, we think if the host family to be considered as debtor, a karmic debtor, one who owes many, many karmic debts in many, many life times. We are taught to treat all the ghost, demons, and elementary spirits as the entities to whom the host family owes money, or owes whatever is owed to them. The elementary spirits, ghosts, demons are in such a terrible shape, going to a lot of deprivation, no food, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, hungry, cold. Skin and bone, in terrible condition, all waiting to be paid what is owed to them by the host family. Then we are taught to consider ourselves the dispensers of Buddhas teachings, as judges, we are the judge. We are trying to settle this outstanding debt and because we, ourselves, the lamas and the monks, are the judge. Then the witness who looks down upon the host family and all the elementary spirits and ourselves as the judge is the witness of the Three Jewels – the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. They are looking down to insure that the justice is justly dispensed that is what they do. We cannot try to appease the family at the expense of all the demons out there. Instead what we have to do is generate loving kindness, compassion. Treats bring down the level of the host family down to the level of all the ghost and the demons because there is equality all are mother sentient beings. When we can do this in order to dispense justice to help the host family as well as to appease the elementary spirits we say prayers How is it going to affect this? Because the power of meditation is one. The truth of Dharma teaching is another one. Loving kindness and the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas blessings another. When you put all them together, although the demons and elementary spirits out there cannot actually devour our flesh and blood because they have not form, they are fully satisfied with what is paid to them on that day or days through prayers and the truth of prayer and by the blessings of the Buddhas. They are totally satisfied appeased and shall cause not harm and it is helping both the suffering of demons as well as the suffering of the host family. That is the kind of attitude we have been taught to have. The same thing applies in practicing Chöd.

Whenever you are inviting demons or ghost treat them as equal, let not be anger or hatred, after all our own body is so much like a temporary shelter, because we all know that we have to discard our physical body sooner or later. Because we have to do that, there is not any kind of point into clinging onto it. Instead we have learn to see it just as a house,

instead of holding onto it when we know that we cannot hold onto it indefinitely might as well do something much more useful than to have this morbid attachment. So we have to give away. That we can do mentally as long as we are in cyclical existence we are going to change from form to form and each time we can give away in meditation. As soon as when you sit down and practice when you transfer your consciousness to Vajravarahi. Then we say OM ( OM AH HUNG) that very secret letter because of the power of blessing and the truth of the prayer it transforms, it increases our little stature body to the size of the universe. When you say AH that body, the size of the universe, is transformed into anything that all the sentient beings out there, specially the demons, desire. It could be anything just each individual whatever their hearts needs and wants are it will be fulfilled. HUNG, that is the turning into wisdom nectar and whoever gets this will be healed when suffering from sickness and resuscitate when being at the verge of dying. All the idea of this is to visualize that whoever comes into contact with my body that is now transformed into all kinds of chattel, property and nectar whoever comes across this and into contact, all the male species will become Chenrezig and all the female species will become Tara.

These explanations are for the consonant Pha, Pha as was explained, ties in with the Sutrayana tradition of teaching. That was the method of generating compassion and loving kindness. Now we are going to deal with the Ta (part of the word PHAT). Ta is an inverted Ta is about wisdom and emptiness. This ties in with Mahamudra and the Great Perfection teachings, phyag rgya chen po and rdzogs pa chen po.

This Buddhist teaching, no matter how far and wide one goes on and toss about, really when you retract all this things and put back the original source everything really kind of falls in two neat pigeon holes. One neat pigeonhole is the Bodhichita mind. In Bodhichita mind there are two, one is relative Bodhichita and the other absolute Bodhichita. Pha dealing with Sutrayana tradition all the explanations given thus far fall into the category of relative Bodhichita. Now talking about Ta, wisdom and emptiness, that would be the absolute Bodhichita.

Ta, dealing with Tantric aspect or under the category of absolute Bodhichita. In this what emptiness, wisdom, which is the ultimate. Wisdom is emptiness what it means is seeing the true nature of mind when you see the true nature of mind just as is written in the Heart Sutra – no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body no feeling and all the rest of it. There is none at all because when you are in the state of true nature of mind then all these external existences are not relevant.

# - One merges one's consciousness with a huge expanse of sky. It is something like the non-huge merges with the huge expanse of sky. It becomes something like huge expanse of space. Because true nature of mind itself is emptiness. Up above we have, if you like, the enlightened Buddhas. Down below, if you like, we have the demons and elementary spirits that cause harm. In between, if you like, we have the humans, the practitioners. As far as the true nature of mind is concerned all the three categories share one and only one mind, there is not difference. That is why there is equality. Once one is able to meditate and stay in the state of Mahamudra or in the state of true nature of mind then there is no reason whatsoever to have confrontation between human species and the demons and elementary spirits because both don't exist. The state of Dharmakaya is the true nature of mind. For example in Samantabhadra supplication it is clearly written that the fundamental basis, the basic nature of mind, of enlightened beings as well as those who are in the cyclical existence are all the same. For example in this tent all of us are sitting together here. If all of us could at a given time get rid of all conceptual thoughts and stay in the true nature of mind meditation, all of us. The power of that, what happens is that all our minds merge into one,

it just becomes one and not separate. That oneness, that all pervading mind, true nature of mind, Mahamudra, has tremendous power and when we cast that oneness out it is going to lessen the obscuration that is obscuring the true nature of mind of all Samsaric beings. Therefore this Chöd, again going back to cutting attachment and ego, which give rise to all appearances which are blocking our mind from joining together. Chöd is not just cutting but forceful cutting. As resorting to this particular method we are forcefully trying to eliminate ego clinging.

This is kind of difficult because Na is I, that in Tibetan grammar is a pronoun but when you attach a Sa it becomes Nye, that becomes a verb "I is about to undertake something". This idea of I, if I have to give you an example, each one of you are thinking – I have come to receive teachings, there is this **I**. **I** am receiving teachings, **I** am going to do this, **I** am going to do that. Really everything is happening around **I** but when you make a slight change to this **I**, of course we do need a label because otherwise we wouldn't be communicating, and instead of just **I** am receiving teachings to enrich **my** knowledge and insight, we would shift the focus a little bit - I am here to receive teachings to benefit others. Now the focus is shifted to somebody else and that is very important here.

Another example here, just pick on someone here, a household lady who wants to keep her house spick and span at all times. You are going to do that, is it necessary? I am not suggesting that you shouldn't do it, but there are two different ways of doing it. One is positive conducive to Dharma practice and one is negative. The negative thing would be if you have such a great attachment to your home and **I** is in the center of things, you want to keep the house looking good because it satisfies your ego, it satisfies your own needs. That would be one way of looking at it and it is negative. Now you want to do the household chores and you want to keep the house spick and span just like you were doing in a negative way. But shift the focus now – you do what normally you do but as far as the motivation is concerned, say to yourself - I have to keep this house spick and span I am a temporary guest, this house is going to benefit other beings. Those who are going to occupy it as I am occupying it now, let me leave a clean legacy for the benefit of those who are going to take care of the house after me. Now you are doing the same thing to the house but the focus is shifted from self-gratification to the benefit of somebody else. So this is how you can shift your focus.

Even if your house is made of solid gold you are not going to live there forever but when you shift your focus you should not, mentally, designate your home to any particular kin. If you did that that would be negative, that would be again nothing but attachment. You cannot polish the floor and keep it spick and span for your older son or daughter. That would be ego clinging. What you should say to yourself is – when I am gone this is for the use of whoever is going to occupy, do not designate to anybody. Whoever comes to live let this house benefit. Even if some mishap should happen, even if this house should fall in the hands of your enemies you no longer have any attachment to the house, you no longer have any kind of hatred or anger. That is the way you should have the focus of your mind shifted.

In this case we are not dealing with your house but we are dealing with your body but the application of the principle, applies equally here. Your body, speech and mind, the way you generate your mind is not only when you practice Chöd, but it should be stabilized so you have the same kind of mind set at all times. That is to say that you will do everything body-wise, speech-wise and mentally, do everything possible to be of use and benefit to your family members which will have a ripple effect to reach outside your immediate family circle. Body speech and mind you will do everything you can for the benefit of other beings

as well and refrain from doing harm. If you have something like this in your mind then the very food that you eat, really you are eating for sustenance. When you eat for your own sustenance really you are sustaining yourself for the benefit of all sentient beings. Because you have said to yourself, resolved, that you are going to do everything from body, speech and mind to be of help and benefit for others. There is no negative accumulation whatsoever in the consumption of food because you are consuming food to sustain your body so that you will be of benefit for other beings. Focus is really shifted for helping other rather than yourself. This is a brief explanation.

Chöd practice is, as already mentioned, about reduction and elimination of ego, when you read the Root Text there is mention of the Chöd classified as male (father) Chöd and female (mother) Chöd. Some are classified as the hidden treasure category, there is the pronouncement category. All this instead of helping you might create confusion and doubt and unanswered questions. These are really irrelevant they do not concern you. It doesn't really matter whether this particular Chöd belongs to the father or mother category, the hidden or pronouncement category. Chöd simply is Chöd and it deals with reduction and elimination of ego clinging.

In order to go through the Root Text, the father or male category is the one that is passed down from Padampa Sangye, the pacifist, to Mara Serpo and from that lineage to Machig Labchi Drolma and Machig Labchi Drolma passed it down to her disciples. That particular category is called the male (father) Chöd category. The one, which Machig Labchi Drolma passed down to her daughters and from them to the disciples, is classified as mother Chöd. Here it says that this particular empowerment and teaching that you are receiving belongs to the father category of Chöd practice because it originated from Padampa Sangye. Also speaking in different terms, instead of male and female in terms of lineage originating from Padampa Sangye it is called the method lineage. Because this also originated from Tara that is also called the wisdom lineage. On one hand you have the method, on the other hand you have the wisdom. So lineage wise it is also the method lineage and wisdom lineage. Because also in addition to that this particular teaching was expounded and taught by Machig Labchi Drolma's son Gyalwa Döndrup that is why it is also called the Chöd lineage of experiential understanding. We have three different lineages. In addition to that also coming, this teaching, starting from the historical Buddha Sakyamuni it also has encompassed the Kargyupa lineage. All these four are encompassed in this particular teaching when we talk in terms of lineage.

Lineage-wise we have counted four that far, on top of that there is also a fifth one because Machig Labchi Drolma is emanation of Prajnaparamita and that is why this particular practice encompasses blessing lineage. This particular practice contains these five lineages. In Chöd practice there are those which come in structured format there are also Chöd teachings that are not necessarily structured in the sense that sequentially it goes to the Refuge down to the dedication is taught randomly. So, in those terms in this particular teaching is structured, sequentially arranged. At the same time we will find that there are random teachings associated to this particular practice as was taught yesterday.

In Chöd practice there are all kinds of teachings, the number of teachings, I think, it was 3 sets of 42 volumes each mentioned yesterday. Those would be the structured sequentially arranged. At the same time there are the random teachings. This particular practice Chöd practice subscribes to both categories.

Who compounded this? Who put it into verses? It was Mikyö Dorgé (VIII Karmapa), he compiled all the structured formatted teachings and pith-instructions and commentaries. He



took out all the jest of these teachings and put this particular Chöd practice together. This was who it was Mikyö Dorgé.

The Root Text says - then what are the benefits of practicing Chöd? These are the answers to this question given by Aryadeva in his commentary in the original Sanskrit language. Aryadeva went on to say that when you practice Chöd properly this is going to bind all the devas, gods above by the sacred word to come to the help of the practitioner. This also because of practicing it the very awe that you generate is going to subdue all the nagas down below and as a result whatever kind of responsibilities or activities you delegate on the nagas will be done. Then devas or the gods above will come to your aid in every respect and all the nagas below will be ready to help and serve the practitioner. When we talk in terms of the devas up above coming to your help, when we have given up self attachment and when your mind is in its purest form, natural form, it is coming face to face with the state of Dharmakaya the ultimate achievement, accomplishment. And when that happens all the devas and gods are going to see the practitioner as one's own kith and kin and to the practitioner's aid will then come the devas. As for the nagas because you have no self-attachment and that the flip side of non-existence of I centerness means generation of loving kindness and compassion. Once you have nothing but loving kindness and compassion then you become like a king, a monarch, in all the subjects, including the nagas will be at your back and call. When you understand the non-existence of self that is the state of Buddhahood or enlightened beings. When we are obscured by obscurations we are not in contact with the true nature. But once we have been able to establish this contact with the true nature of mind, which is the basis for all the glorious ones, or the Tathagatas, you are really the king of all existence. Every form of being will like you, will want to associate with you and come to your aid. Those are some of the benefits outlined by Aryadeva in the original Sanskrit text.

Here in the Root Text in Aryadeva's words there are *tenke fa nam Tam La To*, the key word here *Tam La To* means bind by the sacred word. In other words one is volunteering to be bound by a sacred word to do certain things or refrain from doing certain things, one is making a pledge. This is a very profound word and needs some explanation. I will use an analogy of two friends, friend A and friend B. Friend B always sees friend A as a very sincere, honest, whatever he says he does it, words match his deeds, he is reliable and honest. Therefore whenever friend A says something to friend B friend B realizing which kind of friend A is, his words carry weight, his words are relied upon. Just like that, when you have this special wisdom whereby you don't have any kind of ego clinging or I centerness the flip side is wanting to do everything for the benefit of others. Whenever you don't have any kind of focus on yourself and the reverse is the focus on others. You are always trying to do something for the benefit of others. When this is understood by the devas above, just like friend B having this confidence in friend A, the devas see you and they understand you, they read you inside out and know that all your motivations, everything you want to do is for the benefit of others. That kind of mind set is exemplary, reliable, something to be followed and therefore when you practice Chöd all the devas will come to your aid. We also have a word with the same kind of etymology *Tam Tig*. In Sanskrit *Tam* is to bind and *Tig* is *Samaya*, to bind by *Samaya*. Because the disciple has this wonderful relationship with the master. The master being an example to the disciples. Disciples believing in the words and deeds of the master, when he says certain things to the disciples. Henceforth as a result of having received this empowerment now you are obligated to do this or that and those words carry weight, those words bind the disciples to fulfil whatever he asked them of. This is an important word and I wanted to explain it to you.

At the end of the empowerments you must remember that you repeat certain verses and this what you are repeating actually is whatever the “chief” wants me do it shall be done by me. That is what you are repeating after. That repetition or that verse is Tam Tig or you have pledge to do whatever the “chief”, being the Vajra master, wants you to do. During the time of Guru Padmasambhava there were also all kinds of beings out there, who believing the words and deeds of Guru Padmasambhava came to him and offered their bodies, speech and mind and offered to do whatever Guru Padmasambhava commanded them to do.

Here Aryadeva goes on to say that lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas they all are going to treat you, the practitioner, as their sons or daughters. The reason for this is that lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas or Dharma protectors, they too took the first step to take Refuge, generate Bodhichita mind and gradually they became enlightened. There are three states of Buddhahood –Dharmakaya, Samboghakaya and Nirmanakaya. When you, the practitioner treks the same path and strives to get rid of I clinging and devote all your energy towards helping others, which is Bodhichita mind in action, then all the lamas, the Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas celebrate, they welcome, they rejoice and accept you as their heart son or daughter.

#6 - Lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas or Dharma protectors rejoiced and take a liking to beings who practice Dharma. They do not lean toward the reach and the powerful. Lamas and enlightened beings treat disciples without matter whether the disciple is reach or famous, pretty or not so pretty. What really counts is the purity of heart, Bodhichita mind wanting to help other sentient beings. Because lamas, you obviously see, you come in contact with them. What you don't see are the Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas, but even if you don't see them they act like the lamas they want to do everything in their power to encourage you to practice Bodhichita mind because by practicing Bodhichita mind you too are going to reach enlightenment. That reaching enlightenment is for the benefit of others and knowing that you are a potential help to all mother sentient beings, the Lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas they all take a liking to what you are doing that is generating Bodhichita mind.

The word Dharmapala in Sanskrit, Dharma protector in English, we'll see a brief explanation. Who are they? For example we have here a mask on display of Mahakala. Mahakala is the emanation of the glorious Chakrasamvara, which is a Yidam deity. Mahakala has pledged to serve all sentient beings like other Dharma protectors who have made the secret pledge to Buddha Sakyamuni as well as Guru Padmasambhava. We also have another set of Dharma protectors; we call them in Sanskrit Bhumipalace, the local guardians. Local guardians very frequently have names beginning with the Tibetan word *Geyen*. *Geyen* is upaseca vow, it is a layman's vow dealing with the four fundamental precepts and if you want to make it five, yet you add the refraining from the use of alcohol and it becomes five. These Dharmapalas once upon a time pledge in front of Buddha Sakyamuni or Guru Padmasambhava not to take lives, and all the upaseca vows not to commit adultery. Not to harm other sentient beings but to come to their help as much as they can. That was a long time ago, by practicing these precepts many of them have already reached the first step towards full enlightenment. There are 10 of them <sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> In Sanskrit they call them the Bhumies, the highest is the 10, when you reach enlightenment. There are those who reached the first step, there are those who reached the second step, there are those who reached as much as 8 steps. Once a being has reached the first of the 10steps that is the step of no return. You don't have to come back to cyclical existence. So there are all these different types of Dharma protectors.

Here the bottom line is that if you have genuine, precious, Bodhichita mind then all the lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas will treat you as a very precious commodity. It is something like a huge grassland or a lawn full of weeds and grass of different types and out of nowhere, amidst all this growth you have a wonderful, beautiful flower a single flower, well you are going to pay attention to that flower, you are going to safeguard it from harm. That is because it is very beautiful to look at, people will enjoy it, but the same cannot be said about the rest of the growth, the grass and the weeds. Likewise when the practitioner has genuine Bodhichita mind all the Lamas, Yidam deities, Dakinis and Dharmapalas are going to protect you; there are going to like you because this Bodhichita mind is very precious and very rare commodity. Although themselves enlightened beings with Bodhichita mind they cannot give the same kind of treatment to all sentient beings. Because all sentient beings are not the same commodity, they have to develop Bodhichita mind. Bodhichita mind is very special to all deities because that is essentially what it will be of benefit to all other sentient beings.

Before we drink our tea we pour some in an offering bowl and offer it to the Dharmapalas. We already talk to you about how the Dharmapalas will react towards you if you have genuine Bodhichita mind. Now who has and who doesn't have it? Sometimes you may say I am really trying to develop Bodhichita mind but no one is recognizing this and you may feel a little bit discouraged. No, who will see Bodhichita mind in you? You alone can tell, you should be your witness, whether or not there is genuine Bodhichita mind only you will know. You don't have to have others to recognize this. Then when you have it the Dharma protectors will react to you as to their sons or daughters. What about your own attitude towards the Dharma protectors for example Mahakala. These kinds of Dharma protectors have pledged to safeguard 1,000 Buddha's teachings in countless number of lifetimes. What it really means is that they are working very, very hard, day and night. It is important for the practitioners to appreciate that, note that these Dharma protectors are really, relatively speaking, overworked. Therefore appreciate their hard work and when you are making offering, knowing that they are working so hard for the benefit of all sentient beings and as a gratitude make that offering. That would be very, very meaningful. There is a saying in Tibetan – a monk or a nun the size of a thumb will have the strength of a yak as long as there is Bodhichita in his or her mind and accordingly interact with the Dharmapalas. It is very important to interact in the correct way, appreciate the kind of service they are doing for you.

In Aryadeva's language there is mention of the tangible demons, in Machig Labchi Drolma's own words she says - the best example of tangible demons would be one's enemy. How does animosity develop, originate? What is the root cause of treating each other as enemies? This is because of this notion of **I** and **you**, when you treat yourself as more important than others there is attachment to **I** when you disregard the sentiment of the other that would give rise to hatred, anger. These are all due to attachment, ego clinging, and the dualistic notion of **I** and **you**. Gradually you will be talking to each other in very unpleasant and harsh words. You will be showing each other nasty body language, there will be others that will come to your aid by exaggerating things and sowing further desertion between you and your enemy, that will increase your negative emotions and it is just going to play havoc on you. That is why Machig Labchi Drolma uses your enemy as an example. Anger is a very powerful negative emotion. When somebody has anger this ties in with the dualistic clinging, this idea of **me** and **you**, you in the Machig Labchi Drolma example of enemy. When you generate anger, never mind how your enemy is going to perceive you, but when, let's say the father of the household is always angry, whenever you look at his face is

so gloomy, it is so upsetting that even the family members don't want to look at the face. Because at the minute you look at the father's face it puts you off. What the father is going to think? Only the enlightened beings see their own faults not us. The father is going to think that the family members are really very inconsiderate, they pay no attention to **me**. When a person has so much anger it is like a thorny bush, nobody wants to, knowingly, touch that, because one knows the consequences if he or she touches the very thorny bush. Therefore it is very important for the practitioner eliminate anger and definitely when there is anger not to unleash it at the cost of others. What about when the other person is unleashing too much anger towards yourself? At that time instead of confronting that anger you should say to yourself – this person definitely, one sentient being just like myself, and in all probability he has been my father or my mother. He or she because of ignorance is acting this way because his past karmic imprint and try to understand and control your emotions and refrain from doing the same unleashing anger towards the perpetrator. Anger really is the most powerful cause to being reborn in the cyclical existence and that too in the three lower realms. Anger is really very latent, it is hidden in the mind and once in a while somebody is going to come up and stirred it up and remind you that there is this anger and it is going to surface. When anger surfaces you should say to yourself, instead of confronting it with anger from your side, try to be thankful to have been reminded that there really is a hidden anger lying dormant in one's own mind. That if not controlled properly it would cause you to be reborn in the three lower realms. Not only being thankful but refrain from reciprocating whatever the other person is doing to you. That practice of patience definitely is going to be felt by the other person and there will be a time when the two of you will reconcile and become friends.

As per Root Text here when you have anger and you unleash that negative emotion, negatively affecting the other person, then that other person is bound to have many friends at least it will affect 2 or 3 of them. Word will spread and everybody is going to hear that there is that animosity between you and the other. The next time when you see the friends of the other person you are going to suspect, with or without cause, oh yes! these people are his or her friends and therefore having heard what has happened between him or her and me they, quite naturally, are going to take the side of their friend and let me not to talk to them. Let me even give them a dirty look and attitude. That is going to further cause suspicion in those, otherwise, quite innocent friends. And there are going to say - well you know this attitude is quite negative all the time, let me also not talk to this person. In this way later on it will just multiply, keep on going and if you live in a little village or in a hamlet, specially, there are not going to be many people, after sometime, who are going to receive you well. Sakyapandita has clearly written – if you can overcome one enemy, which is your anger, then all other enemies will become your friends.

The tangible demons in the Tibetan language is Thog, the word Thog has several meanings. In this particular case the word Thog means – when you stumble onto something, you can only stumble onto something that is tangible, so it is kind of translated as tangible demons. Not only the enemy, Machig Labchi Drolma has used the enemy as an example representative of all tangible demons, but even anything that has form, sound, smell and taste, they all can be tangible demons. Your mind can turn them at least, into tangible demons. For example a beautiful flower, when you look at it and if there is attachment

you've stumbled on this. That is also what becomes tangible demon. There are thogs bcas bdud or tangible demons on one hand and zang thal or no barrier <sup>17</sup>.

Here Aryadeva has put in the context that when you practice Chöd if you can get rid of this dualistic notion, in this particular case with regards to tangible demons, all the tangible things to do with your senses. Then there is not going to be any kind of impediment from external things. There are there. You know the impermanence nature of all there is.

Everything is clearly seen, the flower, yet the mind is not chasing after these sights, sounds, tastes and texture. Your mind is in the true nature of mind meditation and under these circumstances nothing external can cause you any kind of harm.

Just as I told the story about the decapitated Chöd practitioner, when you see all these external things let them be there. As long as you don't have attachment, when you do not chase after them and cast all your mind, focus your mind on those external things none of those external things are going to cause you any harm. On the other hand, if you have a lot of conceptual thoughts related to the external things and feel and fear – if I did this I am going to be dead, then even before an external force strikes a blow you are already dead. It is important to realize that.

In Aryadeva's text it says - everything you perceive is not going to cause any kind of harm to you. That is because when you have stopped thinking of yourself, when your mind is free from conceptual thoughts everything is clear though, like a reflection in the mirror. Like in this tent all of you would be clearly reflected on the mind's mirror but the mind is not going to wander off and chase each and every image. Instead when it is in the state of Mahamudra or in that meditation everything is clear and yet free from conceptual thoughts and therefore you get the freedom from all kinds of harm that otherwise can come from outside.

Padampa Sangye said that if you understand the truth about all phenomena. Then you have no reason to fear any kind of harm from external harm: tigers, leopards and other things; because the nature understanding the nature of all existence is really impermanence and non-existence. Although like reflections in a mirror there are there but what can a reflection do to cause harm to you if you understand the nature of these reflections?

In the Tibetan language there is a thing called "raw mind". Try doing this - when all these conceptual thoughts and appearances come, these are the causes for everything: unhappiness, doubts, all kinds of emotions, suffering. Whether they appear externally or inside your own mind let them come whenever they want to come but you just totally disregard whatever is happening. Do not follow them and they will disappear, see then what happens. Even if it is something very wonderful you don't want to shift your attention or focus of meditation onto these pleasures. Whatever kind of illusion or play is being enacted in your mind, let them go on but you try to remain focused on the true nature of mind and then see what happens. That kind of state of mind is also called raw nature of mind.

When we talked about enemies Machig Labchi Drolma used the kind of tangible, physical enemies but that is not the only enemy. Enemies are also intangible enemies, for example this dualistic clinging that is attachment and anger. Especially of these anger is easier to get rid of as compared with to desire and attachment. If you have attachment or desire for something or somebody very beautiful it is going to be a way more difficult than getting rid of anger. Attachment or desire and anger, another way of saying would be expectation and

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<sup>17</sup> The idea of zang thal as an example - sometimes we see an enemy in the movies or star track, one that can walk through walls and there is no kind of barrier whatsoever, nothing is stopping. When you have the possible stumbling blocks to do with all the senses, these are called the tangible demons.

doubt. One should, of course, get rid from now of all the more coarse attachments and angers and expectations and doubts. After some stage one will be also required to have no expectation, for example, of having a glimpse of the enlightened being, even one's own Yidam deity. One will be taught to refrain from any kind of fear or the consequences of having to be born in the hell state of mind.

# - These are all tangible and intangible enemies. This desire or attachment and anger or speaking differently expectations and doubts. These two are really like two eyeballs, whenever there is one obscured there is obscuration of your vision, so equally bad. The intangible demons, intangible demons are the things that are not composed of material or physical things. It would be different kinds of delusions, dreams, all these come about because of emotional afflictions and this one should recognize that these are the faults that one should try to give away, and these emotional affliction arise again from dualistic notion of **I** and **you**. Whenever you have this negative emotions which appear, then try to generate compassion and loving kindness, that is of the two: method and wisdom, that is the method. Method is generating loving kindness and compassion and for the wisdom part when these things happen – delusions, bad dreams, bad influences, these should be got rid off by first understanding the true nature of these different happenings. Really if you look carefully they do not exist, then this would be the wisdom part of the understanding. When you have this kind of understanding, when you see the true nature of all these delusion and know that these are the by-products of ignorance and when you understand that then none of these are going to affect you. There is so much written about the influences coming from intangible demons and the way to go about conquering these emotions. Everything is clearly written in Milarepa's life history so if you could take the trouble to read, keeping in mind that you received this Chöd practice, and try to use all those episodes in proper context, then that would be of help to you.

Talking about demons, tangible demons and intangible demons, demons are not out there externally. All the demons are in your own mind. It comes from ignorance; it comes from dualistic grasping. To prove my point just think of dreams. Dreams come as a result of one's own imprint left in previous life or in this life. A person who is always, always angry or hates others is going, more than likely, to have dreams about fighting or beating up others and very nasty dreams like that. Somebody who is very stingy and miser is more than likely going to have dreams about loosing something precious and worrying about that. Then the demons are not out there but inside our own mind. Trying to understand that is very, very important.

Padampa Sangye had said that all the tangible demons are nothing but illusion all the intangible demons are emotional afflictions and I fear neither of these two. For Padampa Sangye it was very, very easy because emotional afflictions he could dissipate them on the spot. As soon as a negative emotion arose he could turn it around and make it disappear or turn it into a positive emotion but we will find it a little more difficult than Padampa Sangye found.

It is really negative emotions someone like ice because interdependent origination comes in the form of ice, if you like. To use the same kind of analogy our true nature of minds like boiling hot water. So whenever negative emotions come just put these ice cubes into the true nature of mind, which is boiling, bubbling and ice will just melt right there. Now we will have a break and some tea and then see if you can make all the negative emotions disappear on the spot. (laughs).

If you understand that all demons exist within one's deluded mind, then you are really a Dharma practitioner. If you understand the non-existence of demons when you reach a

high state of teaching then that is the time when you have liberated yourself. There are all kind of instances when Sedigma, for examples, showed all kind of illusions in front of Milarepa and how Milarepa dealt with those illusions, you can read about it in Milarepa's history. Like those there are tremendous amount of benefits by practicing this Chöd and trying to get rid of ego and attachment and understand the nature of all phenomena. Guru Padmasambhava has written a commentary (loud chewing noises and laughs) – don't think I am an old man because I still have teeth, (more and more noises and laughs) – this side is not doing too good<sup>18</sup>. Guru Padmasambhava wrote a commentary on Chöd, in it he has mentioned that by practicing Chöd it will get rid of all the impediments and as for the experiential understanding of the true nature of things. It will be by practicing Chöd in a genuine way it will have an unobstructed experiential understanding of true nature of mind. It will also get one rid of dualistic clinging and dissipate all kind of delusions. Obstruction really is the expectations and doubts, although a practitioner has genuine inclination to practice Dharma there also times when **I** is so important and everything to do with current life, material things, one is kind of allured. Whenever one is confronted with a hard time, a difficult period, because one faces suffering and hardship one tends to loose faith in Dharma practice and throws hands up and says – I give up, because I am going through suffering. That kind of attitude especially if one has all the energy devoted towards the material aspect of existence in this life, that is not a Dharma practitioner. Whatever one is and one will be in this life is because of karmic imprint. If one can do things to make amends, if one can correct this path one will do it, whatever cannot be whatever is meant to be is meant to be. So a true practitioner will say to him or her self – let it be whatever because my concern is not for this life. My concern is focused for the future betterment of myself, so I will be able to help all sentient beings. So this is the kind of attitude one should develop.

Then Guru Rinpoche has said here that by practicing this Chöd truthfully one will accomplish all the highest level of experiential understanding of the true nature of things. What is preventing us from realizing the true nature of mind is because of this kind of attachment to external things. Because desire and attachment within our deluded mind, when we have this kind of dualistic clinging each time is going to leave an imprint on otherwise pristine and stainless nature of mind. For example, when we have dreams this is all to do with karmic imprint. The karmic imprint has accumulated from the very beginningless time. Many million of years have already gone, and we have this accumulation of this negative imprint, but if one is able to slowly put an end to this dualistic clinging, attachment and then we are not longer adding more layers and layers of obscurations. It is going to be clearer and clearer to realize the true nature of all phenomena.

Once you attain a level of experiential understanding of true nature of things, then that itself is going to get rid of the idea of **I** and **you**, the separation of these two entities. Otherwise whatever is **I** or **I** related we tend to have attachment, whatever is the other side we tend to have even jealousy or anger or things like that. The idea of all the things, the sounds and sights we see, the beauty, youth, big, small ... all these perceptions if we just leave then whatever they are, let them be instead of trying to mind the business of external things. Then it will like a mirror, everything that is out there will be just like a reflection in the mirror. We should not try to mind the business of what is reflected in the mirror. In Tibetan we often say - mind your own business. So, we have to try to learn to mind our own business. Our own business is let the mind rest in its natural state and everything that

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<sup>18</sup>My footnote: translator says: now I've forgotten.

comes, no need to block them neither but, let them come do not mind the business of what is reflected in your mirror-like mind. You must've heard the expression mirror-like wisdom, mirror-like wisdom indicates that once the mind is like a mirror it reflects everything that is out there, but at the same time it is not a reality that you can hold onto. Nothing in the mirror is tangible.

In this text, of Guru Rinpoche's teaching, there is this term, which once translated would be the two Dharmas, not a sublime Dharma. Dharma referring to the thoughts, material, everything Samsaric. There are two Dharmas one would be like **I** and **you**, the enemy versus friend, beautiful versus ugly, sweet melodies versus not so sweet melodies, wholesome taste versus not so tasty. All these are two kind of polar opposites. What happens is that the thing which is pleasing to the senses is a reason for attachment, those things that are not pleasing to the senses are reason for aversion, anger, and hatred. Those are the things to be given up.

I don't know how much of sense this will make to you, understanding of this is not difficult but the practice is kind of difficult. So this idea of two Dharmas, the idea of this beautiful and ugly, in both cases none of these are in themselves inherently existent. Let's take the example of something or somebody a very beautiful. That beauty is reason for attachment because something that is beautiful is appealing to the senses, once this appealing takes place and then is immediately followed by attachment, but when you can recognize what kind of process is taking place in one's own mind the attachment will disappear. Conversely we take the case of a very ugly thing or a person, what is ugliness? Living beings have one common thing and that is the Buddha nature, this is the basis for all the Tathagatas, all the Buddhas, the most important thing is the existence or absence of Bodhichita mind, does that being have Bodhichita mind or does that being not have Bodhichita mind? That is the big question. If that being has Bodhichita mind then that is very, very precious. Who is precious? Not the being himself or herself, but the aspect of the mind which is compassion and loving kindness, that is very important. We are not comparing the beautiful body versus the ugly body and then weigh and measure and put a label on each. We, the practitioners, just strike a balance, think of equanimity. What we do measure and weigh is the presence or absence of Bodhichita mind. If there is Bodhichita mind in either the beautiful or the ugly that is what counts the most. Then we have a tendency to talk about clean and dirty. What is clean and what is dirty? Think about it carefully, the food we eat, we put it in the mouth, is that clean? And if that is clean, how can all the sudden become dirty when it comes through the other end? (laughs) We can say smells bad, that is understandable, (more laughs) but food is the same it went in from one aperture and coming out from the other. If in the beginning it was clean it should also be clean when it comes from the other end. Trying to strike a balance if you think carefully this idea of clean and dirty, beautiful and ugly, they don't exist. Trying to draw out in equanimity. The same thing happens with happiness and sorrow. This idea example of beautiful and ugly, clean and dirty, can be applied in all cases.

And also contagious diseases, people are warned against being contaminated by beings who have contagious diseases. The doctors will warn to keep away. If one is meant to contract disease from others one would, if one is karmically not meant to; then one simply wouldn't. This is just not saying, because I experienced it myself – when I was in prison in Tibet I use to know a Gelupa reincarnate lama. He was said to be suffering from some kind of lung disease, the Chinese call it “chike” or something like that. They put him in isolation and we were encouraged to keep away from him. The doctors, who practice the same medical system as in the west, said - the lama is not going to last for long and we should not have



any kind of physical contact with him or else we too we'll contract the disease. I was with this lama for 20 years and in 20 years I didn't contract any disease from him nor did he died. In fact right now he is alive and kicking and he is doing a lot of useful Dharma activities. Therefore it points to the fact that unless one is karmically destined to contract such diseases one simply wouldn't.

One should not contract diseases from other sick people, but people do contract them. How come? That is because of doubts. I have already talked about expectations and doubts, when everybody is told that there is, for example, a plague and that if people are not careful are going to be contaminated and contract the disease. At that very moment most people tend to be very, very disturbed and they will open their eyes wide and open their mouth and say – oh my gosh now there is a plague and is going to hit us, in fact at that very moment it might've already hit you. When you have expectations and doubts, it happens. Pundit Atisha for example, was so compassionate to all sentient beings, he traded places with suffering sentient beings. For example if a rock hit a dog, because he was so involved in the suffering of the sentient beings, pundit Atisha could actually feel the pain himself. Why? Because is the power of the mind. Of course in the case of Atisha, he is directing his mental power in a positive way to benefit the dog and other sentient beings. But in our case if we are apprehensive of the things that we don't have to be, that very apprehension is going to cause all kinds of diseases. I have never for a moment thought that I was going to contract a contagious disease. If it is meant to be karmically, I will get it anyway, even if I get myself locked in an armored dwelling. Because it was not meant I didn't contract any disease. Really it is mind over matter if you can practice it correctly. Like eating habits, sometimes you get told – do not eat this, this is stale, that is rotten, if you do this you are going to get pain in your stomach. Well you eat those and if you wait for the pain to start, the pain will surely start. Just eat it and don't think anymore about it and nothing will happen to you. The other side of the power of mind is through meditation; this idea of rainbow body is all done with the power of mind. The most important and powerful thing is the mind, not the matter.

I am not encouraging you to be dirty or eat all kinds of rotten food. That is not what I am trying to tell you. Be hygienic, eat fresh food that is good for your health but don't just sit there and wait for the pain and suffering to strike, because if they are meant to come they will come, otherwise if they are not meant to come it wouldn't affect you. Then if you have that kind of mental determination you are much happier. You have this freedom, you are free from doubts, you are free from fears. Just let it be whatever is meant to be.

#7 - The main thing is to be hygienic and eat nutritious food but free your mind from apprehensions, doubts and unnecessary fears. When you do not have these fears and apprehensions you are freeing your mind, when the mind becomes free then it will be free from conceptual thoughts, when you don't have conceptual thoughts then you will not going to have obstacles. These are the things that are interdependent with each other.

In Guru Padmasambhava's teachings there is a thing call the disappearance of both Samsara and Nirvana at where they stand. What this says is that - when you don't have dualistic clinging, when you are free from the notion of **I** and **you** and when the mind rests in its natural form, all the mind of enlightened beings and the mind of all beings in the six realms of existence are the same. It is the same tree trunk, using the analogy of the tree, the trunk is the same although there are many branches, twigs and leaves, they all exist on one basis. The basis is the trunk. Then both Samsara or Nirvana, whatever you call it, the one very important thing is that all sentient beings, included the enlightened ones, have one pure mind and there lies the equality.

In the closing prayers we read His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long life prayers. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is really the regent of Buddha Sakyamuni. Buddha Sakyamuni himself has prophesied in many of his Sutrayana teachings and many Tantras everywhere there is a prophesy that Chenrezig is going to be the one to help, especially the beings of the degenerated age. This is a wonderful thing when you say it. I have also noticed that you are also saying my own, kind of long life prayers. When you say the His Holiness Dalai Lama's long life prayers just visualize him, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Visualize the Dalai Lama as an embodiment of all lamas all ordained Sanghas, he is not only the regent of Lord Sakyamuni but also is the embodiment of all the goodness of all the lamas and ordained Sanghas, that is more than enough for you. If you want to recite my own individual long life prayers, of course, individually you may do it but in an assembly situation all we are required to do is His Holiness the Dalai Lama long life prayer and do all those visualizations that I suggest.

So when you are saying my prayer is like plucking one flower from the tree and holding that flower in your hand and saying the long life prayer. Why not pluck the whole trunk and hold it in your hand and then you will be saying the prayer for every single flower in that tree? So when you say the Dalai Lama's prayer you will have said the long life prayers of all lamas.

The Root Text says – by practicing this method in the right way, Chöd practice, the Samsara and the Nirvana will disappear on the spot. In this very line includes the 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teachings. Now what this is really talking about the equality of all the Buddhas and all Samsaric beings, rising the level of Samsaric beings to the level of all the enlightened beings and thus is becoming equal. That is what the sentence is talking about. In the Root Text in this sentence there are four key words, in Tibetan they run like these khor dag jangsa thog<sup>19</sup>. Khor, is cycle, referring to cyclical existence, composed of six realms of existence. If we try to imagine the number of beings in this cyclical existence it would be countless numbers, just like the number of stars in the sky, just like the number of particles of this planet. There are just too many of them. Every single being is included in this key word khor or cycle, referring to cyclical existence or Samsara. Dag literally is to go beyond, it refers to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of ten directions and three times, wherever they may be. On one hand we have the ones of us in cyclical existence, on the other hand Buddhas of ten directions and three times. Jangsa means wherever each being is without having to shift places, go to different places or manipulate, that is wherever one is. Thog is to be enlightened, literally to be liberated. So, these four key words what they are saying is - whether one is in cyclical existence in six realms of life or whether you are an enlightened being of the ten directions and three times, each one of us are really, if you can see it, liberated or enlightened wherever we are without having to go places or without having to shift shapes.

How can you be enlightened on the spot, wherever you may be. Well the minute you can get rid of delusions, once the delusions are gotten rid off that is the time when one is liberated.

For us the novices, just as Milarepa has pointed out, first of all we have to recognize what is delusion and what is not delusion.

Let us say that to get liberated or enlightened is somewhat like a perfectly manicured lawn. For the novice right now your lawn is just overgrown with weeds and grasses then when you have a look you will be overwhelmed. How am I possibly going to manicure this lawn

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<sup>19</sup>Footnote mine: my best guess

so that I will be enlightened? Well, use your lawn more and go about cutting the lawn and you go ta, ta, ta, ta... like that (cutting gestures). In effect what you are doing although you are using the lawn more which is the method, one by one each strand of grass is being cut and beveled. So resorting to different methods you cut the overgrown lawn and manicure your own lawn and reach enlightenment.

The conceptual thoughts or delusions are the grass, your lawn mower is your mind and what drives the lawn mower is the alert mind and without straining your mind, remaining in focus, you keep this mission running. When you do that day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, then you are going to reach stability of mind. When your mind becomes stable, when it is not constantly interrupted by appearances and conceptual thoughts, that is the time when you get liberated.

As you will see right now we are talking about subject and object. We are talking about the grass; we are talking about the lawn mower. We have to put these labels otherwise we would not be communicating but at the actual face when appearances come when you don't follow these appearances or conceptual thoughts they will just disappear by themselves. In the true nature of mind there is no such thing as grown grass nor there is such thing as lawn mower, what it remains is the stable mind.

The conceptual thoughts or appearances don't have an inherent existence. Let's take the example of anger, you develop a tremendous amount of anger which is a non-entity just an appearance. When if we try to look in the face of anger and see if there is a thing called anger that exist, with lot of devotion to ones Root Lama you will find that there is really no such thing as anger. When you see that, realize that, anger will slowly diminish. The minute you find that anger is diminishing it will give you confidence, that will be something like cutting one strand of grass. Once you get the taste of this it will encourage you to go further.

Be able to stay like the huge expanse of space, stable and unshakable, and dwell in the true nature of mind you have to work very hard. If you get discouraged by the fact that no matter how hard you try there is a string of appearances and conceptual thoughts interrupting your meditation you should not be discouraged by that. Those are only natural, natural because these are the result of your karmic imprint. Many, many lifetimes you have accumulated these karmic imprints and this will happen. Milarepa has said -how would one know whether an emotion or appearance is delusion or not delusion? What is the deciding factor? Milarepa has given definitions and answers to this by going item by item, the five poisons. The first example Milarepa gave was - you hear nasty things being said about you and assigning you with an arsenal of harsh words against you. You also hear from third person the things are being said about you and the third person may even exaggerate and add even more. All kind of nasty things you hear other people are saying about you and somebody reporting to you what other people are saying about you. That is the Litmus test. See if you feel something as a result, are you offended? If you are offended that is delusion. You are still in the state of delusion, but on the other hand, if it has no effects to you whatsoever then you know, at that time, that your mind has been able to cut many strands of grass that I talked to you about. This would be one of the tests.

The main thing is to not be distracted from your true nature of mind. And to be not distracted, the alert mind plays a great deal of part in it. Jigme Limpa has commented on the great perfection. He said the essence of the teachings of rdzogs pa chen po or Great Perfection is to stabilize your mind, not to be distracted or swayed from your true nature of mind. Once you reach the stability, then things like sorrow, sickness, emotional afflictions, appearances, you will realize they all have no meaning at all to you. They are not going to

affect you. Once you realize just one single incident, just one single item, whatever appearance that may be a conceptual thought. When you understand and see that is the making of the mind, that otherwise there is nothing kind of externally or internally existing, then the nature of all conceptual thoughts, all appearances are exactly the same. When there is not delusion, then is the time when you will understand that Samsara and Nirvana are the same. Everything is made by mind. So, to train the mind to reach the level of stability is the way to go <sup>20</sup>.

Guru Padmasambhava goes on to say that once you understand and experience the true nature of mind it is by far much better to go to a fearsome place and practice this Chöd for one day. It is better to practice for one day, then sitting on a cushion and meditating for one year. So there is this comparison that is talking about the speciality of Chöd <sup>21</sup>.

This is a reiteration about why fearsome places, like cemeteries where there are demons, ghosts, all kinds of aversions, where there is a lot of fear. Why is this very useful? When one is in fearsome places where it is believed that all kinds of negativities are going on there, as a result one fears. When a person is stricken with fear the person's mind becomes very, very alert. It is something like, I talked to you about it, in a war situation or walking through the jungle where there are snipers and enemies everywhere you are trying to go very quietly, the only thing you hear are your own footsteps. At that time the mind is very, very sharp and then when there are external distractions, in a cemetery situation for example, first you will fear, immediately because your goal is get rid of delusions your mind will try so hard to switch back to the idea that all these are delusions and all these do not exist, then it is very, very beneficial. On the other hand, if you are overwhelmed by the fear then there are so many stories of beings that lose their mind or lose their life because they are overcome by fear.

There is a story, probably a very useful story. It is a story of a person who was overcome by fear. It was during the time of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. The Khyentse Rinpoche, the previous Khyentse Rinpoche not the Khyentse Rinpoche who passed away, but previous to that. The place was in *setuan* in Tibet there was a Chöd practitioner quite a good practitioner but he had a lot of ego and pride. He asked for permission to Khyentse Rinpoche – I want to go and practice Chöd at this very fearsome lake, called *Sedundorgewandra*. It was said that whoever went to practice Chöd at this lake did not return. Rinpoche said – well probably you are not quite ready yet to practice Chöd at this lake, it will be better if you didn't. The practitioner thought to himself - the lama is kind of underestimating me. He said to the lama - well I ought to go I must go. Then the lama said – well, if you insist on going there, take my belt and here is a Vajra made out of meteor, you tie this belt around your neck like a noose and put this Vajra as a peg in the earth and you tie the other end of my belt to this Vajra. Then the practitioner thought to himself – this wouldn't really be necessary but I do have a lot of faith in the lama and if I didn't I would be going against his wishes. Then just for the heck of it I'll do it, he talked to himself. # - Then the practitioner pitched his Chöd tent and started practicing Chöd. After a while he felt a little bit drowsy and snoozed away. When he woke up looked around and there

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<sup>20</sup> By the way a reminder that we are dealing with the Root text as kind of quoted by Guru Padmasambhava. It is the continuation from yesterday.

<sup>21</sup> Rinpoche talked yesterday, or the day before, that this method is kind of method of **forcefully** reaching enlightenment. That is how is better than other practices.

was beautiful sunshine, the sky was clear and he could see all the yaks, sheep and all the animals herd in by the shepherds and villagers. He said to himself - this is it, this time my practice has been absolutely successful and then... (All these, by the way were kind of imagination, delusion in the practitioner's mind) he saw himself going to Khyentse Rinpoche and narrating the story of how successful his practice was. He saw himself returning to his hometown village, he also saw himself going on a retreat, so all these things he saw in his mind.

Then he saw himself on a retreat in a cave up in the mountain. Of all his sponsors he saw the major sponsor bringing the yaks and domestic animals down and saying to themselves – we are going to offer milk and yogurt to our wonderful lama who is on a retreat. From his cave he saw all this drama being enacted, he saw the yaks coming down, he saw the sponsor's family members coming after the yaks and all of the sudden the yaks stampeded. When the yaks stampeded one of them batted the sponsor's father in the stomach and he died. There was a lot of grief from the family members and they came to his retreat place and said – now you have to come out of the retreat because the yak batted our household father and he passed away. You cannot be on a retreat, you have to come down and pray, etc., etc. all stricken with grief and the lama on the retreat thought: now I have to go now out of this retreat place and pray for the diseased. Whenever he crossed over the threshold he would say *kunchosumke*, praying to the triple gem. Each time he would say that when crossing the threshold he would say that and what he came out of the retreat place and was about to cross over the threshold he said *kunchosumke* and prayed to the triple gem. At that time crossing over the threshold he really jumping into the lake, he was not crossing over the threshold but he saw himself falling, stepping into the lake.

Then he, all of a sudden woke up. When he woke up he saw himself clinging onto Rinpoche's belt which was attached to the Vajra which was driven in the earth. So that was the one, which saved his life, otherwise he would've drawn in the lake.

Khyentse Rinpoche knowing what was going to happen sent a monk saying – go there and see what the practitioner is doing. When the monk went to see the Chöd practitioner was soaking wet, he was in his tent holding on to his Vajra and belt and he was reciting Guru Rinpoche's mantra, when the monk appeared and said – what are you doing? Lama sent me, you are supposed to come with me, let's go back. Still the Chöd practitioner thought that because he had all this kind of deluded visions, he thought that this monk was not real but also a part of his deluded mind. He said no and kept on insisting that he should stay. What the practitioner really did was to spend a couple of hours by the lake. In these couple of hours he was so deluded he saw all these things - he practiced Chöd, he was successful, day broke, sun shone and season changed, the nomad sponsors came down, started offering him things, the father died. All these things just took place in his mind which were all delusions. Likewise when you practice Chöd you could also have all kinds of experiences. When you see or experience all kinds of signs, sometimes it could be good signs, other times it could be bad signs. When you see good signs as a result of practicing Chöd you should not feel happy about it or talk or think about it, because if you have that kind of feeling, that feeling is going to be accompanied with attachment. Conversely if you have bad experiences you should be not upset with these bad experiences because, again, with that kind of state of mind you are likely to generate anger. Whatever kind of experience you have just let them be, don't pay too much attention, instead you should pray, you should generate devotion to your Lama and keep on practicing.

Your kind of fearsome cemetery should be, for the time being, your own home (laughs). At home there will be attachment, there will be anger, there will be emotional afflictions and

there will be plenty of ignorance too (more laughs). When these hit you, then try to stay stable and practice and that will be fearsome cemetery. If you are able to practice patience and not be kind of distracted by these things. Then the external negative forces, the devas or the demons will not affect you, then you will learn not to generate anger or treat them as aversions and when you see something more appealing you will not have attachment. So it is a good thing to start at home.

When you decide to practice at home, first say to all your family member that you are going to practice Chöd. One day Chöd Practice, and ask each and everyone of them to be their worst and throw at you everything that they can, harsh words, be nasty, try to do utmost worst. You tell them – I am going to overcome. Then you practice Chöd. You will succeed that. Then when you get used to that the next step is to have a Chöd retreat at home for 7 days. Again ask your family members to do you the favor to get on your nerves and you practice not to be distracted by these things. When you succeed these two tests, then you can go to the cemetery. Really devas or ghosts or demons, your family members can be demons too, so you don't have to go outside. They can be demons at home and when you get used to your demonic family members then you can go out and face other demons. When you overcome anger in its place you are going to generate compassion. One's own body is something you discard, but if you have kind of morbid attachments to your physical being then is going to leave and imprint, this will lead to cyclical existence. Body is something like a change of clothes. Now you have this body, when you pass away you discard that, but mind does not cease, it continues. Then if you can train your mind to understanding these ideas you will have less attachment to body. When you have less attachment to body, when you go to cemeteries, to fearsome places, to practice Chöd there wouldn't be any kind of apprehension, there wouldn't be any fear. When you don't have these apprehensions and fears then there wouldn't be delusion.

One's own physical being, the body is a wonderful thing but, unfortunately, it goes through all these processes: first birth, then aging, sickness and finally death. That, we all have to face. Then although a wonderful thing is not something last, it changes it has to be discarded whether we like it or not. That is why we keep on saying that we should train our mind to focus everything, attach all the importance to one's mind and less attachment and less importance to one's physical body. It is just like driving a car, it is shiny and new and as years go on it rusts and decays and finally you don't want it, you want to throw away...

One's own body is subject to aging, sickness and death. So there is no point in clinging onto something that is not going to last. It is much better to focus on something that is always there, which is the mind.

When you receive all these teachings the important thing here is sit down and practice, as Guru Padmasambhava was saying it is better to practice Chöd in a fearsome place for one day and than meditate for one year. Try it out. You don't have to go outside, cemeteries are everywhere, you can stay in your home and talk to family members and practice in the way I told you previously and it is going to have tremendous amount of benefit. You will feel it, just see if it works or not yourself.

These things have to be practice by lamas, by monks and by all of us. Back home we have to go to cut grass to feed animals, to cut grass you need a very sharp sickle and we go out and cut the grass. Sometimes the sickle is blunt and other times you don't quite feel like doing it. It shouldn't be like that constantly just like the flow of water your efforts and your focus should be consistently on the practice while you are eating or doing your daily chores or doing your job, whether you are talking or whatever. Try to maintain a stable mind. Milarepa has taught all these things in the six Paramitas or Perfections. He said – you don't

have to shave your head, you don't have to change your name, you don't have to wear monk's clothes, you can reach enlightenment by practicing as a lay person going about doing your day to day work. Listening and hearing to his advise there were a number of lay people who reached enlightenment in one life time, you can all do this. Don't ever use excuse that you have too much work to do and that you do not have the opportunity to do your practice, you don't have to go far away places, practice at home or wherever you are. During Milarepa's time many learned geshe with academic degrees, name and fame went to Milarepa and debated. These geshe went to him and said to Milarepa - what is Vinaya? Do you have an inkling of what Vinaya teachings is all about? And Milarepa replied - no I don't have an inkling of what Vinaya is all about, but I do know that if one's own mind is properly controlled that would have to be the teachings of Vinaya. The geshe threw another question - do you have an inkling of the logic teachings are all about? Milarepa replied - no, but if you know the true nature of mind that will have to be it. Like that you don't have to be a monk or change your costume and you can still reach enlightenment by being a lay person and going on with the day to day work and practice at the same time. **Dul** or Vinaya teachings. The Tibetan word **dul** can be used in many different contexts one of them would be to conquer also to control. **Dul** is also grinding, making into fine powder Buddha Sakyamuni says - once one is able to stabilize, conquer all the coarse appearances and conceptual thoughts and stabilize one's own mind, that is the essence of my teaching, Buddha Sakyamuni said.

First of all the detachment, getting out of dualistic clinging **I, me** and **others**, then you can uproot that **I** centeredness that is going to generate compassion. Normally when we are bitten by a small insect we cannot help saying - ouch! We cannot exercise any kind of patience, so first of all when we are not able to detach from attachment, that is not going to conduce to the generation of compassion. This is very, very important.

We talked about the Maras, what actually happens is that there are Maras that bind you, bind the body. There is a relation between the body and the mind, when the Mara binds you so tight. This all idea of Mara and association with the body is all mental, so you have to train to free yourself when the Mara sets in; the demon sets in and binds you so tight. That is the time you have to try to reach some stability of mind to counteract that.

When we talk about offering our own physical body to sentient beings we will not be able to do that, physically we will not be able to cut ourselves into pieces and make that into an offering. What we are trying to do is, first of all, you try to understand the benefits of having a body or the problem that body causes and the relationship between body and mind. Right now we look after our body, we eat food to nurture it, we wear clothes to safeguard from getting cold. When the time comes when we have to depart from our body, unless we are able to train now, there is going to be a phantom body. And because of that karmic conditioning, even when there is no body you are going to face all the sufferings that originate from having a body. Right now all the sensual objects: the form, sound, smell, taste and feeling; all these are associated with the body and you should try to find out, try to understand the relationship between body and mind. When you train yourself, even when you can not cut your body and give it as charity right now you are just training yourself so when you have to part from the body you will not have the same karmic conditioning and attachments to a body that no longer exist.

There is the Buddhist view, Buddhist meditation and Buddhist action. When it comes to action, for example, we have to eat to sustain the body, but there are ways of doing that. There should not be any kind of attachment to food, for example, is it tasty? Is it no tasty? Those things associated with attachment. Your mind is Tara and, of course, our birth as a

human being is very, very precious. Without the body we cannot do a great deal of things that we do, but when you eat try to do think of it as a Ganachakra or feast offering so that there is not attachment. At the same time it serves the purpose of nurture your body. Milarepa said - when you eat make a conversion to Ganachakra or feast offering, so by doing that you will accumulate merits and will not leave a karmic imprint which will be carried forward when you take rebirth.

The Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, those are the three outer jewels. When it comes to inner ones natural mind is the Buddha, not having attachment, not having a grasping that is the Dharma and one's own body is the Sangha. When you understand this, when you are free from attachment, in the text it says all the Three Jewels are going to be appeased by the fact that you are free from attachment and as a result there would be a flow of abundance siddhi.

When it comes to accumulating merits by making offerings to the triple gem, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. We mentally make offerings to Buddha and the Dharma and by doing so one accumulates merits. But really in terms of using those offerings neither the Buddha nor the Dharma will use any of the offerings we make. But the assembly of the ordained Sangha, that is a quite different story, by making offerings to the ordained Sangha in this life you can actually make material offerings and you can witness the use of these offerings by the ordained Sangha. That is why it is said that the ordained Sangha community is the most excellent object to whom one can make offerings and thereby accumulate merits. Once you receive Refuge ordination what you are actually doing is offering your body, speech and mind to the Triple Gem. What is Triple Gem going to do with your body, speech and mind?

#8 - Well, nothing but what you are saying is that you will use your body, speech and mind for the benefit of other sentient beings. Real activity starts when you actually put words into action and do something beneficial for the benefit of all sentient beings.

When you do this practice then you are going to receive the siddhi. Siddhi is kind of boom, you are going to receive the excellent siddhi as well as common siddhi. Excellent siddhi is when you reach enlightenment, common siddhi is benefits and happiness in this life and for future. These are common siddhi, for example I carry the name Garchen Rinpoche.

Garchen Rinpoche traces back to 300 years ago and carrying that name and wearing these robes I go about places, I drink tea and eat fruits. By carrying that name and wearing these clothes these are benefiting sentient beings. Of course who knows what really is inside me? Ordained to Sangha, by wearing these robes indicates we are the ones who generate Bodhichita mind and we bring about happiness and benefits to sentient beings. Of course even the ordained Sangha sometimes is overcome by anger and poisons, but generally that is our conviction and because of that conviction is indicated by the robes we wear, these robes are revered and in the process, benefits derive for sentient beings.

Here it says – if you kind of refrain from overdoing by looking after yourself, nurturing yourself, then all the obstacles originating internally as well that from outside no longer exist, for example, food I have talked about. Is it tasty? If it is tasty then you feel like having more. When it comes to jewelry, good clothes, you need something expensive all these things have not meaning at all. Buddha Sakyamuni has said it should not be kind of excessive either way. For example, when it comes to clothing it is not necessary to wear expensive clothing, it is also it is not necessary to wear something so terrible that it would not cover you fully and in the process you'd become cold and find difficult even to eat food. Excessive amount of food is not needed for nurturing your body on the other hand if you refrain from eating is not going to be beneficial for you either. So there should be



moderation in whatever you do, moderation in the sense of needing not too much not too little but in the sense that is appealing to everybody.

External obstacles would be when you go for expensive things, precious, good looking, when you go for something really expensive in order to procure that you need money. In order to have money you need to work very hard and in the process you come across to all kinds of problems, there will be lot of jealousy, a lot of squabble and you'll face a lot of difficulties. Aside from that, for example, in front of the Stupa in Nepal there was a case where an old lady was wearing a pair of gold ear rings and a mugger came and just chopped out her ears. In *jet kumbum* in under region a young lady was wearing a string of indigenous Tibetan beads and she was literally decapitated and they took her necklace. So when you try to procure these things first there is a lot of effort that you have to put in and secondly it causes all kind of mental turmoil. So the amount of things you strive to get equals the amount of suffering you will face. There is a saying – the more you want to eat the more work you have to put in and also the more problems you will have associated with this. So try to be moderated.

The inner obstacles would be related to whatever kind of possessions you have, the worries will be proportional to the value of your belongings. If it is a 10 dollar worth you will have a 10 dollar worth worries, if it is 20, 20 dollar worry and if it is 100 you will have 100 dollar worry. The more precious your belongings the more worries you have, so it has a very negative impact on your mind that is inner. I was once given a very expensive and precious watch. At first it made me very happy and thought to myself that - probably I am one of the few who have this kind of watch. That gave rise to pride and then when I went about wearing that watch I was worried that it might get scratched, I was worried that it may fall off. I was constantly very careful with it. That kind of made me a very miserly person and went to bed I had to be very careful not to bang it against a wall somewhere. So constantly my mind was on this, it bothered me a lot so I gave it away to another lama, so I freed myself (laughs). I freed myself from that worry.

Now we have to look about our needs and I am feeling a little hungry, so we stop here. The inner obstacles, meaning dualistic clinging is all there because of our primordial wisdom is obscured. When it is obscured we see all the inner emotions as reality. When you see all the inner emotions as reality, when you have this dualistic notion of **I** and **you**, this gives rise to attachment, desire, anger and ignorance. These are all made by conceptual thoughts, these are mere appearances. When you regard appearances as reality then all these troubles start. The question of reaching enlightenment depends on whether one can just let go these appearances or cling on to them. Where there are no conceptual thoughts, appearances and grasping to conceptual thoughts, appearances then we have not five poisons. In the Tantric way, in Tantrayana teaching instead of trying to give up the five poisons we make use of the five poisons, convert them into positive energy and instead of discarding them we use them as means to achieve an end. In Tantric way you don't have to give up the five poisons, you can incorporate them without attachment and clinging on these five poisons we can use them as means to achieve an end.

It is very, very important to see this. We talked about tangible demons. Tangible demon we've already covered it is the external tangible obstacles. Inner intangible obstacles or demons would be, for example, when you are practicing nadi channel and bindu later on and when you have doubts or expectations. These translate into inner demons. Whenever one is about to receive siddhi or accomplish something positive, when your mind set is focus in the wrong way these very accomplishments can turn into obstacles. Whenever there are obstacles, if you have the right mindset these obstacles can become means to

achieving your end. So which way you want things to turn out depends on how you set your mind.

The inner demons like dreams and all kind of signs that you'll experience when practicing and various kinds of appearances that you see. Sometimes you have wonderful experiences of what appears to be coming face to face with a deity, etc. etc. But in real terms you can better relate to this. There is this idea of turning impediments and obstacles into positive things. Lets take the example of sickness, when you are afflicted with sickness. One thing you can do is the normal way just to suffer and gloom and doom and feel bad about it, that would not benefit you, if it benefited you of course you should do it. But the most beneficial thing would be when you are suffering from sickness use that sickness in a positive way so that you will gain something from it. You just think that having to go through this sickness, you say to yourself and pray and feel that you are taking the burden of sickness being suffered and will be suffered by all sentient beings. Because it will be difficult for us to actually cut ourselves into pieces and give away our body parts as charity, we are not ready for that, but at least when you are sick we can generate and have that kind of attitude. When you instead of going about moaning and groaning about the sickness, can learn to make yourself happy. And even go to the extent of thinking profusely that you are sick now, that you are paying all the karmic debts and made this sickness kind of take the burden of other sentient beings, which are likely to go through such sickness. That will have two benefits, one you will be a happier person because if you are going to physically suffer, well we might as well to choose to suffer in a happy way. At the same time you will be accumulating merits because of that. That is how you turn a very unfortunately circumstance into something positive.

Those are the kind of obvious, visible, coarse obstacles that you turn around and use as means to achieve your end. But then there are much more subtle obstacles like, even when you are coming to receive teachings, in the middle of receiving teachings if you think well I am receiving these teachings, then again this is the wrong kind of mind set. Whenever you receive teachings you should think that you are receiving teachings for the benefit of others not to relieve your suffering or not for your own benefit.

Once you have this all if you are helping others at the same time training your mind to detach from attachment. Once you have reached a certain level of detachment where there is not clinging or grasping to the notion of **I**, **me** and **mine**, where does not exist **I**, **me** and **mine** there is not reason why there should be demons, ghosts, impediments and obstacles. You have freed yourself, all the delusions, dreams and everything else simultaneously disappear.

Where there is no **I** clinging or **I** grasping that would make all the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and everybody very pleased because in your mindset there is nothing but compassion for others. And if ever in your many lives you have gone against your Samaya, if you have ever broken the Samaya in any way this will be purified and you will not have negative effects nor you'll have to face negative consequences.

Violation of Samaya, how does one violate the Samaya? The Samaya that exist between oneself and enlightened beings, the mind of enlightened beings and the mind of sentient beings, the real nature is the same. Therefore when one engages in utter unwholesome thoughts and practices, mainly revolving around this **I** grasping then one is polluting the Buddha nature. This Buddha nature which is being shared by all, including the Buddhas. That is how you violate the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Each time a violation takes place is like a rope being snapped, each time when your alert mind recognizes all the conceptual thoughts and shifts your focus back on your true nature of mind that rope is again

connected. Your connection with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is re-established. That is what the Root Text is talking about wherever violations occur as long as you can free yourself of ego clinging and strive to have Boddhichita mind and stay in the true nature of mind your connection to Buddhas mind is re-established.

When there is no ego clinging, then all the Dakinis and Dharmapalas will automatically come to your help and remove whatever obstacle there exist in your path you don't have to invoke them consciously they will automatically be at your back and call.

It also purifies one's all obscurations and at the same time pays all karmic debts ever owed to other sentient beings. It does one more thing though, it will also, the benefit of your practice, have a ripple effect on all other sentient beings specially the demons and the formless. When we are trying to make ourselves as offering to them they, having no forms, obviously cannot devour us but because of the blessings of OM AH HUNG is going to have tremendous benefits to them, it is going to satiate them. Although you are not paying in terms of flesh and blood but they will be fully satisfied and also the blessings and your mental offerings will kind of fill them and protect them from cold and feed them.

Ignorance is the root cause for **I** clinging, when you have this notion of **I** that taints the pure true nature of mind which is the basis for all the enlightened beings. It is the reason for reaching enlightenment, it is just like a clean mirror, when the mirror is tainted with images and imprints of **I** and then from there causes a lot of different problems. When you have totally given up this idea of kind of **I** being the center of everything, then both the Samsara and Nirvana are within our own mind. Our mind nature merges with those of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as well of those of sentient beings in the six realms of existence. So, when in the Root Text it says that one is going to conquer both Samsara and Nirvana, what is basically saying is - if I use an analogy of my tea cup, in it lets imagine that it is filled with compress air and I put a lid on top of it that contains that pressed air in the encasement of the cup. If you do that you are just blocking this air from merging with space out there. You are just clinging onto what it is contained within the encasement of this cup. What is happening is that within that there are all kinds of unreal, deluded mental thoughts and appearances are occurring. On the other hand if you brake the cup, at the moment that you are able to brake the cup the air will merge with the space reaching both Samsara and Nirvana one becomes part of this wholeness, not separate. There is not individual clinging, there is no **I**, it is free. So with this kind of practice when one is able to do, then one becomes like Milarepa.

To get more ideas of Milarepa's life history, all the black magic that he did, all the accomplishments he made and these are clearly written in great detail.

The next one is the benefit of using your body as substance for offering and what kind of the special benefits this has.

Of all the charities of giving, the giving away of one's own body and giving Dharma teachings are the most beneficial to the practitioner. It is written in the Kalachakra Tantra that when one is able to make an offering of horses and elephants the merits accumulated by those actions would be thousand fold. Where if a practitioner is able to give away ones wife or husband or sons and daughters the benefit would be a hundred thousand fold and even more beneficial than that when one is able to give away one's own body as offering the benefit would be million fold<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> My footnote : I am not sure about the million, the tape finished at that point. It was a big number.

# - Then the most beneficial of all when you can impart Dharma teachings to others as Dharma gift, the benefit is countless. The gift of Dharma, not only teachings but whatever sentient beings may be generate the relative Bodhicitta, visualize Avalokiteshvara and recite Avalokiteshvara mantra and wherever the sentient beings may be, may they be benefited and recite the mantra that has the most benefit.

Making an offering needs to be explained a little bit, some of you may think – what if I don't have anything material to give as an offering? That is not a problem at all, it is not what you offer, how big, how many or how expensive. It is the mind behind the offering. During the time of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni one of the kings in India invited Buddha Sakyamuni with some 25,000 disciples and offered a huge banquet. At that time it happened to be a beggar woman who had next to nothing. She couldn't even come to close proximity to the Buddha, all she had was a little bit of cooking oil and nothing else, she looked at the cooking oil and said to herself, - should I cook something and have it myself or should I make an offering to the Buddha? Finally she decided she should make that as an offering. She took a wig and put in the middle of the oil and lit the wig, that turned into a butter lamp. Although she was far from where the Buddha was, the light illuminated the Buddha's body to the extent that one of Buddha Sakyamuni disciples, Ananda, asked Buddha and said - is it the sun that is illuminating your body? Buddha said – no, it is not the sun, it is the light coming from the old lady's butter lamp. From this story you will understand that really it is not the quantity or the quality of the offering but the purity of the mind behind the offering.

When the Buddha or Bodhisattva to whom you are making an offering, when that being is a sublimed being, when the offering comes from a pure mind, like the mind of an innocent child, it does not matter what the offering is the benefit will be tremendous. There is a story about king Ashoka. When Buddha and some of his disciples were passing through, two small boys were playing with sand and building sandcastles. When the two small boys called one – this is our gold castle and the other this is our silver castle. They kept on building and putting a label on each. When Buddha was passing through they decided to make an offering to the Buddha and the two boys had a brief exchange and decided to offer the gold castle. So taking a fistful of sand from the gold castle tried to put in Buddha's begging bowl, but because the boys were small could not reach, so one bent down and the other climbed on the back and reached out and poured a fistful of sand of Buddha's begging bowl. At that time Buddha was very, very pleased because it came from a very innocent boy with the sincerest of motivation. Buddha told Ananda to keep that sand, use his shawl and make a paste and smear that paste on the relics and stupas. And by the merit accumulated by offering that fistful of sand the boy reincarnated as Ashoka who was responsible for building thousands and thousands of stupas and being the sponsor of Dharma activities. These are still to be seen, the stupas and the temples all over India.

Machig Labchi Drolma has said here, that when practicing Chöd one should separate one's body, not body but in this case corpse, from one's consciousness and the consciousness should be merged with the state of Dharmadatu, which is the nature of all phenomena.

When you are able to do that, discarding the mortal corpse and attaching no importance to it and attaching all importance to one's consciousness, the uninterrupted, unpolluted, stable nature of mind and merge it with uninterrupted, stable mind of both all Buddhas as well as Samsaric beings, that is the key thing. That is what Machig Labchi Drolma says.

By this what we are trying to do is to get used to this idea, trying to get used to the reality that the mortal body is to be discarded sooner or later. But then if someone comes and says – well, if that is true then give your body now, then none of us would be able to do that.

We are not ready for that but, none the less, it is the right step towards that by understanding and appreciating and mentally getting used to the idea is the right step towards being able to give away your body.

In many of the countries in the west, especially in America, as I see it, you have a wonderful practice of signing organ donations; this is a step in the right direction. By signing organ donation means that whoever signs realizes that sooner or later one has to go. And once one is nothing but a corpse there is no reason why one should be attached to one's own useless organs and these people understand that and that is why with the motive to benefit other beings they sign organ donation. That is a wonderful thing. There are still others who don't understand and still cling to one's body parts thinking that there will be of some use even after death. Organ donation is very wonderful idea and it kind of ties in with the idea of Chöd Practice.

This has two tremendous benefits one relates to temporary. Temporary in the sense that may be it will take a couple of more life times before one reaches enlightenment. During those times when you are able to give up this clinging to **I, my** and **mine** and train your mind in giving, when you do that, in your future lives, a good looking, prosperity, all these are the result of giving, offering, charity. Of course the most important of all is the ultimate accomplishment, the ultimate goal of reaching enlightenment. When you are able to detach yourself, that it is the main thing. Attachment is the main thing that is blocking your path towards enlightenment, it almost is like tying a huge weight around your neck, which immobilizes you from working toward enlightenment. When there is no attachment then the path to enlightenment is very, very near. So freeing from attachment, giving away has both temporary as well as ultimate benefits.

Machig Labchi Drolma says – repeat this practice as many times as possible. To do that, if possible the Chöd feast, the whole text, if you are able to do it, then do it about 100 times. Once in the morning and once in the evening, if that is not possible then do it once a day. Then when it comes to body offering visualization, that can be done as frequently as you can. It is much shorter than going through the text, this text should be done, if possible, a 100 times.

Just as it was explained in previous days, Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say –listen to me sons carefully, I assure you there will not be obstacles and impediments. When you give away the sick to the ghosts and demons, I assure you that will not be sicknesses and instead you are going to gain peace of mind. When you leave your possessions in the possession of the thieves you will not have any one to fear. Whatever they want to take let them take. The message in this is first of all karma, because of karmic accumulation, because of obscurations and because also of immediate causes and conditions one suffers from sicknesses and diseases. And also from these comes suffering, but when you are free from all these demons, say to yourself that whoever wants to come and do whatever they want does not bother me on the least. When you have that kind of determination, then you will not suffer. If karmically is meant to suffer of course then you have to face the karmic consequences. Otherwise, regular sickness when you are free of the shackles of conceptual thoughts, the sickness is going to heal faster and you will be suffering from sickness there will not be mental suffering, you will be freer. That is the message.

Here it says, suppose, just imagine, there is a thief among us and you are constantly having to keep a watch on your belongings, that in itself it is a problem. But instead of constantly have to keep a watch on your property suppose that you were to take those belongings and go to the thief and said – come on have it, keep it for me. Then you don't have to worry

that he or she is going to pinch your belongings because you know that is in his or her possession.

Turning all negative things into positive things is, Machig Labchi Drolma says, my teachings. So therefore this idea of enemies if you could turn your enemies into your parents, mentally, then they will become your friends, that is what the message is. Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say – instead of saying save it or guard it from harm, instead of saying these things one hundred times it is better to say once - take it away, use it. Now, till we are able to detach ourselves from attachment obviously we need to take Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we need to be saved, we need to be guarded. But once we are able to practice detachment we need not to be saved, not to be guarded, let it be taken, let it be used. There is nothing to save, nothing to guard from anybody.

Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say that when you are able to give away your body as a charity or as offering then you no longer need to have in your person any kind of protective chakras. Buddha being a very skilful teacher devised all kind of methods to suit the temperament of different individuals. You will know that many of the disciples wear chakras or carry imprinted chakras in their person as protection. When you are not able to detach yourself from attachment, then obviously you need some sort of protection and that is why the allowance is made by the Buddha to wear the protections. On the other hand, when you detach yourself you can throw away those chakras because you don't need them any longer.

If it is better to detach and be away with all these chakras and protection gear, why do people wear them? Well when you wear protective chakras and sacred threats and all kinds of other things, again the point is the same. Instead of focusing on yourself now the focus is, whenever you are in need, the focus is on the deity, mandala, the chakra that you are wearing .if the focus is shifted from the self centeredness, which is the cause of all the fears to the deities. Similarly in Tibet disciples with a lot of devotion to the lama will carry in their person pieces of lama's clothing, lama's hair, lama when cremated, the ashes, bones, etc. etc. why do they carry them in person? Because instead of shifting one's focus, all the fears, and focusing inward and fearing all kinds of consequences the mind is onto the lama because of a lot of devotion. Lama's artifacts and mind is free from self centeredness, so that is the message. ,

These kind of teaching really need to carefully be thought off, first to hear and then contemplate. In one hand what I am saying is, according to the text, Machig Labchi Drolma is saying - eat it, take it, it doesn't matter there is nothing to save, there is nothing to protect. That is one part. On the other hand, we are saying – save us, guard us, and let us wear chakras to save us from harm. These two, unless properly thought off, are kind of contradictions, but in reality the meaning is the same. How is the same? In both cases we are talking about detachment. The first one is obvious, when you say I no longer need it take it away eat it, that is very obvious. The second one when you are laden with all kinds of Dharma gear then why do we do that? Again the message is the same, when you yourself cannot detach you are resorting to the lama and with devotion wearing the things you consider to be sacred, belongings of the lama. Why lama? Because lama is the embodiment of emptiness. Emptiness means detachment. Devoid of conceptual thought, that is why we wear these things. So, if you think carefully these two mean the same thing. What seems like contradiction is not really contradiction, it is important to understand this otherwise something like this can put you off completely.

The next one is how to go about eliminating attachment. Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say that<sup>23</sup> - be alert, concentrate to the point of being able to recognize the conceptual thought and appearances, once you do that, let it go no longer tense it up but loosen up. As if you are using a bow and arrow and all the conceptual thoughts with the right kind of tension of the bowstring once you are able to recognize the conceptual thoughts then let go the arrow. When the arrow flies away then stay in a state free from expectations and doubts, that is the teaching of both the Mahamudra as well as the Great Perfection.

To free from expectations and doubts you have to be in state of mind free from extremes. Extremes as eternalistic attitude and nihilistic attitude you should be free from these.

# - Let the mind rest in its natural state. In this case, that state of mind is free from any kind of labels. If you call and put a label and say – yes, this state of mind is Mahamudra; this state of mind is of Great Perfection. You don't need to do that, that stabilized state of mind is the ultimate thing without label without that kind of yes or no extremes.

Here Machig Labchi Drolma says – ultimate view lies in this, now I can not tell you too much about ultimate View because I don't know ultimate View is but, just as Milarepa has pointed out, he calls it the common mind and that is common to all sentient beings. It is something that all of us have but it is something that needs to be recognized. Gampopa, although he has reached the tenth bumi, the bumi of enlightenment, it is said that Gampopa did not recognize this common mind until he met Milarepa. Common mind as Milarepa calls it is the Buddha nature that is common to all of us. We all have it.

Here Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say, as it was already explained in the previous days, that this particular Chöd Practice is called the opening of the skylight. This opening the skylight Chöd Practice is better than any other Chöd Practice is. It is unmatched. This particular practice is also called the practice of "method of accumulating merits by the have-nots". This method of accumulating merits is also unmatched by any other form. That is what she goes on to tell.

Machig Labchi Drolma continues this – experiencing the red and white distribution is unmatched by any form of banquet. By white distribution she means when your body parts are raised to the boiling level and then by uttering sacred words turned into nectar and made into an offering to higher beings. Red distribution is the distribution of your body parts as flesh and blood to lower beings.

The reason for this is that if you through a regular banquet, perhaps 500 people, 1,000 people or more and that is the extent of the banquets you can give. But here through mental generation you are giving a banquet to all sentient beings and that is why this particular banquet is unmatched by any other banquet.

Machig Labchi Drolma says – the scanda or heaps of our bodily composition, if taken away in parts, flesh and blood that is the best form of pujas or best form of saying all kinds of religious rituals and rites for your well being. From time immemorial we have been kind of attached to our physical body and even after death there is a yearning to have a physical body. Consequently, one takes form and one gets born in the cyclical existence. But when you say to yourself that your body is not the main thing but your mind is and your ultimate goal should be not to acquire a new body but to reach the state Buddhahood, that is the way to go.

Repeating what Machig Labchi Drolma says – of all the parts whoever wants them, if you want the flesh take the flesh, if you want the blood take the blood. By detaching yourself from attachment to your body parts it is better than any form of religious rites and rituals.

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<sup>23</sup> last time I used the bowstring for the tension.

In reality don't you experience this? Some particular things, let's take the example of my tea cup. If the teacup that you really think is expensive, it is something that is appealing to you. Of all cups you have particularly you have taken a liking to this and you always want to take care of it. When you do that it will be the first one to either crack or break or chip (laughs). When it cracks or chips then you no longer care too much and you will leave lying about. When you leave it lying about nothing seems to happen to it; it is always there. The same kind of thing applies to our own children. Of your own children if you have one special attachment to one particular child. You are always worrying and always looking after and treating him, or her, as a special child more than likely that special child will be the one who will cause problems and put you through the toughest ringer. All those other kids that you treated normally, especially the ones in whom you had the least hope will turn out to be the ones who always be helping to you.

That is because of attachment. Whatever goes on, the effect is felt in proportion to your on attachment. The same thing applies to boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands and wives. When you have an excessive amount of attachment, then when things go wrong the suffering and impact felt by you will be in proportion to attachment you have.

Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say, talking about retreat places, that of all retreat places, the fearsome looking retreat places like the cemeteries are much, much better than any beautiful monastery. It is better to go to these secluded areas to do the retreat. Now she is making a comparison between one's Dharma sponsor, who will sponsor lamas and monks to come and pray, she is comparing with this and the demons and ghosts. If one is given the choice, as far as benefiting a practitioner concern the demons and the ghosts are by far more beneficial than Dharma sponsors are.

Now she goes on to talk about View. The Buddhist View or primordial pure nature that is free from extremes is better than any form of Dharma teachings. The Dharma teaching of Chöd Practice is better than any kind of pith instructions; those are the words of Machig Labchi Drolma.

Then in other teachings Machig Labchi Drolma has this too said – siddhi or boom accomplishments you can receive from demons and nagas and as far as Dharma sponsors is concerned the best of all Dharma sponsors are those formless spirits and wanderers who are constantly wandering about. Food and property, prosperity if one wishes, the best kind of giver are those feminine spirits that are wandering about. Besides teaching of mantra you don't have to go to any body but listen to the recitation of mantras by the demons, devas, it is constantly to be heard. It is a matter of kind of tuning in properly.

To read a little bit more on these ideas, read Milarepa's life history where all the demons, ghosts came to his assistance and made offerings. The same thing applies with Toba Rinpoche, Garchodimpa, there are many, many stories where seem like negative forces turned positive.

For example some of the most precious temple relics in tingum Monastery in Tibet is said to be the Buddha's tomb Buddha Sakyamuni and relics. Guru Rinpoche kept them in the custody of some of the nagas during the time of Garchodingpa and nagas brought them to Garchodingpa. Garchodingpa in turn turned them to Jigten Sungon.

Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to say that the inner natural mind, when you hear or understanding about the nature of the mind would sow the seed to be reborn in the realm of the glorious ones. When we talk in terms of inner and outer I tend to classify the Buddhist from non Buddhist by whoever is able to look inside one's own mind is, I consider, as kind of conforming to Buddha's View and teachings. So if one is able to focus inwardly and understand the meaning of the true nature of mind and receive teachings is very important.



When you experience the true nature of mind you become a Buddha yourself. When you block out all the interruptions and distractions that cloud the true nature of mind, when you can block them out and stay in the true nature of mind you are surely to reach the state of a Buddha.

She also suggests that a practitioner should go to other very powerful places like where there are spring waters. Wherever there are spring waters there reside a great deal of spirits, nagas and others. If you could spend one night in each of the source of spring water and practice Chöd, then you will reach the bumi or the state of Buddhahood from where you will not come back in the cyclical existence. The practitioner what he, or she, does is go there and spend the night and practice and try to incite all these spirits and ghosts so that one can actually put all the teachings into practice.

If you can do these things then you are also going to see the vision of the mother Prajnaparamita and you are going to receive the prophecies from the devas. Here one thing to remember is although it is said thus, when you do hear or see prophecies, one thing to be very careful of is not to have expectations or doubts you should neither rejoice nor should you have doubts, just leave it in equanimity.

Then you may like to ask the question, why shouldn't we rejoice when we actually see or hear prophecies coming from deities or devas? Well when you hear or see, receive a prophecy from a deity, for example, what is happening is that when your true nature of mind is becoming clearer and clearer, without obscurations, then it is sparkling its own radiance, that is what it is. But the moment you start to rejoice then you are putting again another layer of obscurations there and you are obscuring that sparkle because the minute you rejoice you are turning that beautiful thing into an ordinary conceptual thought or idea. That is why one should try not to rejoice. The minute you rejoice it becomes dualistic clinging and dualistic clinging is said to be the worst of all *rudras*.

This is the last one of Machig Labchi Drolma advice, she has written something like this - my pith instruction is a resuscitating pith instruction. It is resuscitating because when somebody is at the verge of collapsing because of all the delusion and attachment and all the obscurations, by hearing all this advise all of the sudden the person starts beating, breathing properly, the heart starts pumping, pulsating, awaking, resuscitating. That is what she is saying and about this there is a lot of teaching on itself.

This resuscitation really is understanding one's own nature of mind, which resuscitates a person. We conclude here for tonight.

Here again talking about Chöd, of course, there are six different analogies. The Text says this Chöd practice is like a snow-capped mountain, when it snows it is white, when it doesn't snow it still is white, because it is a snow mountain. The message is the Chöd practice is such an all ground practice that you can practice Chöd in conjunction with other practices, if you did that it would be white, it would be good. If you just practiced Chöd alone and you didn't even bother to touch other aspects of teaching it still would be white, it still would be good. That is the message. Chöd practice is one method through which you could reach enlightenment in one lifetime. There are things like Mahamudra or Great Perfection, the essence of both these are in Chöd practice, because we are dealing with Bodhichita mind and how to get rid of attachment. Relative Bodhichita, absolute Bodhichita, all are in Chöd practice and that is the message.

The Chöd practice is like the huge expanse of space, there is nothing that is not included in the huge expanse of space, all different aspects of teachings are within this huge expanse of Chöd practice.

When we go on to say that Chöd practice is something that encompasses all aspects of Buddha's teachings, nobody is trying to say that my method is the best and all the others are not so powerful. What we are saying is Chöd by definition is to reduce and eliminate attachment. To do that in the Sutrayana tradition Buddha Sakyamuni, first of all in order to detach, has very skillfully taught all sentient beings to have respect and devotion to our parents. And gradually lead sentient beings to get used to the idea that all sentient beings have been our own parents at one time or another. And then to generate Boddhichita mind, by generating Boddhichita mind what happens is that the more you generate Boddhichita mind the more you detach yourself from attachment, because Boddhichita mind flip-side is attachment, so that is the skilful method leading sentient beings step by step to eliminate attachment. But in Chöd practice is a kind of forceful, direct method for eliminating attachment. When you say – take all my body parts, if you desire flesh take flesh, if you desire blood take blood, because my focus is now on true nature of mind, body parts do not matter. Here you see the end result, the goal is the same and that is why in this it says Chöd is like the huge expanse of space in which includes all forms of Buddha's teachings. Another analogy is that Chöd practice is like the snow lion if the pride (companion) is big the snow lion will be OK, if the snow lion is by himself, or herself, without a pride the snow lion will still be OK. The message, the second line, is if you understand and practice other methods, Buddhists methods or achieving ends that can be practiced in conjunction with Chöd that is good. If you don't know or you don't resort to practicing other methods but only focus your mind on practicing Chöd alone, that is sufficient, that is the message. Another analogy is Chöd practice is like the sound of a huge monastic drum. When the drum is beat all the other percussions, including musical instruments become complement to the sound of the drum, like that when you are practicing Chöd all the other practices that you do become complementary to your Chöd practice, the Chöd is the main thing. Just like the sound of a huge drum.

# - Some people have asked me if they can practice Chöd without drum and bell. If you have the means or access to having a drum and bell then there many benefits attached to the use of drum and bell. One of which would be, for example, the sound that is carried out it is inspirational and the very sound of drum and bell is going to have lot of positive effect on all beings who come in contact to the sound wave. On the other hand if you don't have access to these implements this is quite OK because the main thing about Chöd practice is visualization. When we talk about visualization if it is at all possible just follow the text transfer your consciousness go through the visualization process. Then you offer the white distribution, the red distribution, that is very good, but the full idea of this visualization is, really the key thing is compassion. Without compassion just uttering fancy words and saying – those of you who like flesh can have flesh, those of you who like blood can have blood come and get it from me. But in actual reality when you don't have compassion it is something like holding a bag full of tsampa<sup>24</sup>. And it is tightly bound together you are holding onto it and showing it to all those guest there and saying, help yourself to tsampa, help yourself to tsampa, in fact you are not parting with a single spoonful of tsampa. That is totally useless, when you have compassion as long as you have compassion even without going through the formal process of visualization it is fine.

One more analogy that the Root Text goes on to say is that Chöd is like an oasis of siddhi or boom. If there is just one person coming to quench one's thirst there is enough, if there is a huge group of people coming to quench their thirst, there will always be enough. If one

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<sup>24</sup> Those of you who don't know what tsampa is, it is a staple food in form of flour.

person practices, if that person practices genuinely that person will reach enlightenment. If a whole group of others come in to do the same thing, they also will reach the same result. There is no discrimination, there is equality. It is the generation of Bodhichitta mind. One more analogy - Chöd is like the coat of the thoroughbred, if the colour of the coat is blue it would look good, if the colour is black it still would look good. A thoroughbred horse will always look good irrespective of which colour it is. These are all words of Machig Labchi Drolma.

The message is, just like the colour of the coat of the horse it does not matter which Chöd you practice, which kind of lineage, Chöd is still Chöd and its positive effect will always be positive effect. In Machig Labchi Drolma past lives, when she confronted people and beings with non-Buddhist ideas, when she engaged in kind of dialectic debate with these people, when these people lost in debate they in turn had negative thoughts about Machig Labchi Drolma and uttered negative words. As a consequence in Machig Labchi Drolma's lifetime there were a number of beings who were born who had wrong view on Chöd practice. One such example would be a maid who Machig Labchi Drolma had in her domestic circle called *cholabdo*.

Because of these negative consequences of these unwholesome words uttered by those who lost the debates to Machig Labchi Drolma some of them reincarnated and became the adversaries to Machig Labchi Drolma's teachings. To the extent that these beings went out and preached false Chöd with all kinds of adulteration in the method and visualization. So there was a time when there was not telling which kind of Chöd practice and visualization one was receiving because of all this mixture, adulteration and purposely perpetrated by her adversaries. In this particular Chöd practice Machig Labchi Drolma goes onto - I showed all future practitioners that although at a time her Chöd practice was mixed and mingled with other false teachings, just like the mixing and mingling of horse's hair and cow's hair; in the future time she predicted that there would be such wonderful beings like Khugom Chökyi Sengé and his reincarnation Kumpang Tsodrü Sangé and also Karmapa Rangjung Dorje who will separate this adulterated mixture of horse's hair and cow's hair and just get rid of all the toxins in her teachings. This particular Chöd practice Machig Labchi Drolma goes on to saying that is pure, she gives assurance that there is no trace of mixtures from false teachings that her teaching is pure. This comes from Rangjung Dorje, the Karmapa, and it does not have a trace of adulterated false teaching. That is an assurance Machig Labchi Drolma gives.

Machig Labchi Drolma says this particular teaching of empowerment and the method of accumulating merit through this practice going through the visualization process and all those analogies, teachings, commentaries are thoroughly checked and made sure that everything is properly put together and clean. That kind of assurance is seen by Rangjung Dorje, the Karmapa, and it is totally clean, putting together of this text in form of this format is by Karma Raca Asse, the enlightened being who put together the Amitabha supplication<sup>25</sup>. This is the same enlightened being who put this together. So much on that now the kind of daily practice we do Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon Kusali or Chöd practice, which extracted from the profound teachings of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon, that would be the text. That would be the visualization. We will look briefly at that text.

This text you all have it comes the profound teachings of Lord Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon. Because of the profundity of the text there will be many instances where I will not be able

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<sup>25</sup> The one we recite with melody at the end of the closing prayer (Emaho).

to teach you, where I can I'll step where I can not I'll hop and it will be a hop-step jump (laughs).

A few minutes ago we talked about the kind of false teachings and adulterations in Tibetan language it is called Chöd lo, Chöd we all understand and lo is inverted or deviated, so kind of deviated view, wrong view. How do we know whether something is genuine view or something is wrong or deviated view? That you can always tell because of the absence or presence of anger and compassion. If a teaching is focused on generation of compassion then surely we know that is not a Chöd lo or wrong view, it is the right Chöd. I have always said that if it we apply a material, something tangible, something that is smooth always is going to have a smooth result. A smooth thing can conquer smooth; a smooth thing can also conquer something rough and coarse. Smooth is sharp, if you take something abrasive and coarse and try to achieve a result by applying that to something equally coarse and abrasive the result would be mutually destructive. Because they are both coarse and abrasive you will see if you rub against each other all kinds of particles flying about. That is why compassion is smooth, compassion is very powerful.

We start off with the word PHAT; the word PHAT dispels all kinds of conceptual thoughts and appearances. At that time one instantly, oneself, at the moment one utters the word PHAT, instantaneously one becomes the Prajnaparamita, her body is gold colored and she is adorned with the attire that you see in the pictures, she has four arms. With the first two she holds a Vajra and a scripture text. The last two are in meditation position. When you visualize Prajnaparamita, if it is possible, of course the minute you say PHAT it is a wonderful thing to be able to actually visualize Prajnaparamita. Then what really is Prajnaparamita? Prajnaparamita is the stabilized true nature very often referred as common mind by Milarepa, that is Prajnaparamita. The mind should be absent of conceptual thought the minute you say PHAT, that is the idea. Then here, four arms the first two holding Vajra and pustaka or scripture book. What is this Dorje o Vajra all about? Vajra is the symbol of true nature of mind. True nature of mind is indestructible, unchangeable, unborn, unceasing, consistent, all pervading, permanent. So whenever you see a Vajra think of the symbol of as the symbol of the true nature of mind. There more elaborate description of these symbolic meanings of all those that are embodied in the physical Vajra, for example: five wisdoms because of the five prongs, five principal Dhyani Buddhas and if you come a little bit lower the eight Bodhisattvas represented by eight flower petals. Because the same thing is in the other side too, the opposite eight petals would be the eight, feminine Bodhisattvas. So there are so many things, it is the essence of Buddha's teachings. It is a symbol of emptiness. It is symbol of ultimate Boddhichita. When you sum it up it is the true nature of mind. Then on the other hand you will see the pustaka or the scripture book. This scripture book contains the 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teaching, sub-classified in the most excellent teachings in twelve different categories. Symbol in one hand and all the teaching, all the details of this symbol behind, all the teachings contained in the scripture book. So right and left contains everything there is to know about Buddhism.

One's own mind is the Vajra, when we talked in terms of Vajra or Dorje we don't kind of immediately, we have a tendency of associating this word with something metallic, with something heavy, that shouldn't be so. The minute you hear the word Vajra or Dorje associate that with the true nature of mind. True nature of mind does not change, does not waiver. It is called Mind Vajra. Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon says mind is the ultimate source of Refuge it is raw unadulterated, untempered, raw mind. That is the essence of all Buddhas, all beings who have taken many lives who have gone through a lot of trials and tribulations and beings who have been through hell and the realm of the pretas, all kinds of different

existence. That Buddha nature cannot be altered, no matter through what kind of situation one goes, it is permanent.

Of the four arms the last two in meditation position. What those two arms tell you is the symbol of the Vajra, the teachings contained in the textbook, these are all there. But the last two arms tell you to mind your own business of looking into your inner mind, and stay in stabilized focus, that is what these last two arms are telling you. Because they are in meditation posture your mind is supposed to look into this Vajra nature of one's own mind. Then you are going to strike the mouthpiece of the thighbone in the left palm of your hand three times. At that time you are going to say – to all beings out there, specially the meek and the genteel ones - you who are meek don't be afraid of me or what I am about to do. Let not be any kind of anger, let not be anxiety. That is what you say.

Then blow the trumpet three times, with the first blow the unborn natural Dharma sound pervades the three realms of existence in Samsara. Here the thighbone, part of the equation, we ideally need the thighbone of a young woman who is known for compassion, a lot of compassion. Because, symbolically, we want the message to pass through this channel.

There is here a thing called the unborn natural Dharma sound that pervades the all three realms of existence. How does that become so? What is the unborn natural Dharma sound?

When one is free from conceptual thoughts, when one is in the state of the true nature of mind, at the time when you are about to undergo this practice, at the time of blowing your thighbone trumpet, your mind which being the Vajra which is the ultimate Bodhichita is merging with the Buddha nature of both the enlightened beings as well as all Samsaric sentient beings. There is the oneness, when we say the unborn natural Dharma sound it is just an illustration. We label it as sound but in fact it is not sound at all. It is the merging of the minds reconnecting of minds of all beings. That is what takes place.

Then you are blowing the thighbone trumpet three times and in doing so you read the text and also with confidence believe that your trumpet is being heard. Again when you say the trumpet being heard is that your Buddha nature is being connected with all sentient beings from the top of Samsara right down to the bottom of the hell. Every single being is kind of connected and your message is kind of heard and you visualize that everybody is connected and everybody is coming in an assembly.

Once the connection is established. In this case in order that people can relate to it better. The voice, the sound is heard, and all Samsaric beings responding to this call are all are coming and assembling in front of you. Then it goes on to say NAMO GURU WE (homage to the Guru) and this most uncommon and profound teaching of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon. From all his profound teachings this is a unique method. Unique method for those who don't have material things to offer and thereby accumulate merit. It is a method devised for the have-nots, the ones that are in retreats. Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon himself said – this is a very profound and it is very important that one should practice it and experience it.

For these teachings to be special, he himself has to be special. That is understood. How was he special? Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon was not made especial by his followers because they are biased but he was prophesized by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni himself. There are at least 15 different prophecies contained in the canonical teachings of Buddha Sakyamuni.

Similarly there are prophecies made by Guru Padmasambhava. In these prophecies the place of birth of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon was clearly indicated. The zodiac sign of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon was clearly indicated and there was indication of as to how many followers he would have. This was all prophesized and predicted. Even if we read history there were so many enlightened beings who took birth in Tibet but not many matched Kyobpa Jigten

Sumgon in terms of benefiting followers and sentient beings. In terms of the number of followers who reached enlightenment, in terms of numbers of followers who could perform miraculous deeds. It not just lips service or wishful thinking but Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon was clearly prophesized as the regent of Lord Buddha Sakyamuni.

There are all kinds of miracles performed by Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon one of which is probably useful information. You will find that when you look at Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon statues on the throne just above the flower petals, you will find the raised Vajra or Dorje, you don't find that in all statues. What that indicates is that he is in the essence the regent of Buddha Sakyamuni, he is the Buddha. That is the indication. It is called "toba Dorje todema", Buddha with the Vajra. That is what it means. Talking about statues when Garchodingpa, Garchodingpa made a number of statues of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon, the metal as we call it "lima". I think lima is in English, I don't know I'll just say it anyway see if you are familiar, is there a thing called fermilia (vermilia), vermilion, that is an alloy, right? <sup>26</sup> Is it a colour? Oh sorry. Lima is an alloy, I don't know what the mixture is, which kind of metals, but is a kind of rare mixture. So Garchodingpa went on making a number of statues of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon and when these were finished they were presented to Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon. Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon though that they looked really like him and he picked one of them and bit on the statue head and said. This really looks like me. Wherever these statues are everywhere the same bite appears in all the statues made by Garchodingpa and some of these very rare and old statues are still in possession of some people in Nepal, Tibet and India. Quite a few of them are still to be seen and those statues have a nickname, they are called the tooth marked statues.

Again talking about statues during the counterrevolution they destroyed almost everything but one very wonderful monk was able to retrieve Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon heart from the Stupa and he kept it for a long time and finally we had access to Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon heart. That heart was made into small pills and I used a number of these pills in the statue I was able to build, statue of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon, the big statue that I built in Nepal and sent back to Tibet. I also was able to build about 200 small statues for Tigunka reincarnate lamas. In all these statues I used Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon heart pills and whatever you donated, one dollar or more, you also had a part in that and you have your share of the merits accumulated by building the statue. Just think of all the benefits we created for other beings. Those of you who haven't seen the picture of the statue we'll show you. In medicine when I met H.H. Chetsang Rinpoche, His Holiness wanted a couple of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon heart pills. So I opened my pouch and offered H.H. the pills and when I took out a pill, this pill was on the verge of giving birth to another small pill it was just coming out, really budding out and that was really miraculous. So I offered it to H.H.. We go on to the forth-going mind's generation. When you say all mother sentient beings who are as far and wide as the sky and they need to be shown the path to liberation and help them to put and end to their suffering and elevate them to the level of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. To do that first of all I need to reach enlightenment. And to reach enlightenment I need to resort to a powerful practice and this practice of offering myself as a charity and is exactly what I am going to do. That is what the text says.

Now when you say OM SWABHA WA SHUDA SARWA DHARMA SWABHA WA SHUDDHO HANG that is when you are dissolving all phenomena into emptiness. Once that is done you visualize a small Vajravarahi (Dorje Pagmo) about at the navel high. When you say PHAT at that time you cut away all conceptual thoughts and slowly the small

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<sup>26</sup> My footnote : it may be vermeil, which is silver gilt.

Vajravarahi is coming up, up, up and out of Bhrama aperture in the crown of your head. Ones it exists from the Bhrama aperture then all of the sudden it becomes bigger and bigger and bigger, just the size of the universe. That is how you have to visualize. It is not just instantly visualizing a huge Vajravarahi somewhere out there you have to have this small Vajravarahi at your navel and slowly going up and then when it goes up in the space becoming so huge, why huge? Because you are merging your true nature of mind merging with the true nature of mind just like space. Your continuum, your nature of mind is merged in the form of Vajravarahi, which is the size of the space<sup>27</sup>.

There is no difference whatsoever, the essence is the same. Going back to the text, this Vajrayogini, now we'll stick to Vajrayogini, Vajrayogini has all the Samboghakaya state of Buddhahood attire and she is beautiful, huge, and in front of your consciousness, which is in the form of Vajrayogini, lies your lifeless mortal body. When you, the Vajrayogini, look down at your mortal lifeless body, how should it be seen? It should be seen as something very, very desirable, desirable for consumption. There is this Tibetan word TSHO-ZING NUM-LA. TSHO-ZING NUM-LA is the right amount of fat content, fatty substance content<sup>28</sup>. It is talking about the right proportion of fat content and meaty content. So, it is something wonderfully desirable and it has all the qualities to please the five senses. When you say pleasing and satisfying to the five senses when you look at a mortal lifeless body it should be very beautiful to look at, nice smelling and very smooth in its skin and when tasted it has very wonderful taste. Those are the qualities that your mortal body should be seen as.

One good method of reading the text and simultaneously doing the visualization efficiently would be - while not practicing this Chöd take this visualization piece by piece. Whenever you can sometimes shine the spotlight on your mortal lifeless body and try to visualize it with all its qualities, youthful, beautiful, just as described. Other times just visualize on the part of this small Vajrayogini coming up and going out and forming the size of the space and merging and mixing and dissolving in the true nature of mind, the state of Dharmadatu up there. You can take these parts one by one and train your mind. The reason for that is otherwise when you sit down, hold the drum and bell and you read the text and try to visualize you can not really be just kind of murmuring and stuttering and go so slow because you have to do it simultaneously, it would be very, very difficult. But when you go piece by piece through this visualization next time when you read it, all will come falling to place and it will help.

See how wonderful, how most skilful Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon has composed this secret text. After each two sentence he puts a secret word PHAT, because after going through one visualization process is more than likely that one is going to be interrupted with appearances and conceptual thoughts and to be away with, this there is this word PHAT. So it is kind of punctuated with PHAT that is a very profound meaning for it. Now after visualizing your lifeless mortal body another PHAT is put there to dispose all the conceptual thoughts and then you visualize in front of you the fire blazing in the form of a wheel of fire blazing.

This word PHAT applies in many situations, especially during the generation stage, when you visualize Yidam deities and then once that is done say the word PHAT again going back to the true nature of mind without distractions.

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<sup>27</sup> I said Vajra Varaji but the text says Vajra Yogini.

<sup>28</sup> Written in Tibet your likes and dislikes of meaty substance because we have a tendency to have the right amount of fat content versus the lean meat.

The use of this spoken PHAT or unspoken PHAT is so great. When you visualize a Yidam deity, for example, the minute you have visualized the deity if you did not say the spoken PHAT or unspoken PHAT and switched the mindset to the true nature of mind, whatever you have created would disappear. Once you say the PHAT and switch your focus onto the true nature of mind it is something like painting a deity and applying a varnish over it. When you apply a varnish over it rain or water is not going to smudge that image. Likewise, when you generate a Yidam deity and immediately after that, you switch to the true nature of mind either by audible saying PHAT or inaudible, mentally, saying PHAT and going back to the true nature of mind is like varnish. That imprint will be always with you and will not smudge.

Next are the wind, fire and the tripod. You visualize this, RAM, for example would be the sacred syllable for visualization of fire and YAM would be the wind,<sup>29</sup>. RAM brings fire and YAM brings wind. There is a very close relation between fire and wind. Look at a candle burning when the candle is lit there is a wind associated with that flame. To prove that point try to encase that fire and the fire will extinguish. The same applies during meditation, heat generation in tumo meditation. When you are doing tumo meditation, when you visualize fire, naturally without having to do anything all the wind will associate with that fire, there is a relationship between the two. So, visualize fire and wind, the two together, from the sacred letter Kam you visualize a tripod made out of three freshly cut human heads.

There is this tripod made out of three freshly cut human heads and there is wind and fire blazing. Immediately after that again say PHAT and go back to the true nature of mind meditation. Once that is done, then you, the Vajrayogini with the curved knife in your right hand, visualize that you are cutting clean off the skull from your lifeless corpse lying on the floor. That should be seen as a huge, huge skull that expanse through wherever the space is, the size of the universe and it is white inside and red outside. White is the father essence, it is the method. Red is the mother essence or the wisdom. After that visualization again say PHAT.

Then the next one is - you the, Vajrayogini, will put your lifeless mortal corpse in this huge skull and wind will blow and fire will blaze. The content of the skull will come to boiling level and when that happens it will furiously bubble and form a kind of foam on the top and that will overflow. At that time visualize that all the impurities in the form of this overflowing foam is being getting rid off. Then again say PHAT and the same visualization. After that from the boiling content, which at this time is red in colour, is emitting a profusion of light and turns into pure nectar. Before it turns into pure nectar, that profusion of light coming from the boiling content of the skull, will go in all directions and reach the three sacred syllables OM, white, AH, red and HUNG, blue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, what is this? Actually what is this red light coming from the content? The red light is Bodhichitta is compassion. When this compassion touches the OM AH HUNG of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas all kinds of blessings come back from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the form of light. And these two lights mixed together become inseparable and now the colour is now white and red and the content is now turned into pure nectar. Then the sacred words DZA HUNG BAM HO those four words are the four immeasurables. First DZA it is the immeasurable loving kindness, thinking that all sentient beings are our own mother and they are in need of putting an end to their suffering. HUNG is the immeasurable compassion this urge to actually go there and do something to

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<sup>29</sup> We talked about air we simple say wind



put and end to the suffering. BAM is the immeasurable rejoicing. Immeasurable rejoicing because one is actually able to do something to help sentient beings because one's own motivation. Because of the power generated by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and because of the power of contemplation. HO is the immeasurable equanimity, treating all sentient beings in the same light, no one is getting anything more, no one is getting less they are all equally treated. Those are the four immeasurables<sup>30</sup>.

As correctly pointed out in the text, now the skull content is boiling all the suds and foams in form of impurities overflow out and what is left behind is the pure red nectar. That red nectar, that is mentioned here, is classified as wisdom nectar and Samaya nectar. That red nectar would be Samaya nectar. Samaya nectar because is generated by yourself in your meditation. There is a profusion of light coming from that Samaya nectar which is created by you it goes to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, reaches the OM AH HUNG syllables and in return you receive the body, speech and mind blessings from the deities. That will be wisdom nectar. Those deities are classified as wisdom deities or Jnanasattvas; the one coming from them is the wisdom nectar. I just feared that I had said something different. Now going back to this OM AH HUNG, when you say OM, the sacred word OM has an exponential effect; everything that is in the skull is exponentially increased. So much inexhaustible amount, AH does the blessing and HUNG is the taste, all the wonderful qualities. HUNG is responsible for giving the taste, nutrition and everything else associated with food and drink. That is because when you detach yourself, when there is not self centeredness, when the motivation is for the benefit of others, that is very, very important. Therefore since you will not have it everything is for the benefit of others. Therefore, whoever takes this it becomes tasty if you like, it becomes nutritious, in the sense of that whoever is in contact with this nectar now free from self centeredness will sow the seed to reach enlightenment instantly because it is free from selfishness, it is free from self centeredness. It is embodiment of compassion, that is why when we say tasty and nutritious we are referring to having the power to change all sentient beings when they come into contact with this nectar. So, OM AH HUNG and then it is time to eat and we shall do that too.

We start from where it says OM AH HUNG, and previously it is written and said that when a practitioner does only Chöd practice, Chöd practice alone is sufficient and will not need anything else. Here some explanation is necessary.

When it is said that Chöd alone is sufficient and nothing else is necessary, one should understand that Chöd is a practice that embodies the 84,000 heaps of teachings. We are not saying that other forms of teachings are less effective or not necessary. What we are trying to do is whatever kind of practice one does the ultimate goal is, for example, to merge enlightened beings, body, speech and mind with the body, speech and mind of sentient beings or the practitioner. There is this relationship between enlightened beings and not enlightened beings. These three - body, speech and mind are referred as the three Vajras. Three Vajras because unshakable, unchangeable, unborn and unceasing. In the case of body, speech and mind or the three Vajras of enlightened being, those of the Buddha. First of all the clarity and emptiness is the Vajra body of enlightened beings, audible and emptiness is the Vajra speech of enlightened beings, luminosity and emptiness is the Vajra mind of the enlightened beings.

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<sup>30</sup> Translator footnote: I just asked Rinpoche permission to go back to the previous translation, looking at the text I think I screwed up a little bit.

# - In order to actualize the body, speech and mind of enlightened beings one has to get rid of self-centeredness, grasping. One can achieve that only by generating Bodhichita mind, there is no other way. When we say Chöd encompasses all other teachings that is because the most powerful, the central power of the Chöd is compassion, Bodhichita. We talked about relative and absolute Bodhichittas. Relative and absolute Bodhichittas are the method and wisdom. Relative Bodhichita being the method. You can achieve Bodhichita mind by practicing the four immeasurable and that is relative Bodhichittas in these 4 immeasurables there are the 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teachings. Now the absolute Bodhichita is when your true nature is merged with the true nature of the enlightened beings and that is the absolute Bodhichita. The reason why we said Chöd alone is sufficient is because the focus is on Bodhichita mind.

When we are in our in our Vajrayogini mode, when we look down and see our lifeless mortal body lying there, that mortal body should be thought as the very same body of all sentient beings in all the realms of existence, not different, inseparable.

Think of the Chöd practice when you get rid of the mortal body, you give it away as charity, feast. Now cast your mind to the generation stage of a Sadhana practice, what are you doing? You are doing almost the very same thing; you are transforming your mortal body into that of a deity. Here the parallel is that in both cases you are getting rid of your mortal body. In the case of the generation body you repeat the Sadhana again and again and that is the essence of meditation. You get so use to it you and forget your focus on your mortal body but divert attention elsewhere in the form of an enlightened being.

Now we know that basically getting rid of one's body by practicing Chöd and getting rid of our mortal body by practicing generation stage, when you transform yourself as a Yidam deity is the same. There is a parallel, the end kind of goal is the same, to get rid of the focus from something that is likely to give rise to attachment to something that is far away from self centeredness. Now I am going to talk about Mahamudra. Because each time when you learn something, like the generation stage, obviously the teacher is going to make a lot of emphasis will be laid on the importance of generation stage. When the teacher comes and teaches about Chöd practice, because it is said in the Root Text – an equal amount or more emphasis will be laid on the importance of giving away your body one may get confused, which is the most important? Now another teacher will come and talk about Mahamudra. In Mahamudra meditation, first of all we will look and search for this I entity, we first will look at every part of the body and see if we can find this I entity dwelling somewhere, is it in the form? Is it in the height? Is it in the bones? Is it in the blood? Where is it? Finally when we kind of pass away our mortal body will be cremated or buried. Then where does this I entity disappear? When we find out that this I entity does not exist in our mortal body, physical body, then we search for this I entity in our mind. Where is it? And when we meditate we will find out that there is no such thing as I entity inherently existent in our mind either, yet it is not devoid of anything. There is clarity; there is emptiness it is just like the huge expanse of sky. Now you will realize the idea of Chöd practice, generation stage, when you generate the Yidam deity, meditation on Mahamudra. They all have one think in common - that is detaching oneself from this notion of this I being in the center of everything. These are the parallels. One should understand this because there is always a danger of being confused.

When someone teaches you, because the students are bound to have confusion and doubts and from them arises kind of anxiety when the Dzogchen master comes and teaches the Great Perfection and he will tell you all you'll ever need is the Dzogchen practice. This is one method that will take you to the realm of enlightenment state, then another master will

come and teach you the Great Mahamudra and he will tell you that Mahamudra is one path that is going to take you to the state of Buddhahood. Then someone will teach you Chöd, and says this is a method that will take you to the realm of the enlightened beings, are they all telling you lies? No, none of them are telling you lies. It is true; these are all different methods. Forget about Rdzog pa chen po, Phyang rgya chen po and Chöd just think of the normal kind no so bombastic routine practices starting from taking Refuge, Bodhichita mind generation, the main part of whatever Sadhana you are doing. The dedication all the sublime elements of a practice alone if you do it correctly, that alone is enough to reach enlightenment. So understand it is not a kind of conflicting ideas. Each because the Chöd is what we call it *sentap*, a forceful method. Without going through the normal Sutrayana channel immediately resorting to kind of forcefully giving yourself to others and try to eliminate the I centeredness. These are all the essences the same teachings.

Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon, when he put this sacred teaching together he called it uncommon practice, uncommon practice because everything else tries to slowly, carefully tries to eliminate ego. But in this case the reason why it is uncommon teaching is that all the external things like wealth, beauty, boys, girls, there are all kinds of attachment there. How to eliminate that? That is the question. The way to go about, this uniqueness about Chöd practice, is one immediately concludes that whether you are a human being or an insect, a bird, a bee, whatever, the most cherished possession of all is one's own body. If one can train one's mind to detach oneself from one's own body, then this is a very, very quick method of reaching the result. That is why he called it uncommon method, profound method.

Now we have summoned all, well not all but as many sentient beings as could, assembled together in front of you the practitioner, from the top of Samsara to the depth of hell. We have already said OM AH HUNG, we have all the things ready in this humongous skull ready to be distributed. Then once again the sound PHAT. Now you, the Vajrayogini, will take one scoop of your skull and one scoop of this nectar from the skull and you, the Vajrayogini, will sprinkle it, there is a Tibetan word, which suggest instead of kind of giving it, instead of sprinkling. The connotation of sprinkling you could sprinkle on top of somebody's head but here the Tibetan word connotation is you are throwing out to reach the realm of hell. There is a reason for this, because in the detailed commentary of the Chöd practice although you have summoned all these sentient beings from everywhere, there are still sentient beings left out. There are those who don't have the leisure to be present for this nectar. There are those who are not empowered to come and receive this nectar. There are those who are barred from receiving the nectar. Depending of one's karmic consequences. So for the benefit of all these, so that no being will be left out you, the Vajrayogini, will now take a scoop of this nectar and throw it out to the realm of hell and purify this realm as the Buddha pure land.

Then you say PHAT again. And do the same visualization and as soon as beings in the hell realm come in contact with this nectar and that is immediately in your visualization. When you do the visualization, visualize that as soon as the inhabitants of the hell realm come in contact with this nectar all the obscurations are purified and at that very moment become the actualized body, speech and mind of Vajrayogini. There three kinds of obscurations, one is the *she ge deva* or the obscuration to do with lack of understanding. Lack of understanding is the lack of understanding of the true nature of mind that would be the first obscuration. The second one would be the obscuration of emotional afflictions and because of emotional afflictions one is bound to engage in actions. These actions are going to result in the third obscuration, which is the karmic imprint obscuration. All these three, first lack

of understanding or ignorance and then resulting from that engaging in all kinds of unwholesome deeds and as a result leaving an imprint on the true nature of mind. All these veils are unveiled and all inhabitants now become Vajrayoginis.

Last time I tried to teach you Mahamudra, not very well, but all the same I tried my best. Phyang rgya chen po teaching ties in with getting rid of the first of the three obscurations. The lack of understanding obscuration, due to lack of knowledge. By teaching Phyang rgya chen po or Mahamudra, when one understands the true nature of mind that places a huge difference. Because although not fully enlightened, we practitioners, the minute when we have emotional afflictions, because we have taken the veil of the first obscuration or lack of understanding each time when there is a negative emotion is just like when you are pricked with thorns imagine a shirt or pants with a lot of thorns on it when you wear it you are going to feel it. So that is the kind of unveiling of this knowledge to be able to understand what is the true nature of mind. When you have this understanding because of Phyang rgya chen po teachings, then one is able to exactly know when the negative emotions are rising and recognize them. Because when one recognizes this one tries to not engage in unwholesome activities. When one refrains from engaging in unwholesome activities there is no reason for negative karmic imprint.

When you meditating in Mahamudra, when the alert mind recognizes conceptual thoughts, when the alert mind is on guard, then you don't have this obscuration of lack of understanding or lack of knowledge<sup>31</sup>.

When you sprinkle the nectar you sprinkle it with great compassion for all those beings in the realm of hell if you didn't do that it really wouldn't have a great deal of meaning. That is one important thing. Think of every and each individual who are going through a lot of suffering in the realm of hell. <sup>32</sup>The kind of hell one suffers is consequence of generating a lot of anger.

Because anger is hell you should look inward to yourself and say to yourself - I too have anger, which is hell, and I too need to lessen this. So this negative emotion. So with a lot of compassion whenever you think of those suffering because of anger, you for the benefit of all who are suffering from anger you should generate compassion for everybody's sake. By doing so you will also lessen your own.

If you think where the realm of hell would be, where is it? If you have doubts like that, the hell is everywhere. We in almost daily basis witness the hell in action. Sometimes we see inferno, houses being burned, and all the jungles being burned. Together with this a countless number of beings are burned alive and we also see in television sentient beings suffering from cold, we see in rocks there are sentient beings encased in rocks. If you think that this is just a piece of petrified sentient being, not so because that sentient being has all the essential elements that you yourselves have. So unless just like a snow mountain, unless you shine the rays of light of your Bodhichitta mind that snow will remain forever, but when you shine the rays of your Bodhichitta mind, and each time you shine those rays the depth of the snow will become lesser and lesser.

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<sup>31</sup> Those of you practitioners who have this text on page 9, second line in brackets where it says Karma, Klesha and She-drib. Karma you know, Klesha you also know. She-drib is short, abbreviated for She Ge Deva; She Ge Deva is obscuration of lack of knowledge.

<sup>32</sup> Translator's commentary: A little bit I forgot to translate is when Rinpoche says, - anger is hell anger, is nyoba, when there is a lot of anger that is the cause for nyoba.

When you do not have time you don't have to go through all these six different realms. Each time, depending on how much time you have, you can visualize on one aspect. If it is the realm of hell just think of the realm of hell and then go through the visualization. Next one, after saying PHAT, are the hungry ghosts. Where are they? Well we can witness ourselves. There many different types, some we can see and others we do not see. If you go to a small pond you are going to see a whole lot of small insects constantly hovering around, above the water because there is this need to take a drink but because of their physiological makeup they cannot. In the evening you'll find them all dead and floating on the water. These go through a lot of difficulties. They are thirsty, they are hungry and yet they cannot part from the water hoping that they will be able to drink some. When they get close enough to the surface of the water in all probability some fish will just eat them alive. So like that there are many, many different types of hungry ghosts.

For visualization purpose you could go out and lift a slab of rock and underneath it you will find hundreds of ants hurrying and scurrying about. Why do they do this? Because they are in search for food. These are actually lesser hungry ghost, there are far worse cases elsewhere. So the game here is the same thing, the sprinkling of the nectar and when it reaches their realm it is purified as Buddha pure land and when these beings come into contact with the nectar you visualize that their defilements and obscurations are all purified as Vajrayoginis.

To be able to fully extent your compassion to all living beings including living ants and insects it is necessary to first of all think of the rarity of life, impermanence and the suffering of Samsara, the law of cause and effect. When you cast your mind in these aspects of the teaching then you will be in a better position to extent your compassion to those all living beings.

Now animals are very much covered. When we come to the humans we all strive to work for peace and happiness, how can we do that? You can have lot of possessions, you can do a lot of things, but the main thing is whatever you do peace and happiness should be in one's mind. Without that no amount of activities are going to help. Milarepa achieved that lasting peace and happiness in his mind. He didn't have anything, all he ever did was to live in a cave and eat nettles, but in his mind he had peace. Now look at ourselves we could be wrapped in silk gowns, we could be sleeping and eating and enjoying all these material comfort but we don't have the same amount of peace and happiness in our mind. So what we have to strive for is to get peace and happiness in our mind.

Milarepa has written a wonderful verse, which more or less says something like this – all the reach people suffer from prosperity, all the poor people suffer from lack of prosperity. One, like myself who have nothing but Dharma suffer neither from prosperity nor from lack of prosperity.

#11 - Khempo jigme pinzo as well as kunu tingsy ganzem both have said if one has a kingdom the worries are proportional to that kingdom. For example look at President Clinton (laughs), he shoulders the responsibility of the U.S. and his worries and his burdens are proportional to his responsibility. At smaller scale, in a domestic situation, the responsibility of a household is carried by the parents and parents have the burdens. Look at lama, a lama shoulder responsibilities of a monastery, all these are really suffering. Nothing to be proud off or happy about.

We are humans and what we have to strive to accumulate is to generate Bodhichita mind, because Bodhichita mind is something that does not wear off. Life after life, after life it will always be there. Even because of you karmic imprint if one is meant to be born as a horse,

for example, horse you shall be but you will be a horse and be taken care by a wonderful family and you will not have to face the consequences elsewhere (laughs).

I cannot emphasize enough on Bodhichitta. You all know now, because of my distribution of these things, we have various devices like nectar you put on your tongue and reach liberation. We have things to put around our neck or hold on our person and from there get liberation. We have liberation by sight, we wear sacred writings. We have things like liberation by hearing, for example, the text that is read to dead or dying people for the intermediate stage. What do you think all these are? These are little implements in order to create an atmosphere to generate Bodhichitta mind. That's all we are trying to do. Flashing these things around so that the people think about other beings and therefore generate Bodhichitta mind. That's all we are trying to do. When you generate a little bit of Bodhichitta mind that will be something like dripping a drop of milk in a pot of black tea. It is going to have an effect.

After having a dose of Bodhichitta we will have a tea break.

When it comes to the realm of the humans just think that right now, at this very moment, hundreds of people are dying and hundreds of small children are being born. If you don't take these things for granted but cast your mind to these happenings everywhere then you will know the meaning of cyclical existence, dying and being born with its associated suffering. When you not take these things for granted but cast the mind on those things then your mind will generate compassion.

When you do this Chöd practice, one thing I forgot to mention about the hungry ghost is that the idea of hungry ghosts is to do with desire, attachment and being stingy. Stinginess, desire and attachment give rise to the state of mind that is referred as hungry ghosts. Look at some of the business people there, no matter how much they accumulate they are all the more miserly and they want to accumulate more. Ten million is not enough; they want to make more, so like that there is constant hunger to accumulate more and more. When you the practitioner without attachment, desire and this feeling of misery generate Bodhichitta, that state of mind merges with all beings and in that way benefit not only yourself but all sentient beings.

In our four immeasurables we pray that all sentient beings may part with suffering and the causes of suffering. It is no good just praying that they would be free from suffering, they have to be freed from the causes of suffering. It is just like the weed, if you don't uproot the very roots they will be coming up again.

The next one is the demigods, when you sprinkle the nectar you do it with this in mind – all the demigods are constantly fighting. Demigods really means jealousy, where there is jealousy one is bound to be reborn in the realm of demigods and when one is born in the realm of demigods then there is constant fighting. Jealousy, sometimes we tend to underestimate that. Jealousy is very, very potent in the sense that there is jealousy between those who have prosperity, a reach can feel jealousy about another reach person. A poor person can be jealous of a reach person. A beautiful looking person can be jealous of another beautiful looking person. A non so beautiful person will be jealous of a beautiful person. Even among brothers they have feelings of jealousy. Jealousy is something we all should get rid of. On television we see war being waged, fightings being broke, all kinds of these things we see. That is because it is one's own karmic imprint. When we see these things one should feel as one's heart is pricked with thorns we should feel a sense of urgency. Then when you sprinkle the nectar, visualize that by sprinkling the nectar may all that jealousy be purified in all the beings of demigods.

If you can feel the suffering of those who are, because of jealousy, having to face the consequences of it, then you can generate compassion and with this compassion you will be able to help the inhabitants.

The next one is the devas or the gods. Devas have a tremendous amount of external sensual pleasures, they enjoy all kind of pleasures in their round and they live for a very, very long time but because of all the allurements, all the pleasures they forget to practice Dharma, they have no time for that. One thing about the devas is that they have the ability to see their future. Because they see their future they see their future destiny and that is to be reborn in Samsara. That brings tremendous amount of suffering to them as they keep nearing and nearing to the end. That is so much like these corporate business people, they are so successful, so busy making lots and lots of money and one day all of a sudden something terrible happens and they go bankrupt and because of that they suffer a great deal. It is also something like, in America there are so much material comfort, a lot of amenities. Just imagine a red blooded American being placed slab in the middle of samxx in Tibet where there is no electricity, no running water, no heating, no central air, nothing. The amount of suffering she or he is going to face will be a great deal more than the suffering we, indigenous Tibetans, have in Tibet. We have been suffering in that way and we are kind of used to it. But the devas being used to every kind of pleasure once they see they are going to land somewhere, probably like Tibet, that Rinpoche didn't say it, elsewhere the devas are going to suffer a great deal. Then when you appreciate the kind of troubles and tribulations the devas are going through then develop compassion, extend that compassion and then sprinkle the nectar. It will have the full force.

One thing I forgot is this is how you look at the devas but from your part too, you cannot be proud of the fact that you are young, healthy and therefore things are not material to you. Of course everything applies to you, therefore if you need happiness you have to do virtuous deeds. You have to do accordingly to the law of cause and effect.

After that you say PHAT and in front in the sky visualize Lama, Yidam deities, Dakas, Dakinis, Triple Gem and all the enlightened Dharmapalas. All those who have reached enlightenment from Samsara, except for Samanthabhadra, every single enlightened being had once upon a time been a Samsaric being. So all those who reached enlightenment from Samsara to them as well as all those harm causing elements out there, imagine that they are coming together as guests of this offering just like cloud formation and then to them you make the offering.

Then it comes OM AH KA RO MUKHAM SAVA DHARMA NAM. When you recite this visualize that the offering that you are making, the nectar, is Bodhisattva Samanthabhadra's offering<sup>33</sup>. Bodhisattva Samanthabhadra's offering is that which doesn't run out, the more you use the more there is. It is the kind of offering that is beyond material offering. It is just like the colors of a rainbow. When you do this, when you make this offering, visualize that all the guests, the enlightened beings, are very please. That they are reaching out to by radiating rays of light. At the end of the rays of light visualize there is a Vajra, in the text it says Vajra Tongue, but in the Tibetan text it really says Vajra hole at end of all the rays of light coming out, originating from the enlightened beings. Visualize that it serves like a straw, if you like, and visualize that the enlightened beings are tasting this nectar in the form of Bodhisattva Samanthabhadra's offerings. By tasting it visualize that are all appeased, happy and satiated.

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<sup>33</sup> Here Bodhisattva Samanthabhadra is different from the primordial Samanthabhadra.

OM AH HUNG is a very meaningful three sacred syllables. I am going to say once again a little bit about it. You should say it a t all times even when you are eating your own food you should say OM HA HUNG. OM AH HUNG and TSA HUNG PAM HO are needed at all times.

Buddhism is such than when you are making offerings to the deities you say OM AH HUNG, when you are making offerings to the demons and harm causing beings you also say OM AH HUNG. When you are invoking the continuum of Yidam deities and inviting them you say TSA HUNG PAM HO. When you are trying to get rid of demonic force you also say TSA HUNG PAM HO.

OM will fill the whole space with all kinds of one's desires. AH will put the taste and the nutrition in whatever is been offered. HUNG will turn into wisdom nectar.

When you say HUNG what it is going to do is you are going to see the essence, emptiness, but aspect you can actually see.

This is kind of easy to say OM AH HUNG.

Next you make this offering to the Yidam deities associated with the four Tantras and all the assembly of deities associated with those. And to them you say OM AH HUNG and make the offerings and then you also make the offerings to those naturally abiding in the state of Dharmadatu all the Dakas and Dakinis, to them you make the same offering.

Then to the three precious jewels and the sublime enlightened or the Dharmapalas with wisdom eyes to them you offer the same nectar.

To those who embody compassion and who have the power of bala and to them you make the same offering and say OM AH HUNG.

The next one is, from the beginningless time in cyclical existence to this very time all the sentient beings who existed in the three realms of existence, existence of form, existence of the formless, existence of desire. In other words all six realms of existence. When they were in cyclical existence all the karmic debts ever owed to another being because of taking life, because of having maltreated, physically abused other sentient beings and as a consequence suffering through sickness and physical suffering and all the karmic imprint accumulated from either having stolen, stolen properties or robbed other beings of properties. To them you pay the karmic debts by this offering. These are the key words - having to pay this karmic debt, pay in life because one has taken other being life before. Having to face the consequence of having to go to the suffering of sickness and ill health because one has abused, physically abused others. Because one has to face the suffering of not having material means because what one either has stolen or robbed other beings. All these karmic consequences that karmic beings have to face by giving this offering of nectar may all karmic debts be paid.

This *lencha* or indebtedness, in other times translated as karmic imprint, when a sentient being takes live, that causes an indebtedness, and the result is short life, untimely death. If one engages in physical abuse or one causes physical pain and harm to others the result has to go through sickness and ill health. If one has stolen or robbed other beings of property the result is poverty, a loss of job. Even if one has a job a low pay. All these would be the karmic consequences.

There were times when some people come to me, business people, I have some person, company that owes me so much money, tens of thousand of dollars, and now they are not paying. What shall I do? There is a lot of suffering and grief. I tell them that the country has rules and regulations, there are laws there are legal ways to solve this problem. You should go through legal means. If you are karmically meant to get your payment back, you will. If you are not meant to, you simply would get it. No amount of legal things will put it right



because what if the person doesn't have anything to pay you. These are all kind of karmic things. Some people loose their property, home and then they come and say - I lost this, I lost that... Loosing home or property is bad enough, but on top of that if one generates anger and creates suffering and trying to do everything possible to pay back in their own coins, then you are just doubling the negative effect that is having on you by loosing your home. Then I tell them whatever is meant is meant, one should try to understand that. It is karma.

Then to all the enlightened beings who reached enlightenment from cyclical existence to their mouth I make this offering of nectar and say OM AH HUNG.

From here it comes to red distribution.

The offering of one's own body as a feast is done again and again and again in a repetitive manner, you do it 10,000 times, 100,000 times, the reason for this, you do it repetitively.

# - And to find out whether or not one is making any progress or success in this repetitiveness is to see if one is after some time able to detach oneself from one's body. Is one able to give away one's own body without any kind of attachment? When you keep on practicing this repetitively for a long, long time you will be training your mind and there will be a time that you feel you don't have any kind of attachment whatsoever in giving away your body. It will come to the point when you think that you can literally give away your body parts without any kind of attachment. Now, when you come to this kind of attainment you are detaching yourself from attachment to external attachments. This is to kind of train yourself to the notion of the non-existence of I center notion or ego clinging or selfishness dualistic clinging. So the whole idea of this repetitive body offering is to get rid of attachment, to get rid of dualistic clinging.

During the time of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni one household person, I forget the name, put some questions to the Buddha and Buddha's answers to those question were - when you give away things as charity and that very thing is going to increase exponentially. That which you keep on saving because you are stingy miser, that very thing that you safe is going to be your own shackles. This kind of ties in with this example of taking a seed and go to the field and planting it. When you plant a seed at harvest time you are going to reap many fold. But on the other hand if you keep that one single seed in your custody and do nothing with it, it is always to remain a solitary one seed and in most probability some mouse will come and steal it away too. It is said in all teachings that when you give, the merit generated from that is going to be tremendous value.

Here we go. Sbyin pa or giving, the first of the Six Paramitas, seemingly easy but it is kind of difficult to appreciate the deeper meaning and the benefits. Therefore I am going to tell a story, a true story, and from this story you can deduce the meanings. Once upon a time there was a monk who was on retreat and at some point the devas and demons out there wanted to show some illusions to the monk on retreat. Because of this the monk had a very strange urge to have some meat so he went about his business of eating meat. But instead of a lump of meat he got hold of a ring of sausage as we would make back home in Tibet, sausages called sgyu ma, it is a kind of much longer than the ones we have here<sup>34</sup>. The person on the retreat had a feeling of uneasiness and though - oh gosh! Could this be real? Or could this perhaps is some kind of illusion? Well there is a way to find this out, he was holding the knife and the sausage, something like *grishka*, and instead of striking it and eating it, he put away the knife and said - let me first go in a meditative contemplation. And

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<sup>34</sup> Translator's commentary. The small intestines made into a kind of loop and tied together. By the way Rinpoche didn't say that. That is my explanation.

he went back and closed his eyes and meditated for a while and the urge was still there. Because he was not quite sure he got hold of a marker, a pen, and he just pointed to the sausage and said - could you be real? Or could you not be real? So he put a cross to test if it was real or not and thought – I can always find it out and as soon as he put the cross the sausage disappeared altogether. There was no any sausage. He thought – this is kind of strange. Some hours later he went out going about his business enjoying the sun and he kind of unbuttoned himself and had a look down at his belly and there was this cross that he put in the sausage. Had he cut the sausage he would have opened himself up. Thank god he did not because of that kind of little inkling of idea of going back on meditation that saved him. From this, this is talking about the nature of how things work. The cause-effect relationship. It is said that when you give charity, the things you give away in this life is said to be your own food in your next life journey, so it is very, very important. After sometimes when you give you will realize that when you give to sentient beings, you the giver and others the receivers you will really find that both the giver and the receiver are the same. There is not an iota of difference between the two, the reason for that is that when you give you are the one to receive the benefits. So you are the giver and as result you will be the receiver, just like you see I gave you the example of looking after, keeping a house spick and span with the motivation of benefiting whoever is going to be the next occupant. If you keep it in good condition thinking that it does not matter whoever comes, whoever comes there will find a pleasant place to live in there, who knows if it is going to be yourself. But on the other hand just being so self-centered because you are living in that house and you don't care about who is going to be the next occupant. If you plunder everything, tear down the walls, take steal frames doors and windows, then in all probability is going to be you the one who is going to occupy this very house. So from this hopefully you will learn some more profound meaning of giving.

Here in this Chöd Practice there is the mention of many body parts. There is mention of flesh, blood, organs, intestines, heart and other body parts. Sometimes you may wonder why there is the need to go into all of these gruesome details. There is a need for that because the enlightened beings, skilful teachers, had devised these teachings to suit the temperament of different individuals. Those of us who have a very strong attachment to one's own body and our inability to detach ourselves it is because we believe, in our deluded mind, that all these things are real. That all the body parts are reality and that is why to kind of go through the whole list it helps us to focus our mind so that list by list, item by item we strive to train our mind to detach from ourselves. But to those with higher mental or experiential caliber a day can just go on practicing without going through the list of organs. They can just visualize themselves as giving the whole body as offering. Those can generate Bodichitta mind and also meditate on Shunyata or emptiness they do not have to go through the list. So when you go through all the body parts that are mentioned they are mentioned for those reasons.

We just covered the red distribution. And in the red distribution Zapatrul Rinpoche has said that those who have this kind of morbid attachment of flesh and blood, even when there are as many as nine different dishes of wholesome vegetable dishes, one would then do anything to get a piece of flesh, even if that piece of flesh belonged to an animal who died of hunger. So that kind of beings out there need red distribution that we just covered. There is a thing called white distribution. White distribution is for the kind of beings in Samsara who go for veggies. So, for veggie beings instead of flesh and blood we have yogurt, we have milk. That is why is called white distribution, we have other sweet things. But whether is white distribution or red distribution, in both cases, although the aspect is either yogurt in

the case of white distribution or flesh and blood in the red distribution, the essence of both must be in our meditation pure nectar.

When I was a young boy I use to love meat and I also had a kind of leaning towards not so well cooked meat. My father used to warn me that if I acted the way I acted when I passed away I would be reborn as a tiger or a leopard, if not a tiger or a leopard I would be reborn as a dog or a cat. He used to tell me, pointed out to me, that when we look out there all those flesh eating animals that you see, more flesh eating animals die of hunger than the animals who eat grass. I thought that was true and besides when you eat excessive amounts of meat, because of some form of poisoning one becomes sick and also you don't feel so well. Now a days I have less urge to eat meat I kind of try to reduce the amount of meat intake and I find kind of much healthier. Some lamas have told me that there was a news item somewhere there are some people who never eat meat are living up to 200 years. I don't know where but I think you lived longer if you didn't eat meat.

Now after making the offerings and reciting OM AH HUNG then there will be still some nectar left in the skull because, remember, because of the mind generation the content of the skull will never be depleted. The more you deplete the more there will be. So, the remainder of the nectar is in the skull. From the Vajravahri's heart center a beam of light will come and touch the contents of the skull. At that very moment you utter the word PHAT and it is going to turn the content the mountains of flesh, oceans of blood and all the bones will amount to the thousand-fold world system. When that happen you invite every single being as listed here in the text, in page 17, white gods, black demons, yellow Nyen demons and everyone of them listed here and then make an offering.

All these different types of beings out there, mentioned in page 17. The white gods belonging to the heaven and the black demons, I do not really know all the details of all the different entities listed in here. But let us make it sufficient to say that these are the ones that have not been able to take rebirth in the six realms as we know like humans, for example. They are in limbo out there, always to cause problems for other sentient beings because they are karmically destined to do so. We want to invite all these into this feast offering.

On page 18 there is mention of BER KAR BER NAG all these belonging to the harm causing beings out there. We generally have the tendency of treating all these things as ghosts and treat them as aversion, on the other hand we like to treat the pole opposite of ghost and say these are devas and we have a tendency to treat them better. This shouldn't be like that at all, it is all the karmic originated by the mind. Ghosts can instantly turn into devas, if you know how to shift your focus in the mind make a change in the state of mind. Conversely devas or gods can instantly turn into harm causing demons if you do not know how to think in the right way. So everything originate from the mind. There is nothing absolutely dirty about the so-called ghost or demons.

For further illustrate my point here, even when you are a pious, genuine practitioner if you once make the mistake of shifting your mental focus in the wrong way all the goodness that you have attained can turn instantly into the opposite. Here there is an example. There was a wonderful *bigshu* practitioner, a lama in a place called *Tayeb* in the eastern Tibet <sup>35</sup>. No but anyway ... in this region the lama was worshipped and revered by everybody in the region, and like all lamas they would go to him and receive teachings and make offerings and they had a wonderful relation. One year they had famine and the local people went to

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<sup>35</sup> Translator's commentary: apparently this is quite close to were I was born and Rimpoche says – probably the translator is going to be a little bit upset.

the lama and said – well, you know we are dying of hunger, there is famine, would you, please, lend us all of your accumulation of food, green, meat and other things. The lama replied - I couldn't possible do that because these are offerings made to me by the likes of you for teaching, for imparting Dharma. If I let you have these, if I lend these to you, you having not imparted any teachings you just simply wouldn't be able to digest it. So if I lent it to you I would be doing a disservice to Dharma. I can not do that. People got really upset about that. Because they said to themselves – whatever kind of accumulation you have, dear lama, we are the ones that gave it to you in the first place. Now when we are in need you wouldn't even part with those as loan. So they burned the whole thing down. The local people went and they torched the house and burned every single thing but the lama was a very powerful lama. He miraculously used his shawl as wing and flew out of the house and he was not burned. Looking down and seeing the house being burned down the lama was overcome by anger and he thought to himself – all these years I taught these miserable people (laughs) and now look how they are treating me. He offered a brief prayer in his anger and said – in my next life let me be help to all part of the world to all sentient beings exempt for the people of this region. To these people may I be borne as someone who is going to give them a hard time. Because of that prayer he was born as a very infamous being who was feared everywhere, not only in Tayeb region but elsewhere. So that is the story.

Motivation is very, very important because when you are trying to do something virtuous and once for a split second if you are overcome by anger or negative emotion that really goes waste. So it really is the mind whether you want this to be positive or negative, how do you want to use the mind to your benefit or to your detriment, that is up to you, it is something like the power of money. The decision you are going to make is – are you going to use the power of money to manufacture to procure lifesaving medicines or are you going to use the power of money to build bombs to destroy lives? That is the choice, when you do a good deed, are you going to through Bodhichitta mind generation to dedicate that something beneficial to all or are you going to use that power to destroy?

H.H. the Dalai Lama has again and again made public statements and giving teaching about the futility of practicing certain so called Dharma protectors. The reason for this is when you practice an entity whose very nature is anger and jealousy then it is just like the nature of sun. The nature of sun is luminosity and heat, when sun shines everything is illuminated and gives life but when the nature of something is anger and jealousy, everything you associate, all your energy will become somewhat negative. That is why H.H. has given teachings and made public announcement. Samsaric protectors, unenlightened beings used as Dharma protectors are very dangerous when these beings do not have Bodhichitta mind then is quite useless. Bodhichitta mind is the main thing. Once somebody has Bodhichitta mind nothing is going to be able to subdue or intimidate that. It is always very powerful.

When you give away this feast, when you have summoned all the beings assembled together, now the arrangement we do is, to your mind, whoever is most harmful we invite them first let them take the first sit. Then the lesser ones come after. In that sequential priority we arrange all the guest sentient beings and then make the offering.

Here we have the repetition of the sacred word HUNG three times HUNG is the essence of the enlightened beings mind, now the net effect of uttering HUNG and PHAT is very much the same HUNG also deal with the true nature of mind.

#12 - HUNG HUNG HUNG it says come here and gather here<sup>36</sup>. Next comes PHAT PHAT PHAT and next HUNG, from the top of Samsara down to the depth of hell in these there are many, many different beings. Some with form other without form. All these are included when we say from the top of Samsara down to every single being with or without form. All sentient beings are included in these. We invite them and then make the offering.

Then when you say for you the demons and spirits... In page 21, the first line, to you the gods and demons. Whatever your mind desires you will find here, referring, we are talking about flesh and blood, you are offering flesh and blood but the person who offers, the practitioner, generating compassion, without conceptual thoughts focuses on sentient beings. When you are in a true nature of mind, you do not have to visualize body parts, because by the power of meditation and the text, the beings out there when they come they are going to find according to their needs, they are going to find whatever they need in the flesh and blood. So that is the key thing.

When they come and receive this offering they will be satisfied and completely satiated to the point that they will never again suffer from lack of food or lack of whatever they are looking for.

We are making this offering of body parts and they are coming to receive it. We talk in terms of satisfying them. What do we really say? What we are saying is whatever is visualized in the skull is blessed with OM AH HUNG that is the body, speech and mind of all enlightened beings. Coupled with this is our own Bodhichitta mind the most powerful weapon on the planet. So how are we satisfying them? What are we feeding them? We are feeding them this blessed feast, so that all the body, speech and mind obscurations may be purified and as a result may they embody Bodhichitta mind so that they will reach enlightenment, so they will cease to suffer. That is the kind of meaning one should grasp. When you are making this offering, all the body parts and everything, as said before, we go through the list of body parts so that it helps us to train our mind on the detachment of our body. But in essence what we are saying is when we sprinkle the contents of the skull and throw it out and when the sentient beings are in contact with the contents what we are saying is - may all you sentient beings, from the top of Samsara to the depth of hell, may you all receive the essence teachings of the six perfections. Of the six perfections the first one Prajnaparamita teaching that is what we are saying. And when you say that the focus should not be on oneself, the practitioner, by making this generous offering may I perfect the first of the six Paramitas. No. May all sentient beings perfect the first of the six Paramitas. That is very important.

When we list down the major organs, five major organs we are again the same as before in order to train our mind to detach oneself from attachment to our body parts. That is why we go through the list. Otherwise what we are praying by sprinkling the content of the skull, is that by giving out the five body parts may all sentient beings actualize the five wisdoms. It is not your heart, not your lungs, not your spleen, not your liver but in aspect yes, the major organs, but in essence the praying that all sentient beings may reach the state of acquiring the five wisdoms. Five wisdoms really mean the five principal Dhyani Buddhas, east, north, west, south and center.

You are talking two things here, one – making the offering of the five major organs, that is one hand. The essence is turning all sentient beings making them acquire, by the power of

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<sup>36</sup> Translator's commentary: Rinpoche wanted me to read this but since everybody has the text in front of you I feel kind of stupid going through it, so I am not going to read it just leave the reading to you.

this offering, the five wisdoms which translate in five Dhyani Buddhas. And in doing so we, again on one hand visualize, through visualization, all those coming from far distances, all the demons and the mother sentient beings coming from far away places because they do not have time to cook the flesh and blood so they can have them raw. Those who have time who come from closer proximity they can boil; they can put in an oven or whatever and can eat flesh and blood the way they want, well done, medium, rare (laughs)... they can do that. So here the visualization is, this has all to do with visualization, imagine all mother sentient beings coming to receive the five wisdoms. In doing so in aspect you hear the devouring of flesh, the sound of drinking down blood and chewing on the bones and there is a lot of gaiety, laughter, appeasement and signs of happiness. Visualize these things but not depart from the essence teaching, which is giving them the opportunity to attain the five wisdoms. The more you give, the more there is because of interdependent origination, because the power of the prayers. Now again we designate different parts of the body, upper body, lower body, we designate these body parts to different species of mother sentient beings. These are talking about the different types of sentient beings to each we are designating one body part. For example liver, spleen, bile, lungs, going through the names of different species of mother sentient beings and the different parts of the body. The reason is the same as explained so we are learning to train our mind to detach.

We can talk about different types of demons ghosts, because as long as one conceptual thought can imagine there is not limit to the types and forms of different sentient beings out there. These are all creation of the mind, it can translate into millions and millions of different types, but when the mind is free from conceptual thoughts, appearances, then none exist.

When one is able to detach from attachment then there is a thing called the pristine, pure, expanse of both Samsara and Nirvana. There is no **I**, there is no **you** because one is able to detach oneself from this dualistic clinging.

If you read Milarepa's life history there is a story about how he divided up all parts of a sick person. It is kind of useful. You can deduce a lot of things from that story.

This in page 23 starting from the top of the page goes all the way to the page 24, the first line, all these designated different body parts to different sentient beings.

For the benefit of those who require illustrated teachings, here in page 24, the second line goes - all the host of sentient beings coming to devour you just the vultures swooping down on a corpse or the blackbirds coming to quench their thirst, coming to the water. So all this tremendous amount of sentient beings coming to devour you. They devour you to the extent that not a morsel is left.

For those who need this kind of illustration this example is given, when there is a piece of decomposing meat and imagine when there are so many black flies literally covering it, just like that the example is given. When they come devour the flesh and blood and they are very happy and satisfied.

On page 25 is saying - just as when there is a huge division of soldiers coming to wage war and come, subdue the enemy and conquering the territory swooping down the villagers.

These are all illustrative examples so certain people will find easier to relate to. So my body parts are needed and wanted by the demons let the demons take them, if the body parts are wanted by the devas let the devas be the ones who enjoy my body parts. Let there be no bigger or smaller let there be equality, all can have whatever one's hearts desires.

Now again the sacred word PHAT is to get rid of all conceptual thoughts and the same time telling all the sentient beings gathered together - now without any conceptual thoughts, listen and pay attention.

Here after we are saying PHAT, page 25, the last half of the bottom line, here briefly the practitioner is giving a form of teaching to the sentient beings. Here it goes KYE MA DIR TSHOG; KYE MA is something like alas! those of you who are here, all the devas and all the ghosts, the demons you who are constantly in search of other beings lives - know that this body is an illusion. It is impermanent the very nature of this body is impermanence and therefore I do not hesitate of giving it away without any kind of reservation. You, all the demons out there, whoever wants it may have my body. That is what the message is. Those particular kind beings out there, as said, constantly at the lookout for lives, they want to constantly searching for lives, they want to take lives by karmic imprint <sup>37</sup>. LA is kind of the basis of life that which encases life. There is a thing called life and LA. LA is not very easy to understand, when a person dyes in the grounds wherever there is the corpse there also remains that base, which contains, which encases life. These demons are always in the lookout, by nature they go on being demons, these particular ones, for a long, long time, tens of thousands of years and because of karmic imprint they have this notion that they die every week. In order to prevent them from dying they feel they got to take a life. Once they can take a life they feel completely relieved and satisfied that they will have the opportunity to live. So they are going looking for lives of other beings on a weekly basis. To them you are saying – whoever wants to have... Trying to satisfy them by giving our body our life to them so that they will be satisfied and at the same time teaching the impermanent nature of existence.

We talk in terms of demonic obstacles, demonic obstacles in the sense, again going back to this idea of life and LA. LA is a Tibetan word is a kind of gray area. To take life you, actually, have to make all the major kind of life-sustaining body parts out of commission. But to steal your LA, so to speak, that can be done by the demons when you are sleeping. When your alert mind is off guard that is the time when your LA can be stolen, and when LA is taken away, then what happens is immediately that is going to be followed by signs of mental and physical degeneration followed by death.

What we are saying to the demons out there is that just like a bunch of children looking at a flowerpot with all the beautiful flowers. We are saying to the children – yes, they may seem beautiful flowers, may seem beautiful but giving the time they are going to decompose, they are going to dry up, they are no use to me. So if you are attracted to the flowers by all means take them, have them. That is what we are saying to all the spirits out there. The nature of one's body is subject to decay, old age it is not something I cherish, if you want it by all means take it.

By giving this body to all you beings out there I dedicate this to all sentient beings in general and especially to you the ones that have been my own parents and also, lamas, eberts to them I dedicate this body. I give it away dedicating the merits to them. May this serve as karmic debt payment, may this serve as a ransom on behalf of all of you.

By giving this may all your karmic debts be paid, may you be purified, from the beginningless time all your karmic debts may be paid and whatever is owed may be settled and by the power this may all your desires of causing harms to other sentient beings may be purified. Let there not be anger, hatred in your mind may you now generate Bodhichitta mind because of receiving this and by generating Bodhichitta mind by the power of that may you finally reach enlightenment. Then say PHAT PHAT PHAT.

Here we say PHAT, top of page 28, PHAT PHAT. The third offering is - thus far we have given to all the ghost, demons and spirits the material sustenance but that is not enough,

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<sup>37</sup> Translator's commentary: one thing I forgot to translate is a thing called consciousness and LA.

now we are saying to them that having filled your stomachs now I have to give you Dharma offering and that is how it begins.

Here it goes on to say NA-MO meaning offer prostrations this is all phenomena in Samsara arise from causes. What are those causes? These causes are explained by the Tathagatas and how to put an end to those causes and these are the words of the great teacher the historical lord Buddha Sakyamuni. He went on to say that one should not indulge in any kind of negative action, one should train oneself to engage in all positive actions and this is what he had to say. This really kind of ties in with some of the questions that were asked to me by people who came to me and said - what are the precepts that one has to observe when one receives the gnakpa vow, or the ordination for the lay people. Whether it is Self-liberation Ordination or whether it is gnakpa vows, we can go into 253 different type of precepts that fully ordained people would surely observe. But the real kind of bottom line, the foundation of all these precepts is not causing harm to others. There are four fundamentals that one has to observe.

The Tibetan word, key word is DIG-PA, DIG-PA is negative action. Negative action is that which causes harm to others, that which generates suffering to others, that is DIG-PA or negative action. In Buddhism, Buddha Sakyamuni's teachings focuses on putting an end to the cause of causes of negative action, others you find simply kind of try to tackle the symptoms not the disease itself, that is the difference, in Buddhism we look at the disease itself, not at the symptoms. This is very logical because once a seed goes in the earth this is the cause and the result will be a shoot coming out of the earth. This is inevitable, so we try to prevent the seed going into the earth; all these negative actions come from this selfish **I** centeredness. When you treat yourself as the center of all things, then you don't care about others, if they are cold let them be cold, if they are hungry let them be hungry, if something is causing them suffering or harm let it be. It is them it is not **me**. That kind of attitude is self-centered. When one has this tremendous amount of self centeredness then what one is likely to do is if possible they will kind of rob others, when it is not possible one will think of stealing. This is the kind of negative actions one is likely to engage in when there is this **I** centeredness. When one is not able to detach oneself from the self centeredness one will not be able to benefit others. Therefore in order that we may learn to detach ourselves we, in Buddhist circles attach so much importance on training the mind on accepting all sentient beings as parents. Parents by definition being kind to sons and daughters. In that way one tries to be helpful, to be of benefit to others. Whatever one is able to do all the good deed one is able to do for the benefit of all sentient beings is positive action. Positive action generates positive results; negative actions generate negative results. What is the main thing that switches on and off from virtuous deeds to non-virtuous deeds? It is one's own mind. And when one's own mind is deluded with hatred, desire, attachment and ignorance then we don't see the right things from the wrong things and engage in all kind of unwholesome things. That is why the concluding verse of Buddha Sakyamuni's teachings goes on to say that one should properly control one's own mind. So, emphasis is laid on the controlling of mind. Finally Lord Buddha Sakyamuni concludes by saying – this is the teaching of the Buddhas, this is Dharma. That is what he says.

# - Again going back to 28, because obviously the teachings of the Buddha are so profound, so meaningful that it deserves another look at. In page 28 the transliteration says-DIG-PA CHI-YANG MI JYA ZHING/ GE WA PHUN SUM TSHOG PAR CHYE/ RANG-GI SEM-NI YONG-SU DUL/ DI-NI SANG-GYE TEN-PA YIN/ this stanza includes the whole range of 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teachings. How so? You may ask. This is how - in this stanza alone includes all the ordinations. In Tibetan we say TSHOG



chang ta. tshog is Self-liberation Ordination, Chang is Bodhisattva Ordination, ma ? is the Tantric Ordination all three are embodied in this very stanza. When Lord Buddha goes on to say DIG-PA CHI-YANG MI JYA ZHING/ by not engaging on any kind of negative actions. This ties in with the Vinaya teachings when you do not cause harm to others and you abide by the four fundamental precepts, that is Self-liberation Ordination. That is one. Next one Lord Buddha goes on to say / GE WA PHUN SUM TSHOG PAR CHYE/ try to do everything one can in one's power to engage in positive wholesome activities. Now, what are positive wholesome activities? Positive wholesome activities is, the bottom line is, the generation of Bodhichitta mind and following up with Bodhichitta actions. So in that is Bodhichitta Ordination included, when you generate Bodhichitta mind you will want to do everything in your power to help sentient beings, even if it means your own life. So there you are you got your Bodhisattva vow in that. Next one RANG-GI SEM-NI YONG-SU DUL/ it says to refine your mind, it says DUL it is to refine to perfect one's mind, to control one's mind. How? Refining or returning or perfecting the state of your mind would be turning your ordinary mind into the mind of the enlightened beings. When you through mental visualization generate yourself as Yidam deities, body, speech and mind by this you are receiving or talking about the Tantric vow. When you receive Tantric vow, whatever you see as you see you have pure perception, all sights are pure sights - Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, all sounds are the mantras of enlightened beings, again pure. The mindset is when you are in the state of true nature of mind, which is in the state of Dharmakaya. This way is talking about the practice of Tantrayana, in it there is the Self-liberation, generation of Bodhichitta, the ways of the Bodhisattva and ordination, the ways of the method of Tantric practice and its ordinations. Every single thing is included in this very verse and that is why Buddha goes on to say - this is my teaching.

This is the teaching of Buddhism. When you practice Chöd, when you read, again page 28, top line PHAT/ NA-MO CH'O-NAM THEM-CHE GYU-LE JYUNG/ all phenomena in Samsara arise from cause, you are thinking about the interplay of cause and effect. Cause and effect relationship is infallible.

At that time it is also a good opportunity to generate devotion. Before any of us you, the Buddha, saw the relationship between cause and effect and therefore you, the great one, I generate devotion. That kind of attitude you should have.

The Buddha nature of all sentient beings as well as Tathagatas being the same, when you are wholeheartedly thinking in this way then your own true nature of mind merges with the true nature of mind of all sentient beings. And in that way you are benefiting your guests, all the Samsaric beings by merging your altruistic mind with theirs and leaving an imprint on their minds so they too will be able to generate Bodhichitta.

Here there is this thing called Buddha's teachings SANG-GYE TEN-PA, teachings that are shown, imparted by the Buddha. What is Buddhism? What is Buddha's teaching? Well Buddha's teaching are associated with red robes, temples, monasteries, the sound of prayers. These are associated with Buddha's teaching but these are only kind of external things. The real Buddha's teaching that matter the most, which is the innermost is treating all sentient beings in an equal way and considering all of them like our own parents.

Because of that equality the willingness to help and generate Bodhichitta. If one is not able to do that then wearing red robes is completely an empty hollow shell it is just meaningless. You can yourself test as to how much of a practitioner you are by kind of measuring the amount of Bodhichitta mind you possess. You, yourself know the best. You are your own witness, if you have an inkling of what kind of person you are then you will know how things are. What other people are likely to perceive you as is of secondary consequence. It

doesn't matter, in fact it doesn't matter at all, if they say you are Bodhisattva or they say you are a demon it does not matter. That shouldn't affect you. The real important thing is you, yourself, that is the life witness of what is happening in your own mind. Whatever you do you should put your mind as witness of whatever you are about to do or you are doing and that is what matters.

Just like I taught you last year, Mahamudra teachings, the alert mind constantly being on the watch out for conceptual thoughts, negative emotions and when they come not follow them trying to stay in the true nature of mind. This really is the bottom line. All lamas, no matter what kind of teaching you receive the message will be the same; teachings will be the same, that is the foundation.

After this the next stanza is the last sentence in Tibetan on page 28, JYIN-PA GYA-CH'EN. Here it says that - by having given this huge, vast offering, by its power, for the benefit of all sentient beings, may I reach enlightenment. And having reached enlightenment may I be able to liberate all sentient beings by the power of this offering to the extent that no other Tathagatas, no other glorious ones had been able to do in the past. So this is the message.

Next stanza MA SAM JO-ME, this is talking the true nature of mind, this is talking about Shunyata or emptiness. What are the qualities of Shunyata or Emptiness? The Root Text goes on to say – yes I feel like describing the qualities of Shunyata, that is *masom*, but I cannot *jeremiad* says. I have this urge to express the qualities of Shunyata but there are not words, I cannot tell you what it is like. It is the Prajnaparamita or the perfection of wisdom. That is something that it cannot be described by words, it is unborn it is unceasing, it is like the deep blue space. It can (it meaning the Prajnaparamita, the perfection of wisdom), the perfection of wisdom can only be seen or experience by the perfection of wisdom. That is why it says SO SO RANG RIG YE-SHE, it can be seen by itself and to you the Prajnaparamita, the mother of all the victorious ones of all three times let your auspicious this, be here today. That is the concluding sentence, kind of prayer too talking about the NATURE OF MIND or Shunyata <sup>38</sup>.

Going back to the Root Text MA-KYE MI-GANG NAM-KHA'I NGO-WO NYI, unborn, unceasing with the essence of the blue sky. If you try to understand this by referring to all the Buddha's teachings, the canonical teachings, in the Sutras, in Tantras you will never be able to take out the jest of all his teachings. I, for example, do not know what are written in those things. Instead of searching to these things in the Sutras and the Tantras we look inwardly to our own mind and it is a kind of hands on finding what the meaning is. In this it is said that Shunyata or emptiness or true nature of mind, that perfection or wisdom can be seen and experienced by wisdom alone. What kind of wisdom is it? Again we are going again through the same question, what does it feel? So when you are trying to meditate in the state of Mahamudra, all appearances come and when they do come the alert mind recognizes, that very recognition in our case we can call that wisdom. The wisdom that recognizes the wisdom. By recognizing all these conceptual thoughts one is able to disassociate with these conceptual thoughts and focus the attention on the true nature of mind, the stabilized mind. If we did not have this alert mind we would be kind of preoccupied with these conceptual thoughts and we would be far away from the stabilized

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<sup>38</sup> Translator's commentary: Rinpoche says- is that too much? And I said that is a way, way too much! (laughs). Words of Rinpoche. Translator: Sure..... more words Sure.... more words Rinpoche is talking to himself.... (laughs) telling me how he doesn't know a great deal ... and how there would be many amongst you guys ... who would know more than himself, how shameless he is that he is going on and on... Ya, right!

true nature of mind. Therefore, again, we can call that kind of alertness of mind wisdom a form of wisdom. Then, how does it feel when you actually recognize resorting to the use of that alert mind (wisdom) and then find out what Shunyata is like. The brief moments we experience without conceptual thoughts, without marred with conceptual thoughts or appearances, that very kind of deep or hollow blissful feeling. That would be, in our case, the state of emptiness. That would be the Mahamudra, and who does the finding out? Well it is our alert mind. Wisdom sees wisdom.

SO SO RANG RIG, the third line on the right, SO SO RANG RIG or SO SO RANG RIG PA is of the five wisdoms it would be the discerning wisdom. Here one thing, if you get the notion that the discerning wisdom, the alert mind in our case, is a kind of different entity from the true nature of mind, then that becomes dualistic. That is not the case at all, there is not one wisdom that does the seen and another wisdom that serves as the seen. It is the same very wisdom. If I use an analogy it would be like a burning butter lamp, that illumination illuminates the illumination, so the illumination it is not separated from what it is illuminated. When the illumination illuminates, it illuminates also that very illumination. That may serve as a kind of analogy, a useful thing for you. When the discerning wisdom sees the true nature of mind, the true nature of mind is not separate from the discerning wisdom.

This word YE-SHE or wisdom it is made up from two separate words. YE is from the very beginning, it is the primordial. SHE is the awareness. YE-SHE is the primordial awareness, wisdom, these are wisdom and these are pure, but the polluted, tainted understanding of things, perception of things that are called GNAM-SHE, a cognitive senses, cognition would be the right word for that. There is a very wonderful meaning attach to the word YE-SHE, primordial awareness.

Shunyata, emptiness, true nature of mind, whichever you want to call it is the mother of all Buddhas of past, present and future.

Next stanza is the bottom line in page 29 starting with CH'O-KU NAM-KHA ZHIN-DU JYER ME KYANG/ here the state of Dharmakaya is like the space, we already talked about Dharmakaya, now ZUG-KU JA TSHON ZHIN-DU SO SOR SEL/, now talking about the form body. Form body appears just like a rainbow and it is apparent, it is distinctive visible. How so? What makes it so visible? That is because of the method and wisdom. Method, emptiness being the method and compassion being the wisdom, because of method and wisdom kind of inter-playing makes it possible form the form body to have an appearance.

Then last one we are asking for auspiciousness from all the five Tathagatas. All forms of enlightened beings fall in the category of five Dhyani Buddhas.

Now we have ten bhumis and five paths. The next stanza is talking about the five paths – prostrations to the Path of Accumulation of Merits, the second one is putting into practice Bodhichitta mind, and the third is, because of these actions then actual seeing or experiencing the state of emptiness. The forth is once one experiences the emptiness, then staying in meditation in this state of emptiness. When you do this free of attachment and ego clinging then there will be no impediment, no obstacles, so the fifth is the Path of no impediments or obstacles.

Putting into practice the Bodhichitta mind, compassion is the actual performance Path. Putting into action Bodhichitta mind, once that is done then you see the true nature of things – the suffering of sentient beings, the futility of all the things that sentient beings go through, through ignorance not seeing the true nature. True nature being the true emptiness or basis for all Tathagatas. So that is the Path of seeing.

Then the last sentence is a prayer, praying that all sentient beings may actualize the body, speech and mind of the Great Mother, the Prajnaparamita.

Then at the end on page 30, MA YUM CH'EN-GO PHANG NYUR THOB SHOG/ they are praying that all sentient beings may actualize the state of Prajnaparamita. At that time visualize that all sentient beings, after feasting on your offerings, having generated Bodhichitta and having said prayers, all sentient beings; the male species become Chenrezig or Avalokiteshvara and all female species becoming Tara or Drolma. Then with that kind of conclusion and visualization and meditation you send all sentient beings home.

Once one become used to the generation stage and one gets used to the meditating on the true nature of mind, then there is no gender difference but before one becomes used to that, one can visualize all sentient beings the male as Chenrezig and female as Tara.

This does not need a great deal of explanation, the small script here. It is already translated but as Lord Jigten Sumgon has mentioned, if possible, one can do four practice sessions, but that would be quite difficult. At least one should try to do it once, that especially in the evening before going to bed. If possible read the text completely if not just go through the visualization process and that is going to give you all the benefits mentioned in page 31 and 32.

In this supplication there are a few lines that are very important. It goes on to say now we have left to send all sentient beings guest as Chenrezig and Tara and we send them home at that time. By generating Bodhichitta mind, by thinking in that way, then at that time visualize that all the host of deities that you have generated in front of you they all dissolve in light. The Prajnaparamita too dissolves in light and that light dissolves in oneself. And when that happens, then the transformation that should take place is as a result of all dissolving Prajnaparamita in yourself, your naked true nature of mind is exposed. At that time you should instead of looking into space you should look inwardly, to your own true nature of mind. When you do so your true nature own mind is not something tangible and you will not see it in a tangible way because is the state of Shunyata or emptiness. On the other hand if you say or feel or think that - when I look inwardly I cannot see the true nature of mind in a tangible way, well it is not non-existing either. Because in that nature of mind there is also all kinds of thoughts and appearances that are coming from. And when you look at it seeing the naked mind, just like that burning lamp analogy, when you see with your discerning wisdom and that's what should take place.

The more profound teachings about the ultimate View on Shunyata or Mahamudra are contained in the supplication. So later on as an appendix if you could have this supplication translated and attached to the Chöd practice text this would be of immense value to you it is not that long.

When you have this feeling of great bliss in your mind again look at that blissful nature of mind. And that blissful nature of mind is called the blissful of emptiness, it is the qualities of Mahamudra.

When it talks about to look at it is not the external thing, look inwardly. Mind looking at mind itself, when you do that all the discursive thoughts, conceptual thoughts are just like smoke and fog they will just disappear.

Here the Mahamudra true nature of mind, emptiness and Shunyata. There are so many different labels put there is the blissful and empty. Now here when you feel a great deal of clarity then turn inwardly. Let your mind look at your own state of mind and you will find that that is the clarity and emptiness, again the quality of Mahamudra. When you find sometimes that there is a really empty feeling in your state of mind again look at your state of mind and that is the non-existence of conceptual thoughts, that is again Mahamudra.

That far we have been talking about the qualities of Shunyata, Mahamudra, the state of emptiness, this idea, this feeling of bliss, bliss and emptiness, clarity and emptiness, empty emptiness. When you look at all these aspects - bliss, clarity, empty, really there is nothing to be seen and that is why it is called the naked ordinary mind, that naked, ordinary mind is exposed when you look at it and you see that there is no bliss, no clarity, there is no emptiness. But it's only what remains its and naked common mind, tha mal shes pa rjen pa jemba? Tha mal is common, shes pa is mind and rjen pa is naked or raw but we shouldn't use raw, it is better to say naked.

So when you look at the true nature of common mind whatever is there is there just like rainbow - you are not grasping it, you are not manipulating it, you are letting it be there.

We have in the supplication these wordings – let me see both Samsara and Nirvana as nothing but illusion, so there is this illusion, leave this illusion as illusion.

When the five poisons, these are discursive thoughts pertaining to the five poisons, arise just leave them alone. Do not manipulate them, let them be and when you, yourself, stay in meditation on true nature of mind the five poisons are going to dissipate by themselves, without you having to do anything to with them.

And I keep on saying – just don't mess with this negative emotions let them be. The reason for this is that anger, hatred, jealousy, when one of these discursive thoughts arise, if you don't leave them alone what is going to happen is you are going to chase after what had happened yesterday, you are going to issue into things that never have happened tomorrow and you are going to do a lot of things about what is currently happening. So past, present and future and going to the more and more discursive thoughts added on to what already exist that is why I asked you too leave them alone, do not mess with them they will disappear by themselves.

Stay in the state of equanimity whether it is happiness or sorrow, these are all thoughts, these are all emotions. When they arise leave them alone in equanimity when you do that they are not going to not affect you at all, but when you mess with this they are going to generate more and more discursive thoughts.

Whenever we are stricken with fear, all kinds of different fears, and when you look at the nature of these fears they will subside and disappear and these are the qualities of Chöd practice, which ties in with Mahamudra teachings.

This kind of state, stabilized state this wonderful state of emptiness. Masters and people who experience this state of mind wanted to put a label to it, so that the teachings could be passed on to others. They searched for words and finally they came up with kind of wonderful sounding names like the great Madhyamika or the middle path, the Mahamudra and the Great Perfection – Dbu ma, Phyag rgya chen po and Rdzog pa chen po. All these bombastic sounding names were put just because they couldn't find any better names. So whether your teacher is from the Gelupa sect, Nygma sect, Kagyu sect, Sakya sect, from whichever aspect of the teachings from the 84,000 heaps of Buddha's teachings there are teaching you. Always try one thing on your mind that is – try to absorb the nectar of these teachings and try to look for what is the bottom line. The bottom line is the true nature of mind all focus must be given to nature of mind and whenever you receive teachings look for it.

There is nothing in Nirvana, there is nothing in Samsara that is not included in one's true nature of mind. Therefore the word Rdzog pa chen po is given, so called the great

perfection<sup>39</sup>. Mind is one thing that contains every conceivable thought, every conceivable teaching, and every conceivable idea. From Samsara to Nirvana everything is contained in this teaching and because of that they have use the word rdzogs pa or containment. Just like the Nirvana and Samsara it is just like a flower the roots being Samsara and that flower being Nirvana, but at these different? Are they the same? Well, it is one stem from which the blossoms bloom.

When we are new to this practice of meditating on Mahamudra, of course, we need to resort to the use of some means to stay in focus, to stay in stability of mind. When once a certain level of stability is achieved then the mind should be without any focus at all, it should be left alone.

Believe in your own common naked mind and there is nothing outside of it. That is called Rdzog pa chen po or Phyang rgya chen po all these are contained or encompassed in your own mind.

Tsongkhapa had clearly written in one of his songs and said don't look for true nature of mind elsewhere, be satisfied with the kind of true nature of mind you possess yourself. When you practice Mahamudra meditation then after a while you are going to realize that the alert mind is not a separate kind of unit of the true nature of mind. There is not one looking out to and there is not another one that it is looked at, both are the same. When you come to understand this, experience this, that is the real Mahamudra.

Then one might be tempted to conclude that under the circumstance, really we don't need to resort any kind of the structural formal practice all we ever need to do is look inwardly and keep on looking and just don't waste time on other practices. Well, that doesn't apply at all until one is able to get rid off the conceptual thoughts and discursive thoughts one has to resort to all these teachings like generation of bodhichitta devotion or purification, all these one has to do.

There is the mention of three ordinations the first would be self-liberation ordination and the other would be the Bodhisattva ordination and the third would be Tantric ordination or Vajrayana ordination.

The root text says there is the View and there is the action and those should be directed in the right way and one should be following the three ordinations just like you are protecting your own eyeballs. When you do this, this is called the merging of Mahamudra and the Great Perfection in the ocean of true nature of mind. Now here about the self-liberation ordination, bodhichitta ordination and Vajrayana ordination, somebody asked pundit Atisha - venerable Atisha how are you faring with the keeping of the vows, the three different kind of vows? Atisha replied – self liberation vows I am able to keep them to the letter, bodhichitta vows most of the times precariously, but when it comes to Vajrayana vows then I am totally blind and I am just a blind man trying to find a path, I am making a mess out of it. This indicates how difficult it is to observe the Vajrayana ordination. To try to follow Vajrayana ordination would be very difficult, the reason is you have the body mind speech samayas. Body samayas, now you have to, without shifting your focus to other things, you have to cast your mind to the generation of deity body, and that is the body Samaya. And all sounds everywhere, including your own sounds, thoughts to be thought regarded as a speech of deities and your mind has to be in contemplation on the true nature of mind. So is very, very difficult to do these things and that is why they say keeping the Vajrayana vows is extremely hard.

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<sup>39</sup> Translator footnote: I personally think based on Rinpoche's teachings this particular it should be the great containment rather than great completion.

The Vajrayana Samaya rests on the contemplation on the true nature of mind. Because true nature of mind is something that all Vajrayana practitioners must hold very dearly to one's heart that is why the word **hold** it is closely used in Tibetan word rig dzin. Rig dzin means to hold, Vidyadhara in Sanskrit also refers to holding, and towards that just because of interdependent origination for auspicious reasons etc. etc., getting the Upaseka vow or lay man's vow sometimes referred as gnakpa vow. That too kind of empowers you to visualize deities, recite mantras and also stay in meditation of Mahamudra.

In doing so learning to turn the five poisons into pure perceptions, pure perception in the sense that with the flip side of the five poisons would be the five wisdoms. Five wisdoms in essence is five Dhyani Buddhas. The five elements for example must be perceived as pure and when you are able to do that the five elements are turned into the five Dakini consorts of the five Dhyani Buddhas, for example the earth is form, earth is also *senge gema* one of the consort Dakinis. Water is *mamaki*, another consort Dakini. So like that you have to learn to perceive things as pure perception and also this way of talking about outer shell of Samsaric existence. Now the inner inhabitants you also have to see them as pure perception because each and every single individual has the basis of all Tathagatas or Buddha nature. Because when you are able to see all beings, including the outer shell and inner inhabitants, meaning the sentient beings, perceived as pure then there are all kinds of stories. One would be the story about King Indrabodhi, it is said that the whole kingdom and all inhabitants of the kingdom reached enlightenment because of pure perception.

Sometimes we find certain spots on the ground as dirty, you cannot do that, once you have received the Vajrayana empowerment because of the Samaya when you see the earth as dirty that is the opposite of pure perception, you should not have impure perception. Very frequently we hear that you should not have the wrong view of the Lama and the teachers and your friends those are kind of obvious, even the five elements should be seen as pure perception. When you come across a dog to see that dog as impure then you are violating the Vajrayana ordination. In all cases you should have pure perception, the least you should do is try to leave things in equanimity and whenever you violate some of these ordinations then have remorse and read or say the hundred syllable mantra.

I am just fishing, you are going through the pages and fishing out the ones of those who are applicable to you and leaving out the ones that are not applicable. So the things that you should not do, it is a list of do not but I am separating from the pages.

So far there are four of them, the first one is do not alienate, do not let down one's own Dharma friends, because if you did that is violation of Tantrayana or Vajrayana ordination. Do not say bad things about the teachings that one receives, any kind of teachings, if you did that is a violation. Do not fight or have views between Dharma friends, especially in a situation where you are together receiving teachings. That would be very, very bad if you did. The fourth one, probably the worst of all, one that Guru Rinpoche condemned himself and said – this is one thing that must be given up or else one would be barred even to recitation of Guru Rinpoche's mantra, that is smoking. One is not supposed to smoke, if one did smoke that person would be barred from recitation of BENZA PEME SIDHI HUM. It is a very, very powerful a negative action. There are five or six kind of smokes and all of them are equally bad, that is the fourth one.

Also it is a violation of Vajrayana Samaya if when one of your Dharma friends comes to you and ask you to share some information on teachings, because either the person has missed or did not understand, under those circumstances if you withhold information, if you don't share information that is also a violation. So in the morning, when you wake-up you should always try to say the Vajra wind recitation. That is to say OM AH HUNG in

your breathing OM AH HUNG being the body speech mind of enlightened beings and in addition to the breathing of OM AH HUNG one should try to be alert in one's mind, try to stay in meditation.

With those in mind generating bodhichitta mind, causing not harm to others and try to see everything as pure perfection.

# - When receiving Vajrayana ordination one can actually wear the red robes to indicate that you are one of those who are abiding by those Vajrayana rules. Because there is a reason for it, the red robes also can be included as liberation by sight because the minute the pious people look at these red robes as object for reverence, they will say some good things, prayers, generate bodhichitta. So you can wear red robes and I will be giving you the ordination tomorrow. All those would be gnakpas can come tomorrow and if you have red robes bring them with you and follow those who are receiving refuge ordination and then I will give you the gnakpa ordination<sup>40</sup>. (Sounds and laughs, clapping – they gave him the cap, burgundy cap and he is wearing it). Rinpoche says that you are very, very skilful in accumulating merits because of all the Three Jewels, the ordained Sangha are the best and most powerful when you make offerings. My own mother (Rinpoche's) passed away last year and I did offerings to non-other than Sangha community, so this is very good.

These teachings were typed by Karma Tsewan Chödrön (better known as Martha from Venezuela), from the tapes of the teachings in Rochester, 1999. They have many mistakes, particularly about Tibetan names and words.

The merit of this typing is dedicated to the enlightenment of all sentient beings and also to the long life of my beloved teachers.

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<sup>40</sup> Translator interruption: Genie said that you have some things to offer to Rinpoche and the colour will be liberation by sight, right? OK.



**May all mother sentient beings, boundless as the sky, have happiness and the causes of happiness.**

**May they be liberated from suffering and the causes of suffering.**

**May they never be separated from the happiness, which is free from sorrow.**

**May they rest in equanimity, free from attachment and aversion.**

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