**"Enlightenment, for a wave in the ocean,   
is the moment the wave realises it is water."**  
*Thich Nhat Hanh*

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Prepare for this meditation by doing a few minutes of breathing meditation (focus your attention on your breath) to calm your mind. Then bring your attention to the suffering that all sentient beings undergo: the sufferings of heat and cold, hunger and thirst. Just as you experience many sufferings, remember that all mother sentient beings experience suffering at least equal to--if not greater than--your own. Determine to undertake this practice in order to awaken your own buddha-nature, quickly attain enlightenment and lead all other sentient beings to that same state of permanent, lasting happiness.  **Visualization**  The visualization of Lord Buddha is composed entirely of light, not mundane materials. In the space before you, at the level of your forehead, imagine a jewel-encrusted, golden throne. Each corner is supported by two snow lions with white bodies and turquoise manes and tails; these are the embodiment of bodhisattvas. On the flat surface of the throne is a fully opened lotus; this is symbolic of the awakened mind, arising from the mire of samsara. On the petals of the lotus are the flat disks of the sun and moon which serve as cushions for the Buddha, representing the Buddha's realizations of emptiness and bodhicitta. On the moon disk sits Buddha Shakyamuni.  Buddha's body is made of golden light. He is seated in the "full vajra" or lotus posture. He is dressed in the robes of a monk which do not actually touch his body, but are separated from it by about an inch. His face is very serene and beautiful; each hair on his head is individually curled to the right, not mingling with or touching others; his ear lobes are long; and his eyes are slightly opened.  His left hand rests in his lap in the meditation pose, holding a begging bowl, filled with nectar. The palm of his right hand rests on his right knee and his fingers touch the moon disk upon which he sits; this symbolizes his great control over anger, attachment and ignorance.  **Taking Refuge**  From your heart, recite the refuge prayer and visualize that streams of golden-white light radiate from the Buddha's body in all directions, blessing you and all sentient beings.  You may also visualize texts of Dharma teachings on thrones near the Buddha which emanate with the sounds of the teachings contained in them. Imagine teachers you have read or heard seated on similar thrones around the Buddha. Imagine also that you are surrounded in space by all sentient beings in human form; your father and male friends and relatives are seated on your right; your mother and female friends and relatives are seated on your left; those you don't know and call "strangers" reach out to the vastness of space; those you call "enemies" are seated between you and the Merit Field of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, symbolic of anger in our mindstreams that separates us from feeling loving-kindness toward all beings and hinders our advancement to full buddhahood.  Imagine that you lead all these sentient beings in reciting the refuge prayer three times:  I take refuge until I am enlightened In the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha. Through the positive potential I create by practicing generosity and the other far-reaching attitudes, May I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.  **Requests and Inspiration**  From your heart, generate the request to the Buddha that he grant you inspiration to follow the path to full enlightenment; make this request on behalf of all living beings who are trapped in samsara.  Rays of light stream from the figure of the Buddha before you. This light enters your body and quickly removes all negativities, obscurations and hindrances, freeing you to progress quickly on the path. Imagine that this light flows not only to you, but to all living beings situated in space around you. Imagine that they all receive such inspiration and blessings as you recite the name mantra of Shakyamuni Buddha as many times as possible.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *tayata om muni muni maha munaye soha* |  |   **The Blessing of Body, Speech and Mind**  Imagine that rays of light stream from the crown of Buddha's head to your crown; this light purifies the negatities of your body and removes the hindrances to attaining the enlightened body of a Buddha.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *tayata om muni muni maha munaye soha* |  |   Rays of light then stream from the Buddha's throat to yours, pufifying the negativities of your speech and removing hindrances to attaining the enlightened speech that communicates clearly to all sentient beings, regardless of their level or capacity.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *tayata om muni muni maha munaye soha* |  |   Finally, rays of light emanate from the Buddha's heart and enter your own heart center. This light purifies the negativities of your mind and remove hindrances to the awakened, omniscient mind.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *tayata om muni muni maha munaye soha* |  |   Imagine that these light rays flow to all sentient beings, helping them to quickly reach a state of supreme awareness.  Maintain this visualization for as long as you can, reciting the mantra quietly to yourself or aloud and imagine that the light continues to stream from the Buddha to you and all sentient beings. Imagine that nectar accompanies the light and nourishes you completely, such is the nature of the Dharma.  **Absorption**  Imagine that the teachers and their thrones dissolve into light and are absorbed into the Buddha's body. Next, imagine that the texts and their thrones dissolve similarly and absorb into the Buddha. Imagine now that the throne is absorbed into the lotus, the lotus into the sun, the sun into the moon and the moon into the body of the Buddha. Buddha now comes to the crown of your head, facing the same direction as you, dissolves into brilliant, white light and dissolves into your body through the crown of your head, filling your body once again with this brilliant light.  Feel great bliss and joy as your body, speech and mind are completely transformed. Hold this feeling for as long as you can, experiencing the removal of all hindrances and obstructions to omniscience.  From this state, imagine in the space where you are sitting, arising from emptiness are the snow lions, the throne, lotus, sun and moon disks and yourself seated upon them in the same aspect as you visualized the Buddha before. Visualize and really feel that you have attained the state of omniscience; feel the enlightened compassion and wisdom of buddhahood.  At your heart appear sun and moon disks. At the center of the moon disk, standing upright, is the syllable MUM. Surrounding this are the syllables of Shakyamuni Buddha's name mantra: *tayata om muni muni maha munaye soha*. Streams of light flow from the MUM and mantra at your heart center to all sentient beings, completely removing their hindrances, obstructions, wrong views, delusions and traces of ignorance and thereby transforming them into the form of the Buddha as well. Meditate in this way for as long as possible, reciting the mantra quietly to yourself.  This portion of the meditation is called "bringing the result into the path." It is a very powerful method for transforming our normal view of and how we behave in the world. The result of our practiceis to attain full enlightenment; this activity of bringing the result of buddhahood to our present state is a powerful, transformative tool. You should not imagine that your body, speech or mind are the same; they have arisen from emptiness and manifested in the form of a buddha. This activity enables you to transform yourself and surroundings into vehicles that lead to full, perfect enlightenment.  **Dedication**  When you have completed this meditation, dedicate the positive potential of this practice to the benefit of all living beings, that they may be liberated from the hardships of cyclic existence and placed in a state of perfect peace and happiness. Remind yourself that your initial motivation for doing this meditation is to actually attain such a state as the means to be able to lead all other sentient beings to full enlightenment. | | s of a disturbing attitude, simply reciting the Buddha's mantra *om muni muni maha munaye soha* is often enough inspiration to transform that state into one of peace and happiness. Reminding yourself that you are a "Child of the Buddha" and wishing to attain happiness for yourself and others helps to gradually remove such states of mind completely. When you do so, remember to dedicate the merit or positive potential to all beings, that they might do the same. |   Prajnaparamita  [http://www.tonglen.oceandrop.org/buddhapix/d_pajnaparamita.jpeg](http://www.wildmind.org/realaudio/gategate.ram)      [Prajnaparamita Mantra](http://www.wildmind.org/realaudio/gategate.ram)    **Gate gate paaragate paarasamgate bodhi svaahaa**  **The Meaning of the Mantra  in Tibetan Buddhism**  **The Meaning of the Mantra**   |  | | --- | | This mantra represents a class of Mahayana scriptures known as the Praj�aparamita (perfection of Wisdom) Sutras. These include such famous teachings as the Heart Sutra and the Diamond Sutra. These texts were the subject of worship in Mahayana Buddhism, in much the same way that devotional figures were. Praj�aparamita eventually became personified as a goddess, but this is not her mantra. This one is associated with the texts themselves.  The words here do have a literal meaning:  "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!" |  9-ROUND BREATHING  |  |  | | --- | --- | | This is a pre-tantric purification practice in which you visualise the main 3 energy channels in the body. It is used in the beginning of a meditation session (after the prayers of refuge etc.) to calm and clear the mind in only a minute or so.  Make your breath somewhat longer and deeper, but don't exaggerate, if possible one should not hear the breathing. If you have a cold and one or both nostrils are clogged, just imagine breathing through the different nostrils.  Visualise the body as being completely empty and transparent, then inside it appears the Central Channel.   The Central Channel starts between the eyebrows, continues back just under the skull, and from the crown of the head it goes straight down to the level of four finger-widths under the navel, it stays a little in front of the spine. It is like a transparent blue tube, about the thickness of a thick drinking straw.   To the left and to the right are two side-channels, both transparent and the thickness of only a drinking-straw. The right channel is red, the left is white.  The three channels are flexible and just below the navel they connect with each other.  During the first round of breathing, INHALE through the LEFT nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with a finger. We imagine the air going from the left nostril into the left channel, up near the crown and way down to under the navel. There, the left channel is connected to the right channel, and we BREATHE OUT through the RIGHT CHANNEL by closing the left nostril with the same finger. Imagine breathing in pure white light, and when exhaling, imagine that all DESIRE AND ATTACHMENT which pollutes the left channel collects at the navel and leaves via the right channel as black smoke. The black smoke disappears beyond the universe. Repeat this 3 times.  Then the next round we INHALE white light via the RIGHT nostril, and all ANGER AND HATRED which pollutes the right channel collects below the navel and is EXHALED via the LEFT channel as black smoke. Again, do this 3 times.  The third round we INHALE white light via the LEFT AND RIGHT channel together and imagine them both being connected to the central channel below the navel. This CENTRAL CHANNEL is polluted by IGNORANCE AND CONFUSION which is breathed out as black smoke. Imagine that you BREATHE OUT via the POINT BETWEEN the EYEBROWS.  **Normally do this not more than 2 or 3 rounds.**  Next, you can start with for example an analytical meditation topic of Buddhist philosophy  **P'howa Practice**   |  | | --- | | ***The Essential Phowa Practice*** [***Teachings on P'howa By H.E. Lingtrul Rinpoche***](http://www.kathokgonpa.ca/LR%20Phowa%201998.htm)  ***From the book titled "The Tibetan  Book of Living and Dying"***  ***By Sogyal Rinpoche***  The most valuable and powerful of all practices I have found in caring for the dying, one which I have seen an astonishing number of people take to with enthusiasm, is a practice from the Tibetan tradition called *phowa* (pronounced "po-wa"), which means the transference of consciousness.  Phowa for dying people has been performed by friends, relatives, or masters, quite simply and naturally , all over the modern world – in Australia, America, and Europe. Thousands of people have been given the chance to die serenely because of its power. It gives me joy to make the *heart* of the phowa practice now available to anyone who wishes to use it.  I want to emphasize that this is a practice that anyone at all can do. It is simple, but it is also the most essential practice we can do to prepare for our own death, and it is the main practice I teach my students for helping their dying friends and relatives, and their loved ones who have already died.  *Practice One*  First make sure you are comfortable, and assume the meditative posture. If you are doing this practice as you are coming close to death, just sit as comfortably as you are able, or practice lying down.  Then bring your mind home, release, and relax completely.   1. In the sky in front of you, invoke the embodiment of whatever truth you believe in, in the form of radiant light. Choose whichever divine being or saint you feel close to. If you are Buddhist, invoke a buddha with whom you feel an intimate connection. If you are a practicing Christian, feel with all your heart the vivid, immediate presence of God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, or the Virgin Mary. If you don’t feel linked with any particular spiritual figure, simply imagine a form of pure golden light in the sky before you. The important point is that you consider the being you are visualizing or whose presence you feel is the embodiment of truth, wisdom, and compassion of all the buddhas, saints, masters, and enlightened beings. Don’t worry if you cannot visualize them very clearly, just fill your heart with their presence and trust that they are there.      1. Then focus your mind, heart, and soul on the presence you have invoked, and pray:   *Through your blessing, grace, and guidance, through the power of the light that streams from you:*  *May all my negative karma, destructive emotions, obscurations, and blockage be purified and removed,*  *May I know myself forgiven for all the harm I may have thought and done,*  *May I accomplish this profound practice of phowa, and die a good and peaceful death,*  *And through the triumph of my death, may I be able to benefit all other beings, living and dead.*   1. Now imagine that the presence of light you have invoked is so moved by your sincere and heartfelt prayer that he or she responds with a loving smile and sends out love and compassion in a stream of rays of light from his or her heart. As these touch and penetrate you, they cleanse and purify all your negative karma, destructive emotions, and obscurations, which are the causes of suffering. You see and feel that you are totally immersed in light. 2. You are now completely purified and completely healed by the light streaming from the presence. Consider that your very body, itself created by karma, now dissolves completely into light. 3. The body of light you are now soars up into the sky and merges, inseparably, with the blissful presence of light. 4. Remain in that state of oneness with the presence for as long as possible.     *Practice Two*   1. To do this practice even more simply, begin as before by resting quietly, and then invoke the presence of the embodiment of truth. 2. Imagine your consciousness as a sphere of light at your heart, which flashes out from you like a shooting star, and flies into the heart of the presence in front of you. 3. It dissolves and merges with the presence.   Through this practice you are investing your mind in the wisdom of the Buddha or enlightened being, which is the same as surrendering your soul into the nature of God. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says this is like casting a pebble into a lake; think of it plummeting down into the water deeper and deeper. Imagine that through the blessing your mind is transformed into the wisdom mind of this enlightened presence.  *Practice Three*  The most essential way to do the practice is this: Simply merge your mind with the wisdom mind of the pure presence. Consider: "My mind and the mind of the Buddha are one."  Choose whichever one of these versions of the phowa feels more comfortable, or has most appeal for you at any particular moment. Sometimes the most powerful practices can be the most simple. But, whichever one you choose, remember that it is essential to take the time now to become familiar with this practice. How else will you have the confidence to do it for yourself or others at the moment of death? My master Jamyang Khyentse wrote, "If you meditate and practice in this manner always, at the moment of death it will come easier."  In fact you should be so familiar with the practice of phowa that it becomes a natural reflex, your second nature. If you have seen the film Gandhi, you will know that when he was shot, his immediate response was to call out: "Ram…Ram!" which is, in the Hindu tradition, the sacred name of God. Remember that we never know how we will die, or if we will be given the time to recall any kind of practice at all. What time will we have, for example, if we smash our car into a truck at 100 mph on the freeway? There won’t be a second then to think about how to do phowa, or to check the instructions in this book. Either we are familiar with the phowa or we are not. There is a simple way to gauge this: Just look at your reactions when you are in a critical situation or in a moment of crisis, such as an earthquake, or in a nightmare. Do you respond with the practice or don’t you? And if you do, how stable and confident is your practice?  I remember a student of mine in America who went out riding one day. The horse threw her; her foot got stuck in the stirrup, and she was dragged along the ground. Her mind went blank. She tried desperately to recall some practice, but nothing at all would come. She grew terrified. What was good about that terror was that it made her realize that her practice had to become her second nature. This was the lesson she had to learn; it is the lesson, in fact, we all have to learn. Practice phowa as intensively as you can, until you can be sure you will react with it to any unforeseen event. This will make certain that whenever death comes, you will be as ready as you can be.    Motivation  When you start receiving any teachings it’s always important to review your motivation and purify or correct it. So try to think not only of yourself and your own needs, but also try to have the intention to benefit beings. Sentient beings are as vast as space and as great as an ocean, so work to change your motivation from being selfish to something like, "For the benefit of all sentient beings I am going to participate in this particular teaching, which is called the transference of consciousness." It’s important to be very conscious of your motivation because your motivation establishes how things develop. For example, suppose that someone has a very pure heart. From that, actions of their body and their speech will be in harmony with that, and they will create basically good karma, positive actions, and of course that will bring about proportionate good results. Whereas if someone has a bad mind, a negative motivation, even though their body and their speech may behave in a manner which appears to be virtuous, this doesn’t actually accrue any positive quality whatsoever because the nature of the mind is negative in its motivation. Therefore it’s important to be more conscious of your motivation and to correct it in a positive, constructive manner.  By having a virtuous and positive attitude and approach to life, your own life will be much more a source of happiness for yourself. The way you approach situations will be happier, the actions of the body and speech will be happier, your relationships with others will be more positive and other people will recognize that. They will recognize you as a nice person and will therefore like your company. Whereas in contrast if someone has a negative mindset, of course we become distrustful of the person because they lie, they’re deceptive and they also commit negative actions. So we can easily see that a negative mind and a negative approach to life creates complications and sufferings not only for that individual, but also for others around that person. Therefore it’s very important to put some emphasis on, "Who am I?" and, "Where am I coming from?" Try to make your mind positive and virtuous, and in that way many good qualities will accrue.  Certainly the whole intention of Buddha Shakyamuni was for us to realize our mind and gain a deep realization of ourselves. With regards to that the Buddha said, "Irrespective of what the actions of your body and speech are, your mind is the most important thing. It is what creates how you experience things and creates your actions." Therefore the Buddha said to be very conscious of yourself and your attitude or approach to life, because if that is in a virtuous direction then it will be more beneficial for you. Also, if you have a virtuous, positive mind and approach to life, then of course what you are doing is working constructively to remove the negative traits that you might have. So you are developing a purification of negativity, and this accrues a great deal of positive energy. And by doing that then you are accomplishing what is necessary in the process of becoming an enlightened person. So please be much more conscious of your motivation.    **Refuge and Bodhichitta**  Having corrected your motivation and established in yourself in a more positive approach, the next thing that you need to do is to take Refuge and generate the altruistic attitude towards others. Now, why take Refuge? You do this because Refuge puts you on the path to enlightenment. What Refuge means is that you decide what is important for yourself and how you are going to work with yourself. So you take Refuge and develop the altruistic mind of bodhicitta, or the altruistic mind of working for the benefit of other sentient beings. That insures that you will obtain the path towards enlightenment. If you want to practice any style of practice you have to first be able to appreciate what taking Refuge means and then also generate an altruistic mind. You may have heard of the teachings called the Great Completion. The Great Completion is a very special and profound practice. If you practice and rely upon it properly you can attain enlightenment in one lifetime. But to be able to do that you have to first take Refuge and generate the altruistic attitude of wishing to benefit sentient beings. If you don’t, even though you try to practice something so profound as the Great Completion it will not have any benefit. This applies actually to any style of spiritual practice you may undertake. You have to put it in the context of first taking Refuge, trying to gain understandings to bring about your own enlightenment, and then secondly generating the altruistic attitude to benefit all sentient beings. By doing that, all your practices will be successful and will bring about all the positive results that you desire. If you don’t take Refuge they won’t. So this is the bottom line, the basic point. It’s what Buddha Shakyamuni (the historical Buddha of our time) meant when he said, "The purpose of my Dharma is to make you realize your mind and then to develop that." Therefore be conscious of your attitude, and bring yourself into the style of practice with the Refuge and the altruistic motivation.    **Five Styles of Consciousness Transference**  With these thoughts in mind, we are going to start the teaching on the transference of consciousness at the time of death. There are five styles of transference of consciousness that can be initiated by you at the time of your death. The first one is called the supreme transference of consciousness by realizing the nature of reality. What this refers to is that an individual in their practice gains a direct understanding of the ultimate nature of reality, which of course is called the realization of the Great Completion. By obtaining that, what the transference of consciousness really entails is that the individual merely recognizes that state of consciousness at the time of death. The individual is then able to liberate their consciousness at the time of death by understanding that ultimate nature of mind. One therefore gains the transference of consciousness by the direct cognition of the nature of reality, or the transference of consciousness in the body of truth (dharmakaya).  The second transference of consciousness is called the transference of consciousness in the body of enjoyment (sambhogakaya). In this case the practitioner relies on having received initiation, identification of the self as the deity, recitation of mantra – they do what’s called the stages of generation and completion. Doing that at the time of death, they enter into the intermediate state and at that point they generate the pure astral form called the body of enjoyment. In that form they meet the various Buddhas. So their transference of consciousness is accomplished in what’s called the pure astral form in the body of enjoyment.  The third transference of consciousness is called the transference of consciousness with the body of manifestation (nirmanakaya). This refers to the individual who in their lifetime receives the high Tantric initiations, and keeps the commitments that they received at the time of the initiation very pure. By the power of this, although they may not have done a great deal of meditation, it is said that at the time of their entering into the intermediate state they will be conscious of the fact that they have died, and will be able to very consciously pick exactly the rebirth they would like to take. They might take a rebirth as a human or go to a pure land – whatever the objective they are able to do this by the intention or power of their mind on the basis of the pure life that they led. So this is the transference of consciousness through the body of manifestation.  So these three transference of consciousness – the body of truth transference of consciousness, the body of enjoyment transference of consciousness and the body of manifestation transference of consciousness – are said to not require practice. Basically the individual is immediately able to initiate these styles of transference of consciousness due to the power of realization. Now for ourselves, we have to practice. And therefore the type of transference of consciousness that we will do is called the through introduction transference of consciousness.  So if you are able to generate a realization of the Great Completion, then you obtain the transference of consciousness by the cognition of that. If you are able to generate a pure astral form, then you can gain the transference of consciousness due to that. If you are able to keep your commitments very pure and are able to generate yourself as the manifest deity, then you have the transference of consciousness of the body of manifestation. Now all of those require that an individual is developed in a deep spiritual way. As for us though, we have to practice. We can rely on ourselves just as we are without any special recognition of our divine qualities, and this is the ordinary aspect transference of consciousness through introduction.  The first of the three recognitions that are going to be introduced to you is the recognition of inside the body. When you talk about the recognition of inside the body what you are talking about is that inside the body there are special nerve channels, the pathways on which your consciousness is running. The second thing that you will be introduced to is called the concentration point and this refers to the consciousness. It’s identifying your consciousness in a concentrated form that will then transit upon these pathways. So the nerve in the body that we want to identify is called the central channel and it runs through the centre of your body. The vehicle that you are going to use is manifesting your consciousness in a concentrated form. The third part is, where do you want to go? Having established a pathway and a vehicle that is your consciousness, where do you want to shoot or take that consciousness? Well, where you would like to take your consciousness is into the heart of the Buddha of infinite love, Amitabha Buddha, to be born there.  The fifth of the types of transference of consciousness is called a blessing transference of consciousness and is bestowed upon someone by others. To do this does require a fair amount of spiritual attainment. For us as ordinary people, maybe we will say the prayer and have the intention that we will get that person’s mind and sort of move it toward the heart of Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light and love. It might be something that we intend, but whether we really do that or not we don’t know. So it is said that the blessing transference of consciousness should be accomplished by someone who has attained the path of seeing or has some deep spiritual attainment. They can then move the consciousness of that body to the pure land and accomplish the transference of consciousness.  Also of course, when the person dies they do exit their body and enter into the intermediate state where they will be searching for a new rebirth. They will have a body in a certain style and proportion, they will have certain hallucinations according to what their karma is in that intermediate state. So it’s very hard for us to know what on earth is going on for that person, to be able to benefit them, to be able to project them towards the pure land or such. Therefore, although we may have an impact on the person who has died due to pure love in our heart, it is not easy for people such as ourselves to actually accomplish the transference of consciousness by guiding that individual in the intermediate state to a pure land.    **The Importance of Practice**  So it’s best if the individual who is going to die actually has an opportunity to practice a little prior to death. They understand the techniques, they’ve been introduced to how to do the meditation and they’ve practiced it to some extent. In that case we act as an assistant to the person who is dying, and we have an opportunity to do something for them. For example as they approach their death we can remind them about the meditation technique, we can remind them of their spiritual practice and the good qualities they’ve developed. As they die we can talk into their ear and in that way give them the instruction. Due to that circumstance we are providing for them, as they die they can implement their transference of consciousness because we’re giving assistance with prayers and other things. So this is something we can do for someone who is dying. But the actual ability to take someone’s consciousness and move it to a pure land is something that is not very easily attained because we don’t have the spiritual power ourselves.  When a person is going to die, they need to work with themselves and become familiar with what is important for them in terms of spiritual practice. If you don’t do that, if you just practice verbally without a real inner connection to what you’re doing, then there will not be a lot of benefit. So you need to develop a deep feeling of your own spirituality, of your sense of commitment, and so on. With those factors in place, then you will actually accomplish something at the time of your death due to the power of your sincere prayers and practice. If you’ve only had a verbal type of spiritual practice then your ability to rely upon the transference of consciousness techniques will be rather weak.  Regarding ourselves as western individuals, we of course would like to be able to do something with ourselves at the time of death, to be able to do something positive and constructive for ourselves. But you won’t be able to attain this ability without practice. What is said is that you need to receive the instruction and apply yourself for a certain period of time until you have what's called the signs that you've accomplished the transference of consciousness. So if you do the practice over a period of days and then finally get the sign that indicates that you’ve been able to open the central channel, then at the time of your death all you need is to be reminded of this. Because you’ve already done the practice and have the familiarity of it, you will be able to get out of your body and you will be able to accomplish the transference of consciousness. Therefore it is necessary to receive the instruction, and to do the practice until you get the sign, a dream or something such as that, there are various signs. And when you’ve received the sign then you can put the practice aside until it is actually your time of death, then merely clarify it at that time and actualize it.  Now, what were going to do is rely upon what’s called the transference of consciousness with the three recognitions, and that is something that will be very beneficial for us. If we already had a developed spiritual practice, if for example we had received initiations, we had practiced, and we were able to do things like generate the psychic heat within our body and so on, then we would have the attainment so to speak in our hand. Because of our developed spiritual practice, we would not have to do the three recognitions, because we would already have in place the things needed to bring about the transference of consciousness. For ourselves though, we don’t have a practice, we’re a little bit lazy, we don’t do too much, so then because of that laziness we need a different approach. Therefore we’re going to rely upon the three recognitions and become familiar with them, because in that regard at least then we can benefit ourselves to some extent.  Now there have been people who have an incredibly negative type of nature, people that have done incredibly heinous types of crimes such as murdering their mother and father, people of unbelievable negativity. For them, generally speaking it is said that they will take a very bad rebirth due to the nature of that great heavy negativity. But the Buddhas in their great compassion have given teachings and instruction that allow an individual who may even have done such intense negative actions the ability to gain something better for themselves. It is said that due to the kindness and compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the technique of the transference of consciousness can be relied upon even by someone who has done great intense negative activity, and they can bring about some better situation for themselves due to that.  Guru Padmasambhava, who introduced this actual transference of consciousness technique that we are going to rely upon said, "I have a technique that does not require meditation." Generally an individual puts themselves into a positive mental attitude, practices virtuous and positive actions in relationship with others, and develops a cognition of how they can practice in their striving towards attaining enlightenment. By putting their mind in the channel of that positive and constructive direction they will bring about the ripening of their attainment of enlightenment as time passes. When Padmasambhava says, "I have a technique that requires no meditation," what he is referring to is that if you rely on this transference of consciousness technique, even though you’ve done no meditation you can benefit yourself. Now what that really means for Padmasambhava to say that is – I mean obviously you don’t get something for nothing. If you want to become enlightened you have to spend the time, you have to put yourself into the practice, you have to develop the qualities that will bring about enlightenment and then enlightenment will be yours. It will be something that you’ve worked for. But that’s a long process. What the transference of consciousness technique is, is this. If you receive this teaching, you practice it for two or three weeks time, you gain some of the signs that the transference of consciousness technique will be successful – it’s not that in this lifetime you don’t need to worry about any practice and development – what it is, is that you will so to speak have in your hand the liberty to be able to do something for yourself when you die, because you have been able to escape an uncontrolled death. So this is what is referred to, you don’t get something for nothing, but you will have an opportunity to develop your spiritual qualities if you rely on these transference of consciousness techniques.  There’s a good example of this, which is Milarepa. Milarepa was a very famous yogi and he attained enlightenment in his one lifetime in Tibet. Prior to his real spiritual development he had done many negative actions and so he was repentant of those and seeking a spiritual teacher to help him become enlightened. He came across a Nyingmapa master who was teaching the Great Completion technique. This master said, "My technique is so profound that if you meditate on it in the morning you will get the realization by the evening, and if you meditate on it at night by the next morning you will have the realization. And if there is individual who has great merit and they even hear the teaching of the Great Completion, they can gain realization immediately and not even have to do any practice." And Milarepa, being a bit arrogant, thought that he had actually done so much meditation already that he must be this fortunate disciple. So he did nothing, and therefore nothing happened. And so the teacher realized that Milarepa had some purification to go through due to the very heavy negative actions he had been accumulating prior to meeting him, and said, "You should seek out this particular teacher, the great translator Marpa and relying on him you will gain realization. You do not have a karmic connection with the Great Completion style of practices." So Milarepa moved on to the next teacher. Basically, you should not think that you can get an attainment by doing nothing.    **When to do Phowa**  So in regards to this practice, when do you implement it? Well, you implement it when your body is not going to be reliable anymore. If for example a very strong illness is starting to eat away at you, you get very old and realize that death is near, then at these times it is said you can implement the transference of consciousness practices strongly, basically giving yourself the opportunity to escape your body and the ordinary death and take your rebirth in the heart of Amitabha the Buddha of infinite light and love, and in that way benefit yourself.  When your body becomes old or weak, then the actual separation of your mind from your body is fairly easily accomplished. But if you’re young and healthy, the constituents of your body are all in balance and such, it’s not easy to get your mind out of your body. The example that can be best given for this is that in the spring time when the buds first come forth and then the leaves form, although you might take a branch and shake it very vigorously the leaves don’t fall off because basically they’re too healthy and have no cause to fall off. But if you wait for the fall or winter time when the tree is old and dried up then the leaves easily fall off if the branch is shaken. In the same way with your own self, if the body is extremely healthy your mind won’t separate from the body very easily, and though you might practice there might not be much indication. But if your body is sick, if you’re old, and I’m talking maybe 60, 70, 80 years old then your ability to get your mind out of your body is a lot easier. The constituents of your body are weak and therefore the mind can be pulled out more easily.  The next thing is how can we know the time of death is approaching so we know to do the transference of consciousness? Now when an individual gets old then there will be various signs that come about. It is said that one of the signs that it is a good time to be very enthusiastic about the transference of consciousness practice would be for example, the ears start to lose the ability to hear. Although there are people around and they are talking, all you get is a sort of buzzing, you can’t distinguish the words. Even if someone is beside you and chatting with you, you lose the context of what’s being said. That could be one of the indications that death may be close. Another one is that your eyes lose the ability to see. Although there are forms in front of you they are just fuzzy and blurry. You don’t recognize individuals although they are before you and such. This is another indication that you might consider doing a stronger practice of the transference of consciousness. Another one is that the body fluids are starting to become much more complicated. There is the general flow of the fluids in your body when you’re healthy or strong, but as the body is losing its power then these elements or fluids become drier. So when these types of things start to be very manifest it is said that it is a good time for you to put your mind strongly to the practice of the transference of consciousness.  So when we get to that point where we’re starting to see that this is the case for ourselves, that life is obviously getting very close to the end, what we should do is give up the normal activity of desire that we might be involved with. Normally we have many things that we want, we have many normal actions we do. We sometimes lie a little bit, do this and that a little bit because we have this idea that we will have a lot of time to achieve what we would like to do, and sometimes we rely on some negative activity. At this point then we need to really abandon that and stop completely. We should say to ourselves, "At this time now I don’t need to have any more worldly involvements or engagements. I should abandon all of those and I should turn my mind very strongly to Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light. Now I’m going to do my transference of consciousness and I don’t want any obstacles in the way of getting to the Pure land of Amitabha. Therefore I’m going to pray, I’m going to motivate myself in this way, I’m going to turn my mind strongly in a spiritual direction."  And of course if you do have this kind of practice, if you’ve done the visualizations for Amitabha, if you’ve worked on yourself spiritually with that cultivation, you’ve done prayers and such practices of meditation, then when the time of death comes close you’ve really facilitated the transference of your consciousness because you’ve put everything in place.  So now in regards to all of this practice we need to know the timing. The timing is very important because it is said if we don’t do it at the right time we actually do a great non-virtue. If you try to extract your consciousness from your body at a time that is earlier than is necessary to go to the pure land of Amitabha, when the time is not yet really right for that type of activity, it’s said that it’s killing the divine. What this means is that you’ve done it too early and you’ve done a great non-virtue to yourself.    **Getting Ready to Practice**  Now We’re going to discuss the actual techniques for the transference of consciousness practice. In this regard, what you need to do is put your body in the correct meditation posture. It’s best if you can sit in what is called the vajra asana, the cross-legged posture, but that might be a little difficult. So in whatever way you can, put your body in good posture. Right now our bodies are all inside this room there’s no doubt about that, but where our mind is isn’t so certain. Our mind can be all over the place. I mean it might be in Duncan, Victoria, Vancouver, it might be in Asia, it might be with our children, our mind might be with our lover, it can be all sorts of different places. Our mind doesn’t have to be inside our body, it could be sort of thinking somewhere far away. So in that regard what you need to do for this practice is put your mind in your body. That means you just be astute, be with yourself here, so that your mind is contained within your body. You don’t take your mind to some far away object away from yourself, you put your mind in your body because that is where you’re going to accomplish the practice.    Commentary on the Practice Text  (What follows is a commentary on the text, *Buddhahood Without Meditation: The Swift Path of Phowa, the Transference of Consciousness. Revealed from the Vast Luminous Vajra Essence.* by Terton Longsal Nyingpo.)    **Preliminaries**  When we do the transference of consciousness there is the main body of the practice, and there are the preliminaries.  The preliminaries are that which facilitate the transference of consciousness.  They can be such things as relying on your spiritual mentor, doing guru yoga, or taking inspiration from your spiritual master and other such things.  Within the practice text itself, (the Preliminaries are at the beginning: pages 1-6 including Refuge, 4 Immeasurables, and Prayers to Tathagatas and Bodhisattvas.  These are the Preliminaries in the text - Ed.)    **Identifying With the Body of Chenrezig**  Now in regards to doing this practice, of course what we have is a body, and in regards to that normal body we have many attachments that relate to that body. We look upon ourselves like, "I am this way, I want that, I have this desire, I have that thing to avoid."  We have all of these things. I mean very much you have great familiarity with the body that you have and the wide variety of selfish desires and such which have consumed your consciousness. There’s a long imprint with this due to a whole lifetime of relating to the kind of image that you have of the ordinary aspect of yourself as the basis of all those worldly mundane and material types of obsessions and such. To be able to work with yourself on the basis of that identification can be very complicated because of the great familiarity with the common aspect of yourself.  So it’s said then to help you develop the ability to transfer consciousness you should develop a new identification for yourself, and actually bring forth that which is divine within you. So therefore on page seven it says, "This illusory body of aggregates I call self becomes the meditational deity of great compassion Chenrezig." On our shrine, Chenrezig is the large statue just to the right of Guru Padmasambhava. Chenrezig has a body which is clear like crystal and within that body is crystal clear light energy.  There is one face and four arms. The first two arms are in front of the chest holding a wish fulfilling jewel. The second right hand is holding a mala for reciting mantra. The second left hand is holding a white lotus. He is seated in vajra asana. His body is divine and is for the benefit of sentient beings. So this is the body that you should identify with because this body will give you, so to speak, a fresh start.    **The Central Channel**  Now the next line says, "Rising upwards from the heart is the wisdom central path." So that means that within this body which is clear like crystal you have an essential path which you are identifying. This wisdom channel that you are going to generate is something that is very important to identify clearly. For example, it runs up the centre of your body. It is a channel and in that regard it is even and smooth, straight and hollow. It is very very important to solidly identify it in this manner. You should not see it as being maybe a bit rickety, as having fat areas and skinny areas, as being blocked or obstructed or anything like that. Rather it’s a uniform size. It’s like a chimney going straight up and out of a house. It’s about that size compared to your body. It’s this thin channel going up the centre of your body, clear, even, straight, hollow, and the nature of light energy.  This is a wisdom consciousness channel you’ve generated within your body, coming from your heart upwards. It is the size of a milkshake straw and you should visualize the outside of it as being like glass. Clear, crystal-like, hollow, but on the outside it has a bluish color to it. To give another example for you of the actual size of it, it is like the stem of a fairly good sized flower like a dahlia, the stem is that size. It has the strength, the hollowness and the straightness of that. Now also this channel is said not to be darkened with ignorance. It is said that an ignorant mind is a dark mind because it doesn’t understand. Well you don’t want that in the central channel. The central channel should be like the brightness of a candle. So if you’re in a dark room, when you light a candle the space around the candle is luminous. You want the central channel within your body to be luminous like that, it is not darkened with ignorance.  You also need to be very stable in this visualization. You don’t want to put your mind on the wrong pathway and send it to the wrong place, you want to be on a good path and on a straight path. So therefore when you think of this channel it should be stable and not be agitated. As for the central channel that we have been working with, we want to have the four identifications, the four things which you identify with this channel. These four things are: first, that it has a bluish color; second, that it is like the stem of a flower like a dahlia, of that nature and size; third, it is free of the darkness of ignorance, so it has the nature of luminosity like a candle, illuminating an area of space, and the fourth point is that it is stable. It is not going to be rickety. It is stable and firm to rely upon. These are the four identifying characteristics of your central channel.  So then you say, "Above the crown of my head is an open space of the pure land of great bliss." So not touching your head but some space above it, is this very blissful realm. And also this channel which you’ve identified, although it says, ‘starting at the heart,’ it actually starts at below the navel. And so if you were to take four finger widths below your navel (it starts there), and its solidly blocked (at that end). And so it’s said that going downwards the entrance is completely blocked so you will not take a lower rebirth from the lower portions of your body. The channel is completely empty, and you should visualize it as hollow and empty.  So then it says, "The best of guides is Buddha Amitabha."  Now  what we are doing here is giving a commentary to the actual words (of the practice text), so it is up to you to connect the words to what they mean. So in looking at the practice (text) of the swift path of the transference of consciousness, you can then have an appreciation of what the words refer to.    **Buddha Amitabha’s Pure Land at the Top of the Channel**  So you’ve given yourself a fresh start by identifying yourself as divine in the form of the Buddha of love and compassion, Chenrezig, and you’ve then identified the central channel with it’s four principle characteristics.  Then it's said that one cubit, the length of one's forearm, in the space above the crown of your head should be a very ornate throne of jewels. Now it’s not too large, but above your head that height in the nature of light is a throne. Then seated upon this throne is a lotus of various colors, and within that lotus is a red cushion which is called the sun cushion, a white cushion which is called the moon cushion, and upon that then is the great Lord Amitabha Buddha.  So above the crown of your head is the throne, and upon that is the lotus and the sun and moon cushions, and upon that is seated the Lord Amitabha Buddha. Now in regard to the aspect of Amitabha Buddha, see him as the essence of your main teacher, your root teacher. Your root teacher is the teacher who has been very kind to you, helping you on the path. And so you should have faith. You will of course have some faith in your teacher but you have to have a faith that inspires or lifts you. And therefore you should not see your teacher as being an ordinary person, a male or female with their ordinary qualities, but you want to make them very transcendent. So then therefore it is said that they are the essence, the holder of all the wisdom of the Buddhas of the three times, with great qualities and such. By doing this then you have a very special sense of veneration. So as to this teacher who is the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times that is appearing in the aspect of Amitabha, Amitabha Buddha has one face and two arms. He is seated in the meditation posture. In his hands is a begging bowl full of nectar. His body is very beautiful, it is of course a red color, a ruby red. He has the three robes of being a monk upon his body. His body has the 32 major and 80 minor signs of beauty and quality. And in this then you should visualize Buddha Amitabha as the essence of your most kind and precious teacher, the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times. There is a very colorful beautiful aura radiating from his body.  And around the Buddha Amitabha you should also include of course many other Buddhas. It is said both male and female Buddhas, all standing though, are around him. And you can see them all as being in the nature of great compassion. And so it says on page eight, "surrounded by the loving and compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." They’re all standing, very resplendent, very vast. There are many many of them, both male and female, and they have beautiful qualities of enlightenment. Specifically, standing on the right hand side of Amitabha Buddha you have Chenrezig who is the spiritual son of Amitabha. And then standing on the left side of Amitabha Buddha you have the Buddha Vajrapani. Vajrapani is the very powerful Buddha who removes all interferences. He is standing with a vajra and bell in his hands crossed in front of his chest. Chenrezig and Vajrapani are adorned with the very beautiful ornaments of what’s called the pure astral form. Very beautiful jewels and very resplendent robes of silk are upon their bodies. They are said to be in the aspect of being regal, the pure astral or sambhogakaya forms.  Amitabha Buddha is seated cross legged upon the lotus, sun and moon throne. As for Chenrezig and Vajrapani to the right and the left respectively, they are standing because they are working very strongly for the benefit of sentient beings. So to be able to work for the benefit of sentient beings they’re not sitting down, they’re standing up. In the space around them with all of the great compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas you should have all the great lineage masters. All the great divine spiritual Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are on clouds and such floating around. It’s very beautiful, vast and going in all directions.  And so having established this visualization and placed the things around you in this manner, of course you should see that you are working very strongly for the benefit of the infinite ocean of sentient beings. And in that regard thinking that, "If I were to attain some spiritual capacity through doing this practice, may I be one who implements the benefit of sentient beings bringing them into happiness and releasing them from their suffering."  Now you’ve set yourself up, you’ve visualized yourself in the divine aspect of Chenrezig, above your head one cubit is the throne and seated upon that is the very glorious Amitabha Buddha. And then to the right and the left are the Bodhisattvas Chenrezig and Vajrapani. Around them gathered like a great crowd are all of the very beautiful male and female Buddhas with their great compassionate nature, all of the lineage masters, all of the practitioners that have existed. All of these beings are above you. Now in doing this then you should feel that for the benefit of sentient beings this is really the case. Principally then, Amitabha Buddha with the throne and everything in the space above you is *really* there. With deep faith, deep feeling, you have to say that really this is the case, there is no doubt. You have to encourage such deep conviction to arise within you.  So now what you should do next? We’re into the second line on page eight where it says, "in the centre of the opened eight petaled lotus of the heart." It’s your heart that’s being referred to. And so of course you have the central channel which is clear, straight and luminous running through your body. Now the lower end of that’s completely blocked, the upper end is open and like a tunnel that you’re looking up through to the throne of Amitabha. Now at the level of the heart inside of this central channel will be a very tiny white eight petaled lotus. Then there is the central stamen with your consciousness as a little ball of energy standing in the centre on the top of that.    **Consciousness in the Central Channel**  Now in regards to the actual form that your consciousness takes upon the white lotus and the white cushion that’s in the centre of it, this can vary according to what lineage of practice you would like to do. It could be visualized as a syllable vibrating in the nature of Hri, it could be seen in a variety of other aspects. But in this particular practice it is said to be like an egg. And the egg is of this particular bird, but it would be something like a hummingbird’s egg because it has to be very teeny doesn’t it. And so in that regards then you should see this very little egg standing upright. And not of course the nature of an egg. It is the nature of light energy and so it is actually totally luminous, and this is your mind.  So your consciousness in the form of this tiny egg is sitting upright. And it’s very vibrant with the life energy – vibrating, energized, very specially alive, buoyant. Now it says, "vibrant and buoyant radiant thigle rise upward and become non-dual with the heart of Amitabha." What you have there is the egg has an incredibly buoyant, vibrant sort of light. Sort of like when you have a spark that goes off from a fire. When you do this visualization you have of course being non-dual with the heart of Amitabha. In saying that you actually don’t have the whole egg shoot out of your body and join with Amitabha, that is not necessary. What you visualize is the light like a spark shoots up and becomes non-dual with the heart of Amitabha. In that regard then what you do is with the word phet – and underneath there you see the word phet three times – with the word phet you visualize that the light from this very vibrant little live egg shoots up through the central channel and joins and becomes inseparable with Amitabha.  And so the reason you want to keep the egg in your heart, and not have it eject out and join with Amitabha non-dualistically, is that if you were to do that you’d actually harm your life. You would shorten your life by doing that and you don’t want to do that. So at that point just the light and not the egg shoots up and joins with Amitabha. It creates the circumstance but doesn’t shorten life.  Now we’re only doing a practice of this, we only want to set up a familiarity with the practice. Of course if our body became old, if our body became ill with a terminal illness, then at that point you would definitely do this practice and you would eject the whole egg because you want to get out of your body.    **Signs of Attaining the Practice**  It is a necessity to do the practice, you’re not going to get the results without doing anything. And so it’s said you should do this practice properly and then the signs will appear. Now I’ve actually seen and many of us have seen, if someone actually does this practice repeatedly there will finally arise the signs. For example a small bead of blood will start to form on top of the skin on the crown of the head, or there is a very itchy spot or a very tingly spot that arises on the crown of the head. There are many different signs which then indicate that there is some attainment of this practice.    **The Importance of Faith**  So when you do this practice, especially at the time when the end of your life is drawing near, you should have no doubt that you will be born in the pure land of Amitabha. That is definitely the attainment that is possible. If you do the practice well you should have that expectation, that that is going to be there for you. As I was trying to escape from Tibet I had to stay at the border between Tibet and India for some time, waiting in that place due to the Chinese occupation. There were very few teachers, monks or nuns in that area and therefore there were no teachings. So I had to stay there for several months and a group of people approached me asking for teachings.  One man specifically wanted a teaching on this transference of consciousness. And this is actually the practice that I taught him. Between the time I taught him and the time I left he did a lot of practice of it. And just before I departed to go into India he actually came to me and said, "I have had all the signs. I actually have a direct cognition of the pure land of Amitabha. I will be able to go there. I have no doubts about that. Thank you so much, you’ve given me a great blessing." And so I think from my side that due to the power of his deep faith and his relying upon this technique, he definitely was convinced. He had the internal signs he said, he actually had seen the visions and so he had that expectation of what was going to be there for him.  So that is the end of the class for today and we will do some practice tomorrow and that is something that you should look forward to. Now in regards to this though, if you are going to do the practice you have to bring your faith. When I talk about bringing your faith what I’m really referring to is you have some appreciation of what is, so to speak, the divine in the sense that we talked about the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Now the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas from our point of view are universal. It’s not that they just work for Buddhists and they don’t work for others, or they just work for men and not for women, or they just work for certain people and not for other people. That is completely a limiting point of view in regards to the divine beings. And so from a Buddhas’ perspective they can’t do it for us, but they work for us and our benefit. As much as we allow ourselves to become involved, they will be there for us irrespective of who we are, irrespective of how virtuous or non-virtuous we are. All of those things from the side of the enlightened beings are not how they look at it. They look at all of us completely equally, wishing to benefit us all and to bring us all into enlightenment. The meaning of a divine being is that it has transcended all of the normal partialities that we might have. The Buddhas do not have that type of nature (having partialities). Therefore when you think of this practice, if you have a feeling for your own spirituality, a feeling towards what is important in your life – for example we said remember, in the beginning, ‘recognize your motivation, cultivate a positive motivation, rely upon your positive motivation.’ With those sorts of elements in place – doing good actions, you have a correct motivation, you are a beneficial person in the world around you – with all of those things it’s like you don’t have to doubt it, the Buddhas will be there for you because you have the qualities that are attracting them and facilitating their intervention in your life. Therefore with this practice when I say bring your faith what I really mean is that you can think that, "On the basis of who I am, how I live my life, I have faith that the Buddhas will intercede for my benefit."  That brings us to the conclusion of this evening’s class, thank you very much. Tomorrow we will start the class again at 9:30, so please come tomorrow and we will do practice. Thank you very much.    Saturday, April 11, 1998  So in regards to the teachings on the swift path of the transference of consciousness, we’ve covered a large portion of the material already, but I just have a little bit left just to complement or complete the actual teaching. Looking at the text we’ve received, on the first page we take Refuge and generate the altruistic thought of wishing to benefit all sentient beings by attaining enlightenment. Having completed that then, we have the four immeasurables and then we go into the praises of the Buddhas and the Tathagatas, which refers to the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. Having completed that then, there’s the main practice you come to where you generate yourself in the form of Chenrezig, the Buddha of love and compassion. Having done that you do the practice up to the transference of consciousness. Now on page eight at the bottom it says, "From the heart of the Lama, self-awareness as the luminous deity." That then actually is if you are doing the transference of consciousness for someone else, then you would recite that. If you’re doing it for yourself you would go to where it says, "ah phet" and then stop. From there you go over to the other page (page 10) and carry on. So the last two lines on the bottom of page eight 8 are for doing it for someone else.    **Prayers for Blessings from the Lineage**  So then the prayer, "‘Bhagavan, Tathagata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha, protector Amitabha," you recite that three times. Then it goes, "Om ah hung, to the dharmakaya Amitabha, the Buddha of boundless light I pray." From there going all the way up until approximately page 18 then, there is one set of prayers which is basically a reminder, a review of the transference of consciousness, and (requesting) the blessings from the lineage masters to be able to receive the realizations.  And on page 19 you do the (prayer to Buddha Amitabha) three times. Then after that the prayer that starts, "In the exalted palace…" and continues on until page 27, again is requesting for blessings from the great masters that have accomplished the technique. On page 28 again you recite (the prayer to Buddha Amitabha) three times. Then you do the "oh how wonderful" all the way until page 29. At that time then you are basically reciting a request for blessings. If you’re doing this practice these are things to do because they bring to mind things which are important for you. And then of course you have (the prayer to the Buddha Amitabha) again. If you want to you can recite it three times but it’s not necessary. At this point once is sufficient and that makes it a little bit easier for you. On page 30 then you have another prayer, requesting the transference of consciousness which is particular to the Dzogchen transmission. Again it’s requesting the blessings for that. Then on page 31 you have the prayer, "Very essence of the undeceiving three supreme jewels," up until halfway down page 32. This is a request for the blessings of the three precious jewels of Refuge and such. Then you have, "Because of the unbearable force of this powerful prayer." So having done that you’ve completed the basic prayers for being able to collect the merit to be able to practice the transference of consciousness.    **Becoming Amitayus, the Buddha of Boundless Life**  When you get to page 33 you have, "The body of Amitabha above the crown of my head melts into light and dissolves into myself." Prior to that you have yourself identified as Chenrezig. In your heart you have the particular visualization of the lotus with your mind as being the atomic egg. And you’ve done the visualization of Amitabha in the space above you with Chenrezig on his right side and Vajrapani on his left side. Then around you have all the male and female Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and all of the root and lineage gurus. You have all of these together in a huge mass. At this time you should feel that all of those deities absorb into what’s called the principle three. And the principle three are of course Amitabha, Chenrezig – it says here Avalokiteshvara – and Vajrapani. They (all the deities) are absorbed into those . And so they become very resplendent with the blessings as the great assembly absorbs into the principle three. Then you have Chenrezig on the right and Vajrapani on the left, in that order they absorb into Amitabha Buddha. Amitabha Buddha then becomes the principle one having everyone absorbed into him. Then the principle, the Buddha Amitabha, flows down in the nature of light and absorbs into you. Then from that being absorbed into you, you turn into the Buddha Amitayus, which is actually the Sambhogakaya form of Amitabha, a more exalted form of Amitabha. You turn into Amitayus, the Buddha of infinite life.  So how you visualize yourself when you turn into Amitayus, the Buddha of infinite life, is that that manifestation is in the aspect of being red in color, ruby red. You have one face and two arms, your legs are in the crossed leg vajra position, your hands are upon your lap in the meditation posture. In the palm of your hands you should have a vase appear. In this vase is the nectar of immortality. This then is the aspect that you manifest as. Having absorbed Amitabha you become the Buddha of infinite life, Amitayus. In this aspect you are what is called the Sambhogakaya, the body of enjoyment, and that means your body is very resplendent, having all the ornamentation of a highly exalted being decked out with jewels and such ornaments.  So the reason for visualizing yourself as Amitayus is because you have practiced Phowa. At this time you are healthy. There is a need to visualize yourself (as Amitayus) because this is the Buddha of infinite life and you want to stabilize your life energy. By doing the transference of consciousness practice you are actually shaking your continuity, the life energy within yourself. By doing that then you can shorten your life if you do the practice intensively while you’re still very healthy. Therefore to offset that type of effect to yourself – because you are a healthy, alive, very vibrant person – you generate yourself in the aspect of Amitayus. By doing so you are in effect blessing yourself to have the stability of long life. Now if you happen to be old, or you’re ill, you know that death is approaching, you do not need to do this practice because that’s not something that you wish to obtain. You wish to get out of your body. But if you are a healthy individual and you are merely practicing this to become proficient in this practice at the time of death, to be able facilitate your getting out of your body, then you would do this practice of Amitayus. You generate yourself in this aspect and bless yourself. Then because of the great power of the blessings of that Buddha, you bless yourself that your life energy becomes stable and strong, thereby not weakening your life energy therefore shortening your life. If you see that death is close you do not do this visualization. Then you would recite the life recitation mantra three times. Then if you like to there’s the mantra, "Om Guru Ahyour Siddhi Hung". You recite that some number of times, maybe seven times or so. It’s the mantra for long life.    **Dedication of Merit**  And then the final prayers from page 34 onwards are the dedication of merit. Which of course is, "Having practiced this transference of consciousness may I receive the blessings to be able to progress quickly to the attainment of enlightenment to be able to benefit all sentient beings." And you have the variety of prayers and also you have the prayer on page 39. Again all these prayers are for the pure dedication of the merit to accomplish the practice to be able to benefit sentient beings. So these are the concluding prayers that you would do.    **Practice and Accomplishment**  As for the signs that you have been able to accomplish the transference of consciousness you will have a variety of different signs. The signs can arise quite easily if you do the practice with some sincerity.  One sign is a sort of itchiness or scratchiness feeling on the crown of your head. Another one is if you were to take a piece of grass, then on the crown of your head you would be able to insert it into the skin very easily. You would find that it becomes very soft and such in the crown area of your head. These are two of the signs that you have got the preliminary signs of accomplishing the transference of consciousness to some proficiency.  You don’t have to have a long consistency of this practice. It’s something that doesn’t require an incredible amount of meditation, but what you establish is that you have a technique. And if you rely upon it and do practice and get some of the signs, then you can have a great sense of joy for yourself because you know that at the end of your life you will be able to rely upon this practice and accomplish getting out of your body. And so it is said that you should have great joy having applied yourself to the practice which is a quick way to get out of your body.  So this is the basic presentation of the transference of consciousness and we’re going to do some practice of it, but prior to that I’d like for you to have the opportunity to ask questions. Do you have any questions?    **Questions and Answers**  **Vajrapani's Color**  Q: What color is Vajrapani?  R: Blue.  **The Meaning of "Thigle"**  Q: What does thigle mean?  J: That’s concentration point. In Sanskrit it’s called bindu, in Tibetan it’s called thigle. It’s a concentration point, normally a little dot with a squiggly above it like a semen.  **Birth in an Open or Closed Bud**  Q: If you were to transfer consciousness to the pure land by ordinary phowa, would you reincarnate in the pure land as an open or closed bud?  R: So the actual issue is that yes, when you do the transference of consciousness you will arrive in the pure land of Amitabha Buddha. Arriving there if you have doubt that maybe this practice isn’t going to work, you haven’t got strong faith in your spiritual master, such things like that, then it’s said you will be born into a closed lotus. The reason for that closed lotus is because you have doubt. Doubt is an obscuration which is arising in the form of a closed lotus around you. You can hear Buddha Amitabha giving his discourses, but you cannot see him and you cannot get up and move around. And you will remain in there for 500 years being able to listen to the discourses, but not getting out. If you have deep spiritual faith in your master, you believe in this practice and such, you do not have to be born in a closed lotus. You will be born in an open lotus and therefore you have the opportunity to be able to walk around, see and participate with Buddha Amitabha in receiving Dharma teachings. You can also go to other pure lands. There are many things. You have complete freedom with the attainment of the phowa without doubt. So lack of doubt or having doubt will be limiting factors for you in taking this rebirth.  **Doing Phowa for Someone Else**  Q: On page eight and nine here you’re doing this for somebody else, someone who is passing away?  R: So you’d like to do a transference of consciousness for somebody else?  Q: Not that but (inaudible).  R: So actually go back to page seven where it says, "This illusory body of aggregates I call myself." Then you would actually change that line and say, "The illusory body of the individual I’m focused on."’ You would put that in instead of yourself because you’re doing this for somebody else and that’s the basic reason for that. In doing that then you do the same exact recitation on to page eight. At the bottom of page eight, where it says Hri and then, "From the heart of the Lama (etc.)," that is recited for the benefit of the other person that you are doing this practice for. If you’re doing it for yourself, on page eight you would do the ah phet three times, then you’d flip over to page 10 where it says, "(Chom den day de shin…)" At this point recite the verses developing the self-visualization, then you’d start doing those prayers. Those are little changes you’d do if you’re doing it for someone else versus yourself.  Q: Can this be done at a distance? If you know that someone is passing away then would you visualize that person?  R: Now actually to be practical, the ability to transfer another individual’s consciousness is not easily done by ourselves. We have to actually have the clairvoyance to see where their consciousness is to be able to grab it, then to be able to put it into the pure land. And unless we have a fairly high level of spiritual attainment we will not be able to really do that. So therefore it’s not to say that there isn’t a benefit that we can accomplish for someone who is dying, but the actual transference of consciousness would not be really accomplished because we don’t know where that person’s consciousness is to be able to go and get it, and do this to it. So therefore to be practical there’s not a lot you can accomplish in that regard, but there is definitely the capacity to affect the consciousness of the individual who has passed away, due to the power of your prayers and your pure intention. If you go to page 34, on page 34 there are the prayers which are prayers of sincere wish for the benefit of others. And if you have a deep heartfelt feeling and you recite these prayers, you actually will benefit the consciousness by blessing it. And this does not require you to have any special spiritual quality other than a deep feeling and faith within yourself that you are invoking the blessings of spiritual beings to intercede on your behalf. Therefore intensity of prayer is a more appropriate technique for the level we’re at.  **Reciting in Tibetan Instead of English**  Q: Do you think it would be better for us because we don’t speak Tibetan to do the English where English appears? Would that have more meaning for us?  R: So actually I can appreciate the fact that you do not read or understand Tibetan. Therefore the recitation of Tibetan to some extent is not really that meaningful, whereas in English you understand what you are saying, therefore there is some impact for you. Now if we actually look at the tradition we’re talking of, these are called termas which are hidden teachings and they’re revealed. Now the particular teacher that presented this practice was a very realized being, and this is a terma which he realized in a particular way and then transmitted in the Tibetan language. For someone within the Tibetan language then this is very blessed because it is sacred speech in that regards. But if you look at it, for example there are the Sanskrit mantras. Originally the Dharma came from India, and in that regards we as the Tibetans recite the text of the Sanskrit mantras because of the blessing that was bestowed upon them by the Buddha. Therefore those have a very special meaning. So mantras are definitely something that should stay in Sanskrit. There is a blessing from our point of view in this particular text, and it is done from the actual recitation of it in the Tibetan. That is not to say it is exclusive of the fact that you could recite it in English, but from our point of view there is a blessing because it was realized in the Tibetan language and presented that way.  Actually though, there is a possibility to learn and therefore we're going to do the recitations in the Tibetan. Beneath the Tibetan of course is the English. So while doing it in Tibetan, which is a tuneful sort of way, you can sort of check up the English and become familiar with the meaning. So actually it isn’t impossible for you to be able to, while reciting the Tibetan, to be familiar at least with the idea and concept behind it and still receive the blessings. So that’s what we’re going to do here OK?  **Shooting Fire Sparks from the Masar Egg**  Q: Can you say something a little bit about the visualization that we need to be having when the spark is going up? Is there something special, some special visualization there or..?  R: Now the particular bird that was referred to and the bird’s egg has some meaning in regards to so to speak, the mythology of Buddhism. It the sense that at the time of Machig Labdron, when she was doing her practices and such – this is a very famous yogini, a woman practitioner – it is said that at that time then there manifested two birds. They were said to be the manifestations of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of love and compassion – Chenrezig, and Tara. And they basically came together and produced one egg. This egg was very special, being that it was the product of two divine beings, and it had very special qualities. Wherever it was placed it would radiate light, removing darkness, giving blessings, releasing illnesses and such. When we refer to you visualizing your mind as being this blessed egg that was created from the union of Chenrezig, the Buddha of love and compassion, and Tara, the female Buddha, there actually is a special reason for that. Because of the quality of the story, when you visualize your mind as being like that egg then it gives you stronger blessings. That’s why it’s referred to as the product of these two divine beings who were manifested as birds, who together produced this very special egg. So visualizing your mind as that gives you a strong blessing in your mind. It empowers your mind to have more power, to have more effect. Now that’s one point. The second point in regards to this is that you visualize your mind as this egg. It’s very tiny, has special radiance and such. The actual energy around the egg is what you send up becoming inseparable, non-dual with the mind of Amitabha. Now that’s very much like when you have a fire burning and then a very hot spark shoots off from the fire. Like that then, you want your mind like that. It’s the nature of the fire but it’s not with the fire anymore. It sort of has it’s own glow and radiance as it blasts off. You should visualize that it’s not your whole mind that goes, but that a spark of it goes and becomes inseparable with the mind of Amitabha.  **Pure Land of God or Jesus Instead of Buddha**  Q: I have a hard time relating to Buddha. Is it possible to do God or Jesus instead (inaudible)?  R: Yeah, if your confidence is in that regards, yes that’s what you should visualize.  R: If there’s no more questions we’ll do the recitation.  **Where Consciousness is Visualized**  Q: Sorry I’m just confused for a minute. I was thinking that what I heard last night was at the heart was the eight petaled lotus, and on top of that was the egg. But then when you talk about the mind, I visualize it from here up to here (points from the chest to top of the head). So in my visualization I don’t know where to place it.  R: What you visualize is that your mind and the egg are inseparable. That sits on top of the lotus.  Everything else is sort of the circumstance. But your conscious awareness is the radiant egg. So as you remember, as we talked yesterday the central channel is the pathway. It’s like the road. The place we want to go to is Amitabha. Then the vehicle that you’re driving on is the radiant egg. The radiant egg is the vehicle, that’s your conscious awareness, your mind. That’s the one that you want to move. It’s moving on the pathway of the central channel. The place it’s driving to is the pure land of Amitabha.  **What is a Pure Land?**  Jhampa: I have a question. My question was, ‘You know we always hear about a pure land. What’s a pure land? What are some of its qualities?’  R: Basically the qualities of a pure land are quite inconceivable in the sense that it facilitates one’s spiritual practice immensely. Now in this regards Amitabha’s pure land is said to be a dharmakaya pure land, so if you were to take rebirth there then you would receive the blessings to be able to develop. At this point there is a text which gives a very descriptive presentation of it and I haven’t got that text right here. So for right now you can think of it as a totally inconceivable special place where your spirituality is greatly enhanced. So if you do the practice of this transference of consciousness well, you will actually generate the ticket to be able to go there and then you can see for yourself.  **Choosing a Rebirth to Benefit Beings**  Q: When someone wants to be a Bodhisattva, do you want to go to a pure land and come back after, or do you want to get reborn as a human so you can benefit sentient beings?  R: Really this depends on your own ability. I mean definitely there’s always the intention to benefit sentient beings, but in regards to actually one’s capacity, for ourselves, we don’t have a lot of ability. Therefore we are pushed by our karma to take a particular rebirth. So that says we have rebirths that are uncontrolled as in not under our control. Our births are established merely by our karmic propensity. When you have a higher realization you have freedom, meaning you have control. If you want to take a rebirth you can take it wherever you want. If you want to be born into a worldly realm benefiting sentient beings you can do that, but your power of consciousness is very great. You know exactly what you want to do, the rebirth you want and such. If you want to take a rebirth in a pure land to enhance your skills, then that is another opportunity that you have. So in this regards the ability of the individual to take a rebirth is dependent on their spiritual practice, their evolution and such. It’s always the benefit of sentient beings because you’re developing your skills as a Bodhisattva, but the place that you go to depends on what you deem as the most appropriate thing at that time.  **About the Different Pure Lands**  Q: Is there a sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya pure land, and is the "pure land of the western world" the same as Amitabha’s pure land?  R: First in regards to the western paradise of Amitabha, in the country of India and in Tibet we always say the western paradise. So there is a western paradise and I’m sure that that is of course the paradise of Amitabha Buddha, the divine realm. I’m sure they’re exactly the same. And so as a second point, when you talk about a dharmakaya pure land it’s not something you could substantially say is material, because it’s a state of consciousness pure land. But from there then there are all of the manifestations which are the pure astral forms, the sambhogakaya or body of enjoyment pure lands. From the dharmakaya pure land the infinite number of manifest realms in what are the subtle and divine astral form are manifest. Then from those realms, the pure astral form realms, there come the material pure lands. Now a material pure land for example would be the arrival of Buddha Shakyamuni to the country of India 2500 years ago. His presentation of the Dharma is a nirmanakaya or manifest body pure land, but that came from a pure astral form or body of enjoyment sambhogakaya pure realm, which of course came from the dharmakaya pure realm. So they’re all related, but the pure land of the nirmanakaya is Buddha Shakyamuni’s presence in the world and the presentation of the Dharma.  **Does the Spark Stay in Amitabha's Heart?**  Q: Once you transfer the spark or thigle into the heart of Buddha Amitabha, do you then not take it back down? Does it stay there when Buddha Vajrapani and Chenrezig dissolve?  R: So actually what you do is visualize that your mind, in this particular transference of consciousness practice, stays in your heart in the form of the radiant egg. Only the light rays go up and become inseparable with the consciousness, the divine mind of Amitabha Buddha. In that regard you’re not really sending your mind there, you’re just saying that a portion of your energy so to speak is identified inseparably with the holy mind of Amitabha Buddha. Now what you do from that point then, is remember that you have generated yourself as Chenrezig or Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of love and compassion. You’re in that divine aspect. Amitabha Buddha is above the crown of your head with Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani and all the great lineage gurus and everything. Of course Amitabha specifically is the essence of your spiritual master, your root teacher and all the blessings of all the Buddhas of the three times. So what you do is, having identified that very clearly by absorbing all the lineage gurus, by absorbing the two Bodhisattvas to the left and the right of Amitabha into Amitabha, and then Amitabha flowing down into you in the nature of light, you bless yourself. And so what you’re doing is creating yourself as an aspirant Buddha as Chenrezig. You’re merely receiving the blessings of your spiritual master very strongly within your consciousness by doing this visualization. So in that regards you’re blessing yourself and it’s only a little bit of the energy of your mind that’s merging inseparably with the consciousness of Amitabha, OK?  **I Don't Feel Deserving**  Q: I have a question about doubt. I perhaps don’t doubt so much that Buddha or God can receive me, but I perhaps have doubts that I’m deserving. You know in my little mortal form I’m trying to do what seems like a wondrous achievement. So I’m wondering what (Rinpoche) has to say about that.  R: I agree with you on your point. That is correct we are just an ordinary sentient being. But what we need to do is move away from grasping at ourselves as being ordinary in the sense that, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were ordinary sentient beings. They have applied themselves to their spiritual practice. They have evolved and become enlightened. Now the Buddhas have what’s called buddha nature. We have buddha nature. What’s the difference between the two? (The difference) is that they have no obscuration to their buddha nature, they fully understand it. We have an obscuration to our buddha nature. It is the karmic imprint of habit or negativity and delusion which is obscuring that nature of ourselves. Because of those two things, delusion and habit patterns, we have an obscuration to directly perceiving our buddha nature. So what we have to do to protect ourselves is that we have to practice. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas can’t come and do that for us. They can inspire us, but the real issue is that we have to have a spiritual practice. We have to work with our delusion which sees ourselves as being inferior and such. We have to work at releasing ourselves from the habit pattern of negativity. If we apply ourselves to that then we will actually be able to attain enlightenment. We have the basis of enlightenment within us, it is merely obscured by delusion and the habit pattern of negative imprints from before. So what we need to do is to say, "The basis of my ability to evolve and attain enlightenment is the application of my spiritual practice, releasing myself from these things which obscure my buddha nature." In regards to ourselves we have to recognize that the limiting factor from our side is our delusion and negative habit energy, and these are the things that we have to overcome.  **Special Breathing**  Q: Is there a special method of breathing we should use during the meditation?  R: No, there’s no special breathing thing you need to do with regards to this style of practice. You do the mantra with some emphasis, but there’s no special breathing that you’re doing at all.  J: So (Rinpoche) would like us to do the practice now.    **\* \* \* Practice \* \* \***  **The Benefits of Practice**  Now as for the teaching of this particular transmission of consciousness, I received it on numerous occasions, and of the people I received it from there is one particular teacher, Lama Khenpo Münsel, who was the principal instructor. He is very adept at this particular practice and he gives instructions to many of his students, and so the practice was then presented many times. The general plan of it is one receives the transmission of the teaching, one covers the general points on it, and then for one or two weeks one does the practice and has to sit very well. And the test (to see) if it’s been successful is that they use a stalk of quite stiff grass like a wheat straw, and they place it on the crown of the head and they push down. When it enters into the skull quite easily then that is the sign that the attainment is had. Normally it takes between one and two weeks to be able to generate that type of effect upon the body. Now sometimes he would joke and say if I get someone who has not attained this after two weeks, then what we will do is take all your clothes off, tie you up like you were a corpse and lie you on a rock naked outside. Then we’ll all sit around you and we’ll do the transmissions of consciousness again and again until finally your channel opens. And so all of us were sort of terrified that we would be tied naked on top of a rock and have all these monks sit there and do prayers in front of us, and so we would all sit really straight and do the practice really well. And so his technique seems to have worked.  So at this pointyou have been receiving the instructions on this and that’s very good. And of course if you can do some practice, whether you actually practice until you are getting the sign of the attainment or not is really not so important, but you should do some practice of this. Because in doing so then you will benefit yourself to actually have some accomplishment. That is of course the intention. I mean to give teachings on my part, and for your part then to participate and to do some practice is beneficial. Then you actually get some attainment. To do all of this and then not to do anything is sort of like a loss of the opportunity to be able to prepare yourself for something that will inevitably happen to you, death.  And so this actually applies now to everything. It can be for example, that you become very interested in practicing some kind of Buddhism, and of course maybe you move into the Vajrayana Buddhism. And so you attend and participate in an initiation given by a Vajrayana instructor. You receive the initiation, you get special implements placed on the crown of your head to bless you, you get holy substances to eat and such. Having accomplished all of that, receiving the perfect initiation, then if you don’t do the practice it’s such a shame. You have all the opportunity in place for you to be able to do a spiritual transformation and then you don’t do it. That would again be a loss. Practice is sort of like needing to eat food. We have a stomach and we have to put something in it. So if you have a very large table with many great delicacies placed upon the table, many delicious things that are wonderful to eat and you just look at them with you eyes, that doesn’t get it into your stomach. And so that would be like attending the Dharma discourses and everything, which are a great many wonderful delicacies, and just look at them. What you need to do is actually put it in your mouth, eat it, and then satisfy your stomach. Then you actually have the beautiful delicacies on the table benefiting you internally. So in the same way with the Dharma practices, you should undertake the practices. The objective of this is that your delusions become less, your mind becomes clear, you gain some experiences, your qualities grow, your ability to benefit increases. Those are the objectives of what your spiritual practice is, that those things come about. That comes about because of practice.  In the west there is great material prosperity and such. In that regard the outside is taken care of very well. But there is something in developing oneself internally. For example, where I come from there was lots of opportunity to practice but not so much material. So it’s good you have an opportunity now to bring in both the material and the spiritual. Now in regards to the spiritual though, it’s something that you actually undertake within yourself internally. You develop a sense of what is important for yourself, for example abandoning the non-virtuous actions. There are three of the body, four of speech, and three of the mind. You try to abandon those to try to make yourself of greater quality in your positive nature. And in that regard you bring about the implementation of those qualities so you can do them anywhere. You can do that sort of practice when you get up in the morning, when you’re eating food, when you’re driving in your car, whatever. You can always implement your principles of morality and such, they are easy to be implemented. So that’s something you can undertake as part of the total scope of your practice.  So part of course of what is in practice, is that if you apply yourself in practice the results will come about for you. I mean one time even the Buddha himself was an ordinary person, completely an ordinary sentient being with many delusions. But due to his practice and due to persisting in practice, the unfolding and revealing of his buddha nature took place until finally he attained full enlightenment. Well, that is also possible for us to do. By merely applying ourselves to our practice things will come about and change, and the results will be manifest. In regards to practice we should always recognize that at one time all the great spiritual beings that have ever been were ordinary beings, and through practice they applied themselves, attained realizations, and then slowly evolved. So in that manner that is completely available to us too. There are results for our spiritual endeavor.  We can also bring to mind the story of Milarepa, the great saint of Tibet. At one time he was part of a rich family, and then his inheritance was taken from him. Then due to the prodding from his mother, he went off and learned black magic. Doing a retreat he attained some possibility of inflicting great harm. Then he one day destroyed a house, killing 32 people, due to the power of this particular magic. After that the local villagers were quite angry with him and he again threatened that he would destroy their crops. And with his ability to control the elements he brought a great hailstorm that completely destroyed the crops of that valley. So he did many of these great negative actions. Then with a feeling of strong repentance he abandoned such negative activity, realizing that it was very sad and caused so much pain. He went and sought out a spiritual master and with a strong feeling of wanting to purify himself, it is said he applied himself to the instructions of his spiritual master, and in one lifetime attained the exalted state of enlightenment of the state of Vajradhara. And therefore it can be that even though we’ve done deep negativity, with correct application of the teachings, with our own enthusiasm, we can be just as Milarepa and attain enlightenment in one lifetime.  And there is also the story of Angulimala, who was a man from the country of India who displeased one of his gurus. His guru then being angry with him, gave him an inappropriate instruction saying, "If you can kill 1000 people you will be born into the realm of the gods." And so with this instruction he sent him away from where he was receiving study. And so basically the fellow started to kill people and cut off their finger and hang it around his neck as a sign. And he had killed 999 people and in this regards was a very feared man because of his great power and the brutality that he inflicted upon the people of that area. Then Buddha Shakyamuni came to hear of this and came to the area where the man was. And although walking very slowly in the aspect of a monk, Angulimala seeing him and thinking this is the 1000th person I will kill chased the Buddha, but could never catch him. In this regards the Buddha tamed him and so had the opportunity to instruct him in the Dharma. Angulimala then relied upon the instructions of the Buddha and in that life time managed to realize the mistake that he had made. With deep repentance he purified himself and in that life, even though he killed 999 people, he attained the attainment of an Arhat. And so even someone who had done such great evil by relying on practice was able to attain spiritual purification.  Now of course we have never gotten anywhere close to killing 999 people. In fact we have never even killed one human. In fact I would estimate we have never even killed a sentient being. So in that regard we don’t have any of the great karma that they accumulated in the scale of just their one life. But what we do have is the fact that in this life we have negative actions due to just the mindless way that we have lived. And we can extend that to previous rebirths. We have been involved in a variety of activities, and so have a great store of negative karmic activity which will bring suffering for us as time passes. And it is because of the great accumulation, not just in one rebirth, but over a great many rebirths. We have that continuity within our consciousness. If we would like to become purified we have to actually then regret the negativity by seeing that it causes suffering for us. We have to understand the delusion, understand that if delusion is acted upon it creates a karmic imprint. And if that karmic imprint is acted upon, when it ripens it will create suffering for us. Therefore we need to have a strong regret for our negative actions because we recognize that they cause suffering. The best example for this is that if someone was at one time to mistakenly eat a poison, and having eaten it they realize they’ve eaten a poison. It makes them deeply ill and they manage to recover, but they just recognize that, "Boy, I will never eat that again." So in that way they regret that they ate the poison because they experienced how sick it made them. And so in the same way with regards to our own delusions, and then the negative activities that we create, we should recognize that just like that poison it makes us completely ill. It makes us ill with all the sufferings we experience. So if we can generate regret for the sufferings that we experience by recognizing that they are related to the delusions that we have, that we rely upon, that create the negative karma, and then we make a strong turning of our mind – just as the person who ate the poison really rejects ever eating that poison again by saying, "I don’t want to get sick like that again," – in the same way we also have to reject our negativity. And so when we talk of moving away from our negative actions which we normally rely upon because of delusion, we have to have on one side that we regret those negative actions because we see how they only make us miserable, and then we have to have a real commitment, a promise and commitment that we won’t fall in that direction again. If we do this, then the possibility of spiritual transformation is easily accomplished.  Generally we would say that negativity, delusion, and the negative action which is produced from that has no quality whatsoever. But actually there is a quality that you can identify with negativity. This is the fact that if you recognize the suffering that it causes, and then you regret that action, and you completely turn yourself away from it, the quality that you gain actually is the quality of experience. You know it doesn’t work. So therefore suffering, and the realization and rejection of the causes that create the suffering has a quality. The quality that you have experience and wisdom.  So also of course, if we look back in the past when Buddha Shakyamuni was actually in the world, walking in the world and giving instruction, then of course even though people were in direct relationship with the Buddha, able to hear his actual discourses and such, they still had to actualize the teachings and practice them to bring about their own transformation. Because as the Buddha said, "It is not possible just by knowing me you will bring about realization. You actually have to practice yourself. You have to tame your own mind." And so in this regards when we look to ourselves we don’t have to have great expectations, just that we should try to take something (from a teaching). For example, if there are four points in spiritual transformation to be understood, maybe we don’t get all four, maybe we just get one. Even if we don’t get one, we should at least recognize that we are the source, the creator of how we experience things. So we don’t look outside at other people or things like that, external to ourselves, we look within ourselves. And to gain a realization of our own mind this is the whole emphasis of what the Buddha taught. He said, "Our mind is the creator of how we experience things. Our mind is the creator of our suffering. Our mind is the creator of our enlightenment." So in this regards, even though we don’t have a profound practice, at least we can get things right as to what is the source of our transformation. Then actually we are doing something beneficial.  A very good analogy for the Buddha’s teaching is that it is like a mirror. And all the mirror is, is that it reveals where we have made mistakes and what we need to do for ourselves. And in that regards, if you have the mirror of the Dharma you can see where you yourself are dirty. For example, I mean how your face is dirty, how maybe your teeth are dirty, how maybe your ears are dirty and such. All of these things are revealed. The Dharma teaching is a mirror that lets you reflect upon yourself and see where there is an opportunity to do some improvement, to see where there are things to be cleaned or qualities to be enhanced. And in that regards then, the mirror of the Dharma reveals ourselves and what we can potentially attain, and what needs to be done to bring that attainment. And when you have the Dharma, it has nothing to do with taking the Dharma and looking at everyone else and measuring them, and deciding if they have a Dharma practice. That is not appropriate at all. The Dharma practice is to be applied to yourself. There is nothing to do with other people. You don’t look at other people and decide how deluded or undeluded they are, you only look with the Dharma at yourself and to change yourself. That’s the intention of the Buddha.  Also when you practice the Dharma it can sometimes be that people, they practice for maybe 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, and some people say, "Look nothing’s ever happened for me. Nothing seems to have improved. You know for example, here I am trying to be a Buddhist, you know, and things go wrong. I’ve lost my money, my house got burned down, my arms and legs are getting broken, all these things are happening. So where’s the blessings of the Dharma, I’m not a happy person." So we sort of maybe think sometimes, "Wow, the Dharma’s completely useless. Life isn’t the way I expected even though I’m trying to practice the Dharma." Well it’s not that case. We don’t know what our karmic continuity might hold for us. Although things are happening a little bit now, we really don’t know what could have happened if we weren’t involved with that perspective of trying to be a virtuous individual, by relying on the Dharma to try to get ourselves out of the suffering, and trying to attain liberation. A good example might be this, let’s say, I’m a Tibetan. I’ve come to the country of Canada and arriving here I borrow 1000 dollars from every one of you. And that’s fine, you lend me the money and there’s a relationship established. Then maybe if I suddenly get an opportunity to go somewhere where I’m completely freed and liberated, well all of you will show up on my doorstep saying, "Hey, before you go I want you to pay your debt." You will make those demands on me. Well it’s like that. Let’s say you start to enter into the Dharma practice. Well that means you’re going to a good place, you’re going to enlightenment, so your karma will actually start ripening a little quicker. Now it doesn’t have to be that it ripens in a negative aspect, but it can be that some things get speeded up a little bit. Now maybe for example, in your previous rebirths you have some very heavy karma that you are not conscious of, that is waiting to ripen and give you a very bad lower rebirth, some horrendous rebirth. Well if you enter into the Dharma you might just get a migraine headache. So although you are in the Dharma, you get this small headache. It carries on for two or three years and you think, "Gee, I wonder why this is going on?" Well, what you are doing is you are purifying the karma that would give you that rebirth in that lower realm. And it’s no longer going to ripen because your attitude’s changed, then your karma shifts, then the karmas basically get purified because of your intentions in spirituality, your intentions of being positive, trying to bring about a transformation for yourself. That causes the karma to ripen in a different manner. So maybe a small suffering in this rebirth actually stops a great suffering in the future. And of course if you persist in your Dharma practice you will gain the opportunity to go to a pure land, or gain better rebirth, or attain enlightenment - whatever it is you are able to muster from your spiritual enthusiasm and endeavor. So in this regards you should never think that the Dharma doesn’t work and things aren’t happening. If you sincerely take the Dharma to heart and apply yourself, no matter what is happening to you there is a definite shift in the whole structure of your karmic evolution. And in that regard the Dharma is effective and is working for you. It’s just maybe you don’t understand or see the exact implications of what’s happening. But it is effective, the Dharma does work because it’s working with you at the source of who you are.  And of course we might see other examples of someone who practices the Dharma for some period of time, they try to be virtuous and things don’t work out, and they say, "Oh this Dharma’s ridiculous and nothing’s going to work." And they just give it up and it seems like then things go well for them. You know, they get a good job, they make good money, have all the perks they would like to have. And we think, "Well gee, here I am being so devout to the Dharma and nothing very beneficial is happening. That person completely gave up the Dharma and look at them. They’re getting so far ahead." And they even talk about how stupid the Dharma is and how dumb all the people are that practice and such. They collect that sort of bad karma. Well we really don’t have a bigger picture on things. Generally it’s said that the experiences of this life time are ripenings from previous lifetimes’ karmic activity. So in that previous rebirth, maybe that person did practice some forms of generosity and such, which creates the physical prosperity in this rebirth. But what they have waiting for them are the activities of this rebirth ripening for them in a future rebirth. So maybe at this moment things look pretty decent for them, but when their good karma runs out, all the previously accumulated good karma exhausts itself, then things will definitely turn around for them. Because they haven’t been doing anything new with themselves, nothing more productive or in a positive light, things will only go from worse to worse. So in that regards we shouldn’t try to judge the Dharma by how successful or unsuccessful we are in this life. That’s not any way to talk about how the Dharma is successful. The Dharma is successful because it changes your attitude, makes you a virtuous, positive individual, and then creates a whole different rapport with the world. That’s what the benefit of the Dharma is. We shouldn’t expect material benefit, or that things will somehow greatly improve just because we get into the Dharma.  Also, in regards to the practice, the first thing we do of course is take Refuge, which puts us into the pathway of virtue and working towards liberation and enlightenment. Then of course we do the generation of the altruistic thought of working for the benefit of sentient beings, to attain enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings. So that is called taking Refuge and altruistic generation. Now those are basic preliminaries. Some people might think, "Ah, I’ve been doing spiritual practice for a long time. I don’t need to worry about those things. I want the big practices, the big stuff. I’d like to have a Tantric deity. I’d like to practice the Great Completion. I’d like to practice Mahamudra, some very profound practice like this. So this whole thing with Refuge and the altruistic mind, benefiting others, those are all just preliminary stuff. I don’t need to worry about that anymore." That’s a big error in one’s practice because if you took all the Buddha Dharma teachings - it's said Buddha taught 84,000 discourses on how to become spiritually inclined - you could actually bring all of those practices down to just one day having a kind heart, having a noble heart and benefiting others. That’s what it’s all about. So if having a positive, kind hearted motivation is where all the Buddha Dharma can be brought down to, then you can understand it doesn’t matter what you do in regards to a big practice. The real essence of the practice is that your heart is transformed into being kind and a benefit to other sentient beings. That's actually what Refuge is. Refuge makes you an inner person, the altruistic thought of bodhicitta, working for the benefit of sentient beings, makes you a kind person giving benevolent help to the world around you. That’s the essence of the Buddha Dharma. Irrespective of whatever you’re doing, that’s what you really want. So don’t think that the big practices are important. If you don’t have those two, you don’t have a big practice. Even if you have just the smallest amount of kind intention towards others, you have a big practice.  So Rinpoche would like us to do the sadhana again, but we’re going to pause at various times and do some meditation on some of the material. Rinpoche says we’ll stop at the end of the section halfway down page eight for five minutes. Then at other points in this practice we’ll stop again for five minutes. So page two then.    **\* \* \* Practice \* \* \***  **Questions on the Practice**  On page 29 halfway down after you go, ‘May I attain the kingdom of the dharmakaya you have to put in three of the "ah phet". Then at the bottom of page 30 (also). Then at the bottom of page 32 again. So are there any questions on what we’ve done to this point?  **Your Root Guru as Amitabha**  Q: I haven’t been able to follow exactly because (of trying to follow) the Tibetan and English, but there’s lots of people that we’re praying to, and we’re praying that we become one with them. But I’m assuming that the visualization of Amitabha is still the same, that they’re one with Amitabha and we’re praying that way.  R: So in regards to this practice then, when you started yesterday of course I described to you there is the principle Amitabha Buddha, to the right and the left is Chenrezig and Vajrapani, and then around there are many of the male and female Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and all of the lineage teachers. Now you can think of those as you do this practice, or if you wish remember that the teacher is called the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times, then the teacher as inseparable from Amitabha is called the jewel-like quintessence. The jewel-like quintessence means the jewel who has all the essence of everything that is special and beautiful. That is, the root guru. So it depends on your own mind and then how you’d like to do it. If you can of course expand it, if not, just focus on the guru and feel that he is the quintessence of the jewel-like qualities of all the great lineage masters.  **What is Dewachen?**  Q: What is Dewachen?  J: Dewachen is Sukavati and that is the Sanskrit word for the western paradise. Dewachen, dewa means bliss, chen means great, so it’s the place of great bliss. And that means Sukavati, which means it’s the pure land. Pretty good hey? A whole new meaning to heaven.  R: You don’t even find one iota of suffering in a pure land of great bliss. For us we have all sorts of things. We have a birth, we have an abiding, then we have death and all the sufferings in between. There you have none of that. Also then, the basis of all the delusions such as pride, arrogance competitiveness, jealousy, all of those delusions don’t arise there. In fact, there is no sense of I and other. There is no this is my cup, my house, that’s yours. All of those sorts of discriminations are completely dissolved. In the palm of your hand will arise whatever is your wish. So if you wish to make an offering, in the palm of your hand it arises. Whatever you need. So you don’t have to go off and do business to get the money to do the offerings, they just appear in the palm of your hand. And also of course, in regards to everything that arises within your ear, it is totally within the teachings of the Mahayana. Meaning that whatever you’re doing, whether sitting or standing, whatever sounds you hear bring about the reflections of the Dharma and spiritual realization. And as for the type of teaching, of course because this is a realm for Bodhisattvas there’s only the teaching of the Mahayana vehicle, working for the benefit of sentient beings. You don’t hear anything about working for your own liberation. It’s always for the benefit of all sentient beings. But if you doubt any of this at all don’t worry, you’ll just be born in a closed lotus and have to hang out there for 500 years. This is the actual picture of Amitabha Buddha in the centre, with Avalokiteshvara on the right. Then in regards to this you can see that Vajrapani, which is the blue deity and Avalokiteshvara, which is the white deity are appearing seated, but they’re actually standing. And you’ll see down below there are three to this side and three on this side, those are the great Bodhisattvas. There’s a total of eight Bodhisattvas of course, and the two principle ones are Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani and they all should be standing. So that’s it.  **Boredom in the Pure Land**  Q: What about boredom in the pure land? I mean if you can just manifest stuff in your hands and the guy next to you can do that too and you’re there for 500 years, wouldn’t you get bored?  R: I guess you’re pretty doubtful aren’t you? Your reference to the word bored though refers to there being some sense of dissatisfaction in the consciousness. That’s why boredom arises. So you’ve got to remember that in the state of the pure lands the delusions such as having aversions and attractions, those sort of fluctuations of samsaric mind don’t arise. So therefore the conceptuality of boredom isn’t part of the realm of the pure lands. And remember there’s not even an iota of suffering, which includes all the things such as boredom that are related to suffering consciousness.  Q: We like challenges, we like goals, we like striving after things.  R: Isn’t working for the benefit of sentient beings, trying to become enlightened and trying to help all sentient beings a challenge enough for you?  Q: That’s plenty of challenge but are you doing that in the pure land?  R: Basically yes, your working for the striving of enlightenment is to attain enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings. And until sentient beings are empty from samsara your work isn’t finished.  Q: Ok.  R: Good job.  **Names for Amitabha Buddha**  Q: Sometimes Buddha Amitabha is referred to in Tibetan as Nangwa Thaye and sometimes as Öd Pagmed, is there a difference?  R: No, it’s the same. They’re just different names. Exact same Buddha. There’s no difference in who it is, it’s Amitabha Buddha.  **Better to Do a Retreat, or Have a Daily Practice?**  Q: To do this practice is it best to try to do it everyday once a day, or is it best to try to do it in retreat and do it for a month or something like that? And if you do it every day do you do it instead of the practice you’re already doing or in addition to?  R: Basically it would be best if you can do a retreat for one or two weeks. That should be all that’s necessary in doing a retreat. And having completed that if you turn to page seven, the top two lines, ‘I pray to the Buddha Amitabha for the blessings to be born in the pure land of great bliss, Dewachen. In saying those two lines that’s all you need to do. So what you do as a daily practice after you’ve done your one or two weeks, is that every day you would say these two lines with deep feeling, saying, "When I die I want to go to the pure land of Amitabha Buddha." With that thought in mind then, you visualize him above the crown of your head and saying this is the way it is from now until I die. So if you can, try to do the retreat of one or two weeks and then every day after that say these one or two lines, that is sufficient.  **Clarification of Text, Page 37**  Q: On page 37 there’s a sentence I can’t really understand. It says, ‘Being born there may I your face.’ I don’t connect it to another part of the recitation.  J: No, it’s may I *see* your face. It’s missed the word "*see*". In the Tibetan it says…being born there may I *clearly* *see* your face.  **Location of the Central Channel**  J: I just asked a question – where is the point where the central channel is – ‘cause I was always taught it’s what is called eight finger widths from your eyebrows back, so about this point (pointing to a place on the scalp).  R: It depends on the individual. Some people have it at the back, sort of at the crow’s nest of the hair, and other people have it forward from there. So it just depends on your personal physiology as to where it will arise.  **Practice Tape**  Q: (request for a tape of the practice because it would be difficult to remember the melodies etc.)  J: You can ask (for one from) David.  R: Don’t worry I had the same problem. When I was in Berkley, California I was attending an English class, and they would say everyone should turn to such and such a page and start reading. And I wouldn’t even know where the heck that was, where the page was or anything. If I don’t get it in English you can have the same mistake.  **Three Kathok Siddhas**  Q: There’s a picture of those three (inaudible)?  R: This actually refers to the Kathok monastery. The founder of the Kathok monastery is the person in the middle and his principle student was the one to his right or to your left. The person on his left, Campabum, was the second student. In the second line then it says, ‘are the three lords of Dharma inseparable from Amitabha and his lineage,’ referring to those three. Now these three (siddhas) all made it to the pure land of Amitabha, so when you pray to them it makes them have to think about you to get you up there too.  **Deep Faith**  Q: How much (word unknown, sounds like bakshi) is there in this?  J: Define bakshi (?) because (tape change).  R: (tape change) it says deep faith in your heart actually makes a ring and with that ring then the hook of the Buddhas can come down and grab you and pull you wherever, to your good rebirth or whatever. If you don’t have the ring of deep faith the Buddhas’ hook doesn’t catch on anything.  Q: Deep faith is different from devotion though.  J: That’s why I asked you to define it. The words you used were devotion so…  Q: Yeah, but (Rinpoche) said deep faith so I (inaudible).  R: Yeah there’s some differences but essentially it’s…So if we talk of you having great faith what the faith actually refers to is that you reflect upon the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. You see that the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas have qualities. Then in regards to their qualities they can help sentient beings to work out their delusions and attain enlightenment. So the faith that’s referred to from a Buddhist perspective is a faith in the qualities and the abilities of the enlightened beings to help and benefit sentient beings. Therefore when you think of the word faith that’s how you should think of it from a Buddhist perspective.  Q: Exactly, but devotion you see…  J: Ok then that’s the thing you should work with. I’m sorry I used the wrong word for you.  R: Thank you very much, your legs must be tired.      Sunday, April 12, 1998  **A Second Way to be Born in Amitabha’s Pure Land**  R: Good morning to you all. So to be able to bring ourselves to liberation for the ending of our cyclic existence, we would practice the transference of consciousness to be able to get to the pure land of Sukavati, the pure land of Amitabha Buddha the Buddha of infinite light. Now that’s one technique is to do the phowa. There is a second technique to be able to take birth into the pure land of Amitabha in Sukavati.    **Four Causes for Taking Rebirth in Amitabha’s Pure Land**  The circumstances to be born into the pure land of great bliss would be one would have developed four causes.    **Strong Faith**  One of the objects for the cause of taking rebirth into the land of great bliss, which is Amitabha’s pure land, is that in your heart you would develop great faith. So whenever you see a picture, or in a meditation hall, or a temple, all of these places, then you would develop the thought in your mind that you would have a very strong connection with Amitabha. That you will be able to pursue your spiritual practice with Amitabha and such. So the internal cause, which is called an internal reliance, is that within your mind you have strong feeling for Amitabha, to be in his retinue in his pure land.    **The First Cause: Accumulating Merit and Awareness**  So you might have the idea that you have devotion, faith and inspiration to take rebirth into the pure land of Amitabha. But just having that alone (is not enough). You actually need the cause, you need something that’s going to bring that about. So what brings that about of course is that you accomplish virtue, you accomplish positive activity, and you purify your negative habit patterns. Now what might be the way to purify negativity, what might be a way to generate the positive qualities? Well actually it’s said the easiest way is to just abandon the ten non-virtues and to accomplish the ten virtuous actions.    **Generosity**  One of the activities of course to be undertaken in regards to one’s body action is to do things of generosity. Now of course you may be familiar with the stories of the great Bodhisattvas of the past who for the benefit of sentient beings made great sacrifices, or basically practiced generosity on a very profound level. They would actually offer themselves in service, they would offer their body, even body parts for the benefit of other sentient beings. Then also they’ve given up all of their home, their belongings, their family, they’ve given all of these things away for the sake of benefiting sentient beings. Now these of course are very exalted beings that have been able to do this because they don’t have any miserliness within their mind, and they solely work for the benefit of others. And with this type of a deep attitude, of course then they have been able to accomplish this. Now we ourselves shouldn’t have expectations that we will be able to give up family, home, all of our possessions, and even parts of our body for the benefit of others. We have not generated the altruistic thought of Bodhicitta, therefore what we should do is just practice generosity in ways which are most appropriate for ourselves. And there are different types of generosity, but these are the things that we might do on our own side for generating a very positive feeling of generosity and sharing.  Now of course in practicing generosity there are many ways we can accomplish that. But one that is very simple, that doesn’t cause any agitation for us, is for example if you have a personal altar of some sort, or you go into a temple, then there are many different things that you can do with the practice of generosity. For example setting up the offerings in front of the altar, putting flowers and burning incense. All of those things can be done, and the reason why it’s a very beneficial thing to do is because the objects that you’re offering to have the quality of no miserliness, and therefore have great qualities. So to make offerings sets up an appropriate association for yourself. But also the reason is that very often you see, when we practice generosity with other people we have a very low mind. Sort of thinking, "Oh I’ve worked so hard for what I have, how can I give it to these other people? They’re not deserving of it." Many negative thoughts come to mind. So we think, "Oh this is my thing, if I give this away they might do something inappropriate." or, "It’s my hard work." We have these sorts of mundane attitudes which sometimes make it difficult to practice generosity purely. So by doing offerings on your altar – flowers, incense and such – or doing it in the meditation or spiritual hall, some sort of centre like that, then with those sorts of offerings normally we don’t have the generation of miserliness. Because our mind’s very pure, the object’s pure, and therefore it’s much easier for us to accomplish a great merit with just a simple action in such a place, because of the associations with it.  And of course the whole issue with being generous is that it is an attitude of mind. It has nothing to do with the outside phenomenon, it’s an internal event. So if for example you go outside and you’re walking around and you see someone’s very beautiful garden, or you see a beautiful scene, very pretty things, a wonderful sky, all of these things you can also offer because it’s within your mind that you actually set up a sense of generosity. So when you see something that’s very beautiful and very pleasant and such, just in your mind you think that, "May this bring about happiness and joy for sentient beings." And in your mind you make a sense that this is being offered for the benefit of all sentient beings. Even though the physical thing is not owned by you, the experiences of beauty that you have can be set up in your mind as an offering of beauty for everyone.  And you actually can have a much more spiritual relationship with things such as clothing and food by thinking, for example, when you get a brand new piece of clothing you can in your mind say, "I offer this to the divine. I offer this to the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas." And you can do this with great sincerity and then that way you give it to them and feel that they then allow you to wear it. And so in this manner by wearing it you remember the fact that it is due to the blessings of them, and their inspiring you in the good qualities and such that you generate, that allows you to have all these good things. So in that regards for example, just having beautiful clothing then, you can feel that this is due to the blessings of the Buddhas, due to having offered it to them. Or food, when you have food you first offer your food to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and feel that they receive it. And from there you eat it and it becomes food then for your spiritual practice. So it puts things in the context of spirituality for you.    **Wisdom**  In doing this you create a great sense of positive energy and attitude around the material world. And this is called the accumulation of merit. And in doing so then it establishes you in a very positive manner. Now of course you also need to develop what’s called the accumulation of wisdom, understanding the nature of reality. And that is true whether you study within the Mahamudra tradition, or the Great Completion tradition, or the central path tradition, whatever style of practice that you’re relying upon to generate those accumulations. Now it's very good to develop wisdom, but it’s sometimes difficult. So it’s actually said that if you first work on technique or on skillful means, which is developing a very generous attitude and a very positive attitude in relation to the world, the quality of your being increases a great deal. And then it is very easy to gain realizations into the nature of wisdom. So also, if on an outward level of expression in your activities, you always have a very powerfully positive attitude and such, it makes your life much easier. In that regards then, it makes it more easy to work within the realm of being a spiritual person, because everything is facilitated for you because of your great positive energy. In this manner then you can develop on that side, and then the development of wisdom is easy.    **Heartfelt Joy**  Another way to look at how to generate a very positive energy within yourself is to rejoice. Now rejoice means that you take great joy in other people’s virtue. This is an easy way to develop your own spiritual quality, but it’s actually very profound. The reason for this is that the whole object and the whole activity of being positive and of working to benefit the world is an attitude that arises within the mind. So if in your mind there’s a very strong feeling, you actually accrue a great blessing or positive energy within yourself. There’s a story that relates to this and it happened at the time of the Buddha. When the Buddha was with many of his ordained people, one great king invited him to the palace and then made great offerings. So there was a whole day of feasting and many gifts were given to the sangha. Incredible lavish wealth was directed towards the prospering of the Buddha Dharma. And being that it was offered to the Buddha and to many of the highly realized beings that were with the Buddha, the merit that was being accumulated by the king because the objects were so special was very vast. But at the time of all this happening there was a beggar woman, an old beggar woman, outside of the palace watching all of the fanfare going on. And in her heart she thought, "Truly, this man, this king, is so special. He’s created all the causes for himself to be born as a great and wealthy man in a future life, and he has deep devotion to the Buddha. How wonderful it is that he sees the quality of spirituality." And so in her heart she had deep feelings of joy for the king and for what he was doing, and all of the activities he was involved in. In her heart of hearts she was deeply moved and rejoiced with incredible joy. So at the end of the day when the king had accomplished all of his great activities, he approached the Buddha, thinking that he had done such a wonderful job, and that no other king in the past had made such incredible offerings to any of the other spiritual mendicants of India.  He was expecting that he was going to get a wonderful sort of pat on the back. And so he approached the Buddha and said, "Tell me, who in the world has accumulated as much merit as I? Is there anyone?" And basically he just wanted the Buddha to say, "Oh you’re the best in everything that ever happened." So the Buddha responded and said, "The merit that has been accumulated today has been very great by you, but the woman at the gate has accumulated more merit." Of course the king was a little depressed by that. He thought, "How does that little beggar woman out there get better stuff than me? Why does she get a better blessing?" And then the Buddha responded, "Because she had true love and joy in what you did with no other thoughts. Therefore, her merit is greater because she rejoiced in your activity. You were a little proud and arrogant in what you’ve done and therefore that diminished your merit." So in this regards then, the Buddha showed that being in a positive nature is related to the mind. And if you rejoice truly and deeply from your heart at another person’s virtue – whether building a temple, doing some statue work, doing virtuous actions, or working for the benefit of others – if you truly rejoice in that person’s activity, then you actually accrue a similar virtuous action because of your heartfelt rejoicing and empathy with that person’s great quality.  Of course that’s a two way street. So as much as you can have heartfelt joy in someone’s virtuous action and accumulate equal merit, if you rejoice in someone’s non-virtue then also you would of course accrue equal negative energy. So for example if someone murders somebody and you think, "Oh it’s really good that guy’s gone, he was such a jerk anyway," then actually you accumulate equally negative merit. So be careful what you rejoice in.    **The Second Cause: Purification**  So there is a second cause of taking rebirth in the pure land of Amitabha. The first is the accumulation of positive energy and merit, and the next one is purification. So the things I was just talking about of course are the accumulation of a great positive force within yourself that will bring great goodness into the world around you. The second thing is the purification of negativity. Now you not only have negativity of this rebirth, but you have from previous rebirths many types of negativity that you may have been involved with. So to be able to purify that, to diminish it’s karmic effect upon your stream of consciousness, there are various practices you can do in this rebirth. These are things like the Vajrasattva practices of purification, and other ways of meditation and such, which can diminish the karmic weight of negativity from the past.  Also too, there are other ways that purification can take place at the same time as accumulating merit. For example, when you come to a spiritual place and you do a prostration, or come before a spiritual teacher, a spiritual mentor, if you do prostrations there are a great many both purifications and accumulations of merit that are accomplished. For example by showing respect for the object of a prostration, you actually are showing that you venerate those spiritual qualities by showing respect with your body, your speech, and your mind. So for example with your body, by putting your hands together in front of your chest and placing them on your crown, your throat, and your heart, what you’re doing is purifying the obstacles of body. And in that regards what you should think is that you’re eliminating the negative forces for body that may have been accumulated, and you’re accumulating the positive forces of the blessings of the beautiful body of the Buddhas, of the enlightened beings, which is being able to attract sentient beings. It is said that your throat is the centre for the blessings of speech, so by reciting some prayer while doing your prostrations, or just by touching your throat, what you do is then you feel that you’ve purified the impurities of speech that you may have ever uttered, and you accumulate the qualities of very beautiful and harmonious speech that attracts sentient beings into enlightenment and such. So blessings of speech are accrued at the base of the throat. And at the heart of course, your heart in the centre of your chest, what you should think of is that you purify the negativities of mind and you accumulate the virtuous qualities of all the enlightened beings’ holy minds. And that’s of course from having faith and devotion within your heart, then the qualities of the enlightened beings can enter into your mind. Then that’s what’s called the purification of the body, speech and mind, and the accumulation of merit for the body, speech and mind. When you then go down with your hands touching the ground, your knees and your feet on the ground, and you touch your forehead to the ground, at that point then it’s called the integration of body, speech and mind – doing the prostration so that everything is integrated together. So in this way, doing a prostration is actually an accumulation of great merit and the purification of great negativity. But it has to be done within the context that you are doing it from the point of devotion and such.  So what we are focused on is that we would like to be with Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light, and to be able to be inspired into being a Bodhisattva, accomplishing great virtue for the benefit of sentient beings. And so these are the practices which are called the cause in the sense that they are the cause of the accumulation of positive energy, and the elimination of negative habit patterns. They therefore become the cause of being able to be with Amitabha.    **The Third Cause: Wanting to Benefit Sentient Beings**  So the third of the causes for being with Amitabha Buddha in the land of infinite light, is that this particular pure realm is a Mahayana pure realm for the benefit of sentient beings, meaning that Bodhisattvas take rebirth there. So therefore the third cause is that within your heart you have to generate the universal altruistic attitude which says, "May I be of benefit for all sentient beings. May I bring about benefit for all sentient beings. May I attain enlightenment to be able to be fully qualified to benefit all sentient beings." So in this manner then what you need to do is to bring forth the thought of truly wishing for the attainment of enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings; have heartfelt feelings to liberate sentient beings from suffering and the causes of suffering, and bring them into happiness and the causes of happiness.    **The Fourth Cause: Prayer**  And now the fourth of the things that will bring you into the pure land of Amitabha the Buddha of infinite light, is pure prayer. Now of course there are prayers related to desiring this particular rebirth, but here we're talking about having noble and altruistic prayers. So if in your prayers and your thoughts and aspirations you were to generate strong feelings towards the ability to be a Bodhisattva, to be able to receive the inspirations of Amitabha, to attain the rebirth in his land, to be able to become more deeply moved in your practice, then all of these become the causes. Then there will be no doubt that you will attain entry into the pure land of Amitabha to pursue your spiritual development to enlightenment.  In regards to this though, we have to have the confidence that this will be brought about by developing these four causes. Having confidence, being free of doubt as to the activities we’re involved with then, we will definitely bring about the ability for us to be in the pure land of Amitabha. Now the analogy for this of course is very much like, if you want to go to a different country you have to have a few things in place to be able to accomplish it. You need a passport, you need a visa, you need an airplane ticket and you need money. If you have those four things then you can get to that foreign country without any trouble. If any one of those is missing then – you don’t have a passport – you’ll never get to that other country. So in the same way, if you get these four causes in place for the rebirth into Amitabha’s pure land, you’ll get there. If you don’t get them in place, you won’t get there. But of course in going to this foreign land you don’t need intoxicants with you, it’s not like on the airplane.  So in regards to being able to go to the pure land, of course it’s not that complicated. It’s not half as complicated as going to a foreign country for example. You have to have faith in the heart, you have to work at purifying the negativities and accomplishing virtuous actions. Then of course you have to have the sense of altruism in regards to wanting to bring about the benefit of all sentient beings. And then you actually even have to just offer prayers. "For the benefit of all sentient beings may enlightenment come about. May the development of sentient beings come about. May virtues be increased, may non-virtues be diminished for all the sentient beings of the universe." So with those four in place then you have no problem whatsoever taking rebirth in the pure land of Amitabha. These are not complicated things to bring about as causes for you to get that rebirth. So I’d just like to again make sure again that there’s no questions that you have about anything.    **Questions and Answers**  **Rejoicing in the Merit of Animals**  Q: I was wondering if it would benefit or further if you rejoiced in the virtue of animals, trees, or mountains?  R: So in regards to animals, yes, you can definitely rejoice in the merit of what they do, and it’s said actually that animals in their own quaint way do accumulate positive activity and merit. For example in the time of the Buddha there was one fellow that came – now he didn’t come to the Buddha himself, he came to the two chief disciples of Buddha called Maudgalyayana and Shariputra – and he requested to become a monk. Both of these (Arhats) would look at the individual and they would look at their past lives looking for merit. And if they saw enough merit, so that the person on receiving ordination had the merit within them to be able to receive realizations, then they would bestow the ordination upon the individual. So both Maudgalyayana and Shariputra looked at this individual’s stream of consciousness and found no causes of merit in any of the rebirths. The person had been rather mundane and so they said, "Well there’s no cause for you to take ordination because nothing’s going to come of it. You have no merit, so don’t worry about ordination just try to be a virtuous person as a layman." And of course the man was very disheartened. So at this point then the Buddha interceded and said, "Maudgalyayana and Shariputra have limited psychic vision. They do not see the causes of merit. I will give you ordination." And so then Maudgalyayana and Shariputra requested to the Buddha, "Why do you see merit when we don’t?" And he said, "You don’t see far enough into that person’s stream of consciousness. I can see for many hundreds of thousands of years ago. Long long rebirths ago, in a previous age this man had been born as a pig. And in his rebirth as a pig he was on a farm quite close to a very large stupa (a stupa of course is a holy object). And so one day the pig was beside the stupa sort of grunting and walking around, and a dog came and bit at the pig. Then the pig was chased around the stupa. The pig ran very close to the side wall of the stupa and rubbed it clean. And so the pig ran in this way all the way around the stupa accumulating merit and cleaning the stupa." So on the basis of this positive action even as a pig, the Buddha said, "You have actually some cause of gaining liberation in this rebirth by that merit ripening for you in this rebirth." Therefore the Buddha gave the fellow ordination and the fellow received realizations. So anyway, in regards to the rejoicing you can rejoice in the merit of animals, and in this regard generate positive feelings for them.  **Mantras in Sanskrit**  Q: Rinpoche I was wondering if you could give a bit of an interpretation of the dharani, the life zung.  R: I don’t know the actual meaning of the mantra, sorry. I’m not up on my Sanskrit actually, and in regards to the mantra, it’s called the protection mantra for life by the Buddha Amitayus. And so the recitation of it has blessings because it was pronounced by the Buddha himself. And also I would say because it’s from the Buddha and because it’s blessed, it invokes blessings within the stream of consciousness of the individual. That’s the way I recite that mantra. Actually a lot of the blessings of mantra come from your conviction as to the power of that mantra. If you have faith in your heart already from other practices and you have a deep spiritual intention within yourself, the mantras merely facilitate you being able to bring about blessings on others. And so in that regards the key factor with recitation of mantras, although they are blessed within their own right, they do actually work by the empowerment you give them from your own feelings.  So I’d like us to do the sadhana if we’ve got no more questions.  I have not a lot more to say about doing the transference of consciousness. I’ve pretty much said it all. It basically now it's a thing that you practice and so in that regard we are going to do the recitations.  **\* \* \* Practice \* \* \***  **Bi-Monthly Tsok Offerings**  So anyway, we of course have met for the first time in this very beautiful temple which is in great part due to the kindness and inspiration of David and Jane. Because of their support, this opportunity has developed as a building. Of course to have a building, which is the opportunity to develop focus and practice spiritually, of course is a good start. With of course ourselves as the practitioners. In regards to that I was thinking that maybe at this point – of course the downstairs temple has not been greatly completed, but there is potential it will be as time passes – I would like to, starting at the end of this month or the beginning of the next month, to start doing what is called bi-monthly tsok offerings. And that would be for Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal – they’re called the dakini days also. And so every two weeks we would get together and do a practice, and I think that would be a good place to start. And so of course it should be in harmony with your own wishes. And so we will try to draw people together and try to do that as a bi-monthly program. (Thank you Rinpoche).  **Temple Work is Very Beneficial**  And so of course that we’re here in this temple is due to a lot of hard work and hardship, there’s definitely hardship. People have to put a lot of energy and time in. David and Jane of course principle, and Ron who’s been the manager/supervisor for it. And all of you in your own ways at various times have been supportive of this, and I really hope that you rejoice in this. Because if you think about it, places of spiritual practice are rare. They’re not sort of all over the place and easily available. They don’t happen often. So that there has been an environment within a place barren of spirituality; a spiritual centre developed is a place where we should all rejoice. In that regards then, rejoicing is to think that the Dharma, spirituality, is facilitated. And in this regards there are many great benefits for the people that do participate and actually then there are repercussions into the community. So although there has been hardship, I hope no-one ever gets despondent (thinking), "Oh this is too much work." Because actually in the long run, the bigger picture, it’s incredibly beneficial.  **Non-Sectarian Open-mindedness**  And of course what we should look at though, is will you want to bring the benefits to the community. And so we should think that if there are teachers that come of a non-sectarian nature – in the sense of people that are open minded – and whether in the Tibetan traditions, we have the Gelugpa, Sakyapa, Nyingmapa, and Kagyupa, if they would like to come here, then we should certainly invite and allow that to happen. Because what the objective is, is that we develop ourselves in our qualities, our good qualities. And so this is something where joy, friendship and relationship all develop. We want to be the implementers and supporters of that. Also, to say each individually what you’ve done is not easy to do, but definitely let’s say the total support, in whatever part you play is incredibly beneficial, so thank you. (Thank you Rinpoche).  So now we have the last opportunity to ask questions at least for this workshop, so are there any other questions please.  **Empowerment**  Q: Would you have Rinpoche talk about empowerment, what empowerment is please?  R: Initiation is something that basically starts the Dharma practice in regards to the Tantra or Vajrayana. So what you need is a teacher, qualified, holding lineage. Then the bestowing of the initiation within a mandala for the nature of that particular deity and such. Then an introduction and transmission are given to the student, who then receives that. And so its said that to bring the Vajrayana alive an initiation which is a transmission of the lineage is required.  **Rainbow Body**  Q: What’s the rainbow body?  R: Within the tradition of the Mahayana Buddhism and then also in the higher levels of practice, and certainly in the country of Tibet, we had many people that demonstrated this. If they, relying upon the meditation techniques and the particular yoga systems that they have – it is possible that if you gain the ultimate realization of the nature of reality, that at the time of death your body, if it’s left in state, will completely shrink and then dissolve and disappear. All that will be left is your fingernails, toenails and your hair. And that ability to do that is because your realization has allowed you to completely dissolve your body and take it with you. It’s turned into energy. That energy is the rainbow body.  My own personal experience is that at the time when the Chinese invaded Tibet, we had many of the very old teachers. And because of their being very old the Chinese didn’t really consider them to be people they needed to do something with, and throw them in prison or something, so they left them alone. And this one particular Drubchen (accomplished master) who was in a remote community, he was left alone. He was a very great master but he was not bothered by the Chinese military and such. So I personally - this was about 1962 I think - when he died his body shrank to the size of just one foot tall. I saw this with my own two eyes – that he had been able to make his energy that small.  As for the attainment of rainbow body, there are many biographies translated into English that you can read of many of the both male and female meditators who have completely dissolved their body into the light energy and to remove it. Now the reason that hair and fingernails are left behind is because they’re something without consciousness in them. For example, if you cut your fingernails or cut your hair it doesn’t hurt you or anything because it’s actually dead matter. It’s not live matter which your consciousness has pervaded. Anything that your conscious energy pervades, which is the rest of your body, if you’ve attained the state of attainment you can dissolve that part of your body, turning it into energy and light.  **Sending Energy from the Egg**  Q: A question about the meditation, when we’re doing the contemplation of the egg, the little egg at the heart, is it proper to contemplate the egg until spontaneously the thigle or the little energy goes up to…or is that the correct way to do that?  R: You focus on your mind as being inseparable from the radiant light egg, but you actually consciously think that you send little bits of your energy from that egg to join inseparably with the mind of Amitabha. You actually visualize doing that. You don’t wait for it to do it on it’s own, you do it. Make your mind think that.  Q: It was just happening automatically. Soon as I would focus on the egg the thigle would just go.  R: That’s good then don’t worry about it. Also of course we are beginners in the whole process. We haven’t been able to generate pervasive visualization technique. So therefore maybe we just want to focus on individual aspects. Sometimes just focus on Amitabha Buddha in the space above you. And really feel that he’s there. Develop a deep feeling of wanting to be with him and to be able to merge your consciousness with the consciousness of Amitabha. At other times then focus on your body, it’s arising in the aspect of Avalokiteshvara, one face, four arms, and just do that as something. Then at another point just focus on that central channel running up the centre of one’s body to the crown of one’s head. Then at another time just visualize the light egg. In this way becoming familiar with the various components, and just doing that, having a particular session focussed on the one aspect only. To have the whole thing arise at one time for us as beginners is a little complicated and may be difficult, but it can come.  **Misuse of Consciousness Transference**  Q: Is the egg sort of a milky white color?  R: Yeah, white. In India more than a thousand years ago, eleven hundred years ago, there was a particular lineage for this practice where if you were a very powerful meditator, you could eject your consciousness from your body. What they would do is if a person got very old, they would practice this particular one, and it was called transference of consciousness and possession of a body. So what you would do is when you got old and your body was getting very crippled, you would actually eject your consciousness from your body, and then you would find someone who was young and you would take their body over. And in that regards then, you would have a continuity of your being without ever losing consciousness, but just transferring from body to body. That particular lineage only lasted until a thousand years ago but it was broken and lost, and it has not been continued since.  There was a lot of malpractice with this particular technique though, and there’s quite a long story that goes along with it. There’s a book of people that were practicing this and the particular story goes along the lines that, there was a king and his minister who had this ability to practice and they also had two sons. Now the king was of a virtuous nature, but the minister and the two sons were of a very non-virtuous nature. I don’t really remember the story line properly, but it goes something to the effect of, the two boys were always hanging out together, they liked to gamble and smoke and basically led a very debauched life, and the minister managed to get himself very much in there. Now he then learned this technique of being able to possess another person’s body. So at one point then, the king, who was very virtuous and had the ability to astral project and run around, one time left his body vacant and took over the consciousness of a bird, and was flying around sort of checking things out in that manner. At that time then, the minister then left his body and took over the king’s body, took his own body and had it destroyed, and then basically the king was out of a body. Now he was just in a bird’s body. The minister who then was in the form of the king came back to the kingdom and did many bad things to the kingdom, threw people in prison, basically destroyed the Dharma because he didn’t like the Dharma and such like that. As for the king, the one that took over the bird’s body, he ended up teaching Dharma to many birds. Anyway it’s a big book and it’s got lots and lots of stories in it, and it’s all about people shifting bodies and consciousnesses and anyway this technique’s all gone now. All of the intrigues, the soap operas, ‘As the world turns’ wouldn’t even match it.  So also, the actual ongoing stories of the king, he had a lot of troubles of course being a king in a bird's body. But he did actually teach Dharma to many other birds and in that way affected the birds of that time and such. And there were lots of stories about some of the birds who were his disciples and what they did. Anyway there’s volumes of books which cover all of the various story lines that come out of this.  There’s a whole story there that the king, as a bird, was a fairly powerful bird. He met with a hawk – and of course the hawk likes to kill other birds and eat them – and so there was a whole Dharma discourse in this one section of the book about the hawk dialogue compared to the bird dialogue and such. The hawk didn’t benefit but there was a whole section in there about that. Anyway, other questions?  **The Ability to Dissolve Your Body**  Q: Rinpoche, if you’re successful with this practice, and at the time of your death you project yourself to Buddha Amitabha, does that mean your physical body dissolves, or do a lot of people go to the pure land without their body dissolving?  R: The attainment of your body being able to dissolve into light energy is if you have realization of Dzogchen or Mahamudra, the attainment of the nature of reality. If you have that power of consciousness then you can turn your body into energy and make it dissolve. If you haven’t got that realization you haven’t got the ability.  **What About the Physical Body Once Your Mind Has Gone?**  J: Now as for getting your mind out of your body, I just asked a question like what happens, what happens between you and your body. (Rinpoche) said that when you do this practice very aggressively you will actually get your mind out of your body, and at that point your body will die within a few minutes, it turns into a corpse. And then you basically don’t have to deal with it anymore, you’re out.  **Going Directly to the Pure Land**  Q: If you do the phowa practice and leave your body, do you not then go through the intermediate states of death, through the intermediate bardos? Do you go straight to the pure land?  R: If you do the phowa and are successful you go directly to the pure land of Amitabha, you do not go through an intermediate state.  Q: Good.  R: Thank you. Thank you Jhampha. We’ve spent lots of time, but it was good time. | | |