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*Vajrasattva Purification (Unedited)*  
Osel Shen Phen Ling, Missoula, MT  
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### *Introduction and Refuge*

...again about how we create it, and therefore the most important thing, I found, is how we purify it, you know, that's what we'll do tonight... So we'll do the refuge prayer, reminding ourselves why we're sitting here, to listen to Buddha's teachings, Buddha's marvelous methods, coming from the lineage of all the holy beings in Tibet, from His Holiness and our marvelous lamas who are these great practitioners, who are actual *knowledge holders* -- the name 'Tenzin' -- His Holiness' name- it means 'knowledge holder'. We need these knowledge holders. So, from the lineage of all these knowledge holders, we'll talk about these practices; these marvelous psychological techniques to help us transform our minds and develop our marvelous potential. Why do we want to do this? So, finally we can be of benefit to others and help suffering sentient beings.

(Refuge prayers chanted in Tibetan)

### *Reminder: Buddhism is a Doing Thing*

Okay. So just to remind ourselves about karma, okay -- we talked about it on the first day. We implied it -- whatever day it was -- the day before, Monday. So again I want to stress, you know -- we've got these words, all these words that sound like Buddhist religion and then we can so easy -- because we think of it as religion, we think of it as a belief system, and when it's a belief system, we think it's something we can't kind of penetrate and understand; you're supposed to believe in it... It's not like that, okay? It's really -- it's like if this were cooking class or tennis class, you need to learn techniques; the practical, real, do-able procedure. This is Buddha's entire point, you know -- that the practice of Buddhism isn't a *belief* thing; it's a *doing* thing. You put into practice these techniques -- and where you put them into practice is in your mind. That's where the workshop is, as Lama Zopa Rinpoche says.

So, given, you know, this fundamental law that Buddha says runs the universe -- no-one created it, it's a natural law, like botany, it just works. Like gravity, it just works. It doesn't get created. Natural law's a thing that just occurs -- and this is Buddha's real thing because he doesn't posit a Creator -- he says things don't need creating, you know. Minds function, minds act, minds do things and that's the meaning of karma.

### *Causes and Effects*

So things that minds do based upon neuroses, based upon ignorance, based upon delusions, you know, leave imprints in the mind that distort and harm that mind and will ripen in the future as suffering for that mind. This is found from Buddha's experience. And the positive things that minds do, based upon the virtuous states within it are what make that mind content and pleased and happy and will ripen in the future as the happiness in that mind. This is a natural law -- like you put rose seeds in the ground, you're going to get a rose bush --

guess what? You put a weed seed in the ground, you're going to get a weed. So, you put negative seeds in your mind, it'll manifest as suffering. You put positive seeds in your mind, it'll manifest as happiness. Given that we all want happiness and don't want suffering, then this is our main concern. We better learn the laws of botany, learn the laws of karma. It's very simple. It's very down-to-earth. It's very grounded. It's not mystical, and nothing to be afraid of, you know.

Because it's a doable, reasonable thing, then you can predict the results, and this is the part that's a big surprise to us. We know perfectly well, if you get the laws of botany down, you know very well -- we know -- the very nature of a law, once it's been established and you've proven it, then you know it's predictable. You know you do it every time, you're going to get the same thing every time. You know, if you know how to make a cup of tea, you're not surprised when you get a cup of tea every time. It's not like, 'Wow, another cup of tea came...I'm amazed! It worked.' Once you know laws, you can relax. It's how come we have such a brilliant universe. It's how come we get computers and gardens -- because we know the laws. It's something we really understand, you know.

### *We're the Boss*

But when it comes to religion, we lose any common sense. We think it's all to do with mystique, and this, and faith, and cross your fingers and hope for the best, and no-one knows and then we live in total fear. It's just superstition. It's so shocking to hear what Buddha's saying; it's so unusual for us, because the only religion we've known, and I'm not criticizing now, is the religion of creators -- and of course, it's rude to stick your nose in God's job. Back off, please. Do what God says. That's the creator religion, but that's not the Buddhist one. Buddha's not demanding we do what he says; that would be very rude of him. He's simply pointing out from his own experience what works, and if you have any interest in this, you check up on what he says and give it a go. That's the approach, I tell you. It's up to us; we're the boss, not Buddha. It's so important to remember this. We thank him; he's a useful guide, you know. And so what he's saying is, we can learn the laws of the universe. Not just a few philosophers can learn it -- everyone of us needs to, because that's what practice is, is applying those laws; and the fundamental law that runs everything is called karma. It's called cause and effect. We understand it, like I said, when it comes to the physical world -- we get this. We know, once you know the law of botany, we know you can predict the results -- it's very reasonable, no-one's surprised. So, the same with karma. And this is a shock to us.

What karma is, is knowing the laws of what seeds to plant in your mind so that in the future you'll get happiness and what seeds to plant in your mind so that you, you know, get suffering. So, logically, we don't want suffering and we do want happiness, we better learn the laws of botany, it's very simple -- so simple it's a joke, you know. In the beginning, of course, we've got to have some confidence in it, based on one's research on Buddha, research of the lamas who embody Buddha's teachings, but eventually from your own experience you start to find it out, you know...

### *Plant the Right Seeds and Do the Weeding*

8:06

So, it's really do-able and practical. Nothing mysterious. Therefore fear would be alleviated. You know, if you go and do your garden if you know botany, you don't live in fear and panic of whether or not a rose will come; you know you put the seed in the ground, it's a rose seed, you give it the nourishment, you wait for a time, you put a bit of sunshine on it and you know a rose will come -- it's not surprising. You don't get a big shock, you know. You predict it; and you know how long it'll take, so you just relax. Karma's like this, surprisingly. We're so used to believing no-one knows what's going to happen, we think that's scientific. 'Oh, well, no-one knows,' we'll say -- as a scientific truth. Buddha disagrees and says you can work it all out, you know. Okay, it takes time... the laws are quite complex; but it's all there in the teachings for us to check if we want.

So, okay...as Lama Yeshe says, 'We create suffering -- we create negativity with our mind, then we can change it by creating positivity with our mind. They call it 'purification' which sounds a bit abstract; it just means, you know, 'doing your weeding', that's all...got to do the weeding and grow the flowers. That's it.

### *The Four Ways in Which Karma Ripens; #1 -- Our Human Life*

9:41

So like I said, there are four, we said on Sunday, there are four ways in which our karma ripens. You can talk about it in this way -- four ways. If we look at our life now, we can divide it into four different results. One is the very human life that we have -- that's the result of what they call the main or the 'throwing' karma. In fact, in our case -- being human -- we can deduce it was a very, very powerful practice of morality. And morality, bare-bones morality, is the first level of practice which is the mere refraining from harming others, in particular not killing, you know, refraining from harming -- especially not killing. But not only that; it's not enough, as Lama Zopa says, just being a good person. The time is so degenerate, there's just not enough 'oomph' in those karmic seeds...so he says it's most likely that we've practiced that morality in the context of a spiritual path and not only that, but in the context of keeping vows of morality -- which we can discuss -- in our past life.

So, we built up a lot of habit in the mind. We programmed our mind with morality. And then we died peacefully, such that the karmic seed that ripened at the time of our death was a very potent morality karmic seed nourished by all the other virtue that then programmed our mind on autopilot where it left the body to run immediately -- or at some point -- to our own present mother's human womb. This is the first way our karma ripened. We got a human life. And really that should blow our minds, if we think about it from the Buddhist point of view. You now, because we have this grasping at self -- at the self, because we have this deeply ingrained misconception in the mind called 'ignorance', that clings absolutely without question to everything being self-existent, and then since because we only live at the gross level of our mind and we don't have any memory, and then we get born to these parents and we're told that our mummy made us and our daddy made us or that God made us so we just believe it all; we

never question this -- we maybe question the one about God, but we certainly don't question the fact that our parents made us; that's an absolute truth for everybody in the world. Even if you're Buddhist, you still blame your parents if you're depressed, you know. It's really too much. The Buddha would say it's got nothing to do with your parents -- your depression's yours. Your anger's yours. You can't blame Hitler's little old Austrian housewife mummy for creating a maniac... Don't be ridiculous -- it's Hitler's own past stuff. Our parents do not create us. They give us a body -- how kind! The rest is ours.

So this is the second way our karma ripens. You get the human life -- the result of your hard work. I mean, if we stopped taking this life for granted, and started to analyze Buddha's teachings and look into karma, and reminded ourselves of this, it would blow our minds. But we take our lives for granted. This is what `believing in self-existence does. We're like as thick as a post, you know. We just accept the status quo, without question. We sink into kind of this 'sleep' mode, taking things for granted.

## **#2- Our Tendencies**

**12:56**

The second way the karma ripens is all the tendencies inside your mind. They're yours, too; they're just a bunch of habits, basically. Very simple. Whether you're good at music or good at killing, or good at lying or good at generosity or good at piano or good at maths; it's just a bunch of habits -- it's your habits from your past practice. We come fully programmed into this life from the first second of conception with our habits. They're ours, not our parents'. You might share some with your parents; you came together -- that's how come. But they're your habits, baby... you do them.

## **#3- Our Experiences**

**13:30**

The third one is all the stuff that happens *to* us; all our experiences, how people see us. If they don't believe our word it's because of our past lying. If they think we're very beautiful, it's because of our past patience. If they pay their bills, it's because of our past not stealing. If they're generous to us, it's because of our past generosity. If people harm us, it's because we harmed them before. If people are kind to us, it's because we were kind to them before. *Everything*, as Lama Zopa puts it, is our own karmic appearance. Everything. Without exception. Everything. Not just karma 'happens' sometimes. It's not like as if botany applies in gardens just sometimes. By definition, a garden is the product of the law of cause and effect called botany; by definition a life is the product of the law of cause and effect called karma. Everything in your life is your garden.

## **#4- Our Environment**

**14:25**

And the fourth one is called 'environmental' karma. Even the way the external environment impacts upon us -- whether it harms us or helps us, nourishes us or damages us, whether we live in a disgusting smelly place or a lovely, sweet place...if you have volcanoes, if you have, you know, pleasant weather, harmful

weather, whatever -- environmental karma. The entire -- all the environmental way we experience the world; all the way we experience sentient beings and how they treat us and see us and love us and hate us; all our own tendencies and even our humanness -- my goodness, this is the result of our past work; so we are *literally* our own creators. Not kidding. This is Buddha's view. It's kind of tasty. It's kind of powerful. It's kind of outrageous. It's kind of radical.

So, we're the boss. We did it. We're in charge. No one else to blame. Yes -- you are the blame -- and we love to use that word because it comes -- thinks of the negative. But I like to say, 'Yes, you are the blame -- for all the good things that happen to you, you're the blame. You did it. Yes.' You are the blame for all the good things that happen to you, for all your goodness, and your morality, and the people who are good to you in your life and your kindness and the good things that happen. You are the blame. You did it. So we can own the good stuff - - easy to own the bad stuff. Makes you courageous.

So, you take stock of this garden -- you look at your life, and you see the crummy things that happen. You see the people who lie to you. You see the people who harm you. You see the people who don't pay their bills. You see the bad things that happen to you and you go, 'Do I like this?' and you go, 'No, I don't.' And then you go, 'I wonder what caused it...' and then you go, 'Well, it must have been my past actions similar to this. Oh, drat,' you go. 'What can I do about it?' you go. And then you go, 'Well, I'd better stop doing it, hadn't I, if I don't want it in the future.'

It's so practical! It's a half a dozen thoughts, but look at the dramas we experience when things go wrong -- shouting and yelling and depressed and angry and blaming people and cursing and fear and all the drama. We're like kicking and screaming and maniac children, refusing to accept the simple reality that 'This is my life, I did it, what can I do to change it?' All the fuss and bother we go on about. We're ridiculous. We're like a bunch of maniacs, you know.

### *Samsara as Suffering*

#### **16:36**

So first of all -- two levels of practice. In the Second Noble Truth, there are two causes of suffering, Buddha says. He neatly narrows it down to two. The first one is 'there is suffering'. That's the 'Suffering of Suffering', which is in-your-face suffering. All the bad things that happen: that's the 'Suffering of Suffering'. Then there's the second kind of suffering which is called the 'Suffering of Change'. Now this is a bit depressing, because we call it 'happiness'. Buddha calls it suffering. It's a sneaky, honey-covered razor blade called 'getting what attachment wants'; which is a sneaky, you know, like I said, a honey-covered razor blade. It looks to us like happiness, but it's just the junkie getting the fix. It's actually fraught with suffering. The third kind of suffering, even more subtle -- we don't even give it a name in our culture, or even in our religions -- is being born in the first place with this body, which is the body of a junkie in a world constructed of junk, and to survive you need to ingest it. That's the third level of suffering. They call it 'All-Pervasive Suffering', something like this. So, we're locked in suffering -- the world is in the nature of suffering, the Buddha says.

And why all this? Well, it's got causes -- that's the Second Noble Truth. And guess what? There're two main causes, and both are us. It's scary -- we think it's everybody else. And there are two. One is the past karma, the past action, that left the seed in your mind when you did the negative action which is now ripening as your suffering. And the second cause, and actually they both subsume down to this one, is the delusions in the mind that cause you to do the negative action in the first place, which then again manifests when you punch me in the nose and I say, 'How dare you,' and I punch you right back, and the ball keeps rolling.

### *Two Levels of Practice*

**19:23**

So, in relation to these two causes of suffering, there are two main levels of practice. And as Lama Zopa Rinpoche says, the first one, the most immediate, the most urgent is not to respond in a neurotic way to the negative things that ripen, which are the fruit of our past negative action. So you're owning it as yours, you do everything in your power to not continue it. You do everything in your power to avoid harming the person back, to watch your mind like a hawk and not have more negativity in the mind. The blame, the resentment the anger, the 'not fair!', the 'poor me'. That's your first immediate level. Watch your mind like a hawk. Watch your body and speech like a hawk every second. You avoid at least creating more negative karma in relation to the situations of daily life.

The second one is where you now have to take care of the karma you've already created in the past, whose seeds are lying in your mind latent, waiting for the conditions to ripen as your suffering. They haven't ripened yet; so you've got to get ahead of the game, you've got to pull them out, or at the very least weaken them. And that's what purification is.

This is daily practice.

### *The Force of Our Past Habits*

**20:19**

So it's a tough one, the one of the first level -- before we get into purification -- is a really tough level, because the tragedy of karma is, we're brainwashed, we're completely conditioned, we're completely habituated, we're completely brainwashed by our own past actions. We are propelled by the force of our past habits. Now, when it comes to good things, aren't we fortunate? For example, a friend of mine taking the lice out of her little three year old son's head, and the little boy cries, 'Mummy, Mummy, leave them alone, don't hurt them. It's their home.' The little boy is full of compassion. He's three. She hasn't taught him this...so *he* is propelled by the force of *his* past karma, which is his compassion. How fortunate that spontaneously compassion arises in his three year old mind and he cries with compassion for the lice in his own head. So how marvelous! Programming is good when it's virtuous karma. How fortunate!

Mozart, the time his mother gives him a piano at the age of six; off he goes writing his sonatas. We can deduce that he's programmed with music. If, you know, I popped out my mother's womb shouting and kicking; I was programmed with anger. So, it's a tough one when the programming is negative,

because everything appears to you this way; it feels so spontaneous that you believe it's totally right. It appears to you as good; this is how karma and attachment work together.

So for example -- an example I use, a friend of mine, another mother of a child -- she said when her little boy first saw the river -- first saw the water -- he ran like a magnet to the fishing. She hated fishing. She never taught him this. He saw fishing and he ran like a magnet. Why? Because he had the karma to kill. So that -- the trouble is, there he's got the imprint, he's been in the lower realms in the past, he's finished that karma, but the tragedy is, he didn't purify all aspects of it. He's still got the residual result, which in this life is the habit to keep killing. The habit is very strong. The three year old boy with compassion, he didn't have to think about it; it just spontaneously came because he'd practiced it in the past. So this little boy, he just had practiced killing in the past. He saw the river, attachment is instantly activated -- attachment is your rose-colored spectacles -- instantly it was activated, you run like a magnet, the thing you run like a magnet to is a thing that looks good to you; no -- the thing you've done before, then you put your attachment glasses on instantaneously so it will look good to you, it will therefore trigger a good feeling, therefore logically you assume, 'Oh, this must be good. I get a good feeling.' So then he pursued it. He followed the fishing. He became a professional fisherman.

She said she went fishing with him one time, to please her boy. And she found it unbearable. All she could see was suffering fish. All she could see was the little fish who was clearly showing by their body language that -- poor things -- they would rather be in the water, please! The poor things can't shout; they haven't got a voice. Their poor little eyes can't show much; the best they can do is wriggle their body, isn't it? I mean, if he had the addiction -- if he had the attachment to killing pigs, you'd know the pigs were unhappy -- they'd squeal most uncomfortably. Who'd want to go pig shooting? Nobody. We go fishing because it's quiet; they die peacefully, poor things -- for us peaceful, they don't make a noise.

So he can't see suffering. All his life he's killed fish; he's attached to it. He's addicted to it. Every single day going out-- and the feeling of feeling good. This wonderful feeling -- it's so good -- comes from attachment to something. So, because the world accepts fishing, no-one's going to argue with him. If he was attached to killing poodles, he would've been in trouble... keep it secret, snuck out at night... No -- fishing is easy going in the world. Everyone does it so no -- one can point it out to him. So he never questioned that it was good. But his mother, having no attachment to fishing, all she can see, nakedly, is the suffering of the fish. He literally couldn't see it, and this is the proof that we make up our own stories based upon what's in our minds. So, because he had a habit to kill and attachment to it, then his rose-colored spectacles caused it to look good. He couldn't see the suffering. Literally. He was a lovely human being, she said, a kind, lovely, generous man. But he was blinded; and that's what attachment causes -- so sneaky. It blinds us from seeing the truth. She saw suffering; he couldn't see it. He'd been doing it for years, killed hundreds of thousands of little fishies. He felt blissful. This is the tragedy of habit.

## *The Desire Realm*

25:01

So we are propelled by the force of our past habit. And that conjoined to the attachment -- you're lost. Completely lost. That's why it is so hard to change -- because we are junkies for pleasure. We are junkies for pleasure. That's this human realm. Buddha calls it a 'desire realm'. So that means we are junkies for pleasure; we are born with these bodies that crave their objects. The moment we get the object, that's what we mean by happiness. If we feel happy, then we logically deduce the action we did must be good. The same with the torturer -- I remember reading about one of those guys years ago -- you know, a multi-murderer and a torturer. He said, from the time he could remember, he was compelled to kill -- to torture and kill creatures, like, you know, little ants and animals. And then of course as he got older, he graduated to humans. He intellectually knew it was wrong; because he could see the world didn't approve, but you know, he had to keep it secret, of course...but he was totally addicted to it. That's programming from karma. We think in the west, 'Oh, he's just this devil, he's an evil person.' Just send him to hell and be quiet, you know. But the logical reason why he did it, 'cause his past killing, no doubt as being an animal, torturing -- look at animals, they torture each other all the time. Constant. They're just addicted to torture. Being tortured and torturing -- that's what animals do. Worst, most intense suffering. This guy -- karmic imprint, you know, of torture. And what happened? He got pleasure from it. That's why -- habit meets attachment equals pleasure. And the logic is 'it must be good, because it gives me a good feeling.' Of course, the world doesn't agree, so he's going to keep it quiet. There's always this conflict in his mind. But he is addicted to the pleasure. Look at our pathetic little habits, you know. Overeating, smoking, a bit junkies for sex, maybe... look how hard it is to get past our old habits, and we've got pathetic little habits, you know. Imagine if you got born with the habit to torture! What a terrible suffering -- can you imagine? Or just to even kill fish and not realize it's suffering, not realize it's negative because it feels good. This is why it's tricky.

This is why we have to have really logical, intelligent minds to have a little basis for what is good and what is not, and then judge our experiences according to it. And then struggle to change our old habits. It's a tough job, because we are propelled by our habits. We're just like on autopilot, you know. We think we make choices. We think we're intelligent. We're not. We're just junkies for habits, you know, craving to get good feelings. Stuff the food in, whatever we do. So we have to look into our minds carefully, and then struggle to change the habits. And it is a struggle, we all know that. So that's the immediate one, the here and now, dealing with what arises every second. This other one -- the purification -- is trying to deal with the seeds that haven't even manifested yet, that one can see no evidence of. This is called purification. And as Lama Zopa says, we are insane not to do this practice every day. So, we're going to talk about it tonight; if we get a chance we might just go through it, and at least you can take the copy -- there's some copies printed, isn't there? So we don't have them now, that's okay, we won't need them now, I'll just lead you through the meditation, but you can have

those to take home with you and go through them, or if you need the PDF on your computer, I'll just ask Bob to send it to you. He'll email it to you.

### *Purification as Psychological Process – the 'Four Rs'*

29:14

So, like all this work in Buddhism, this process of purification is practical, it's psychological. So a really easy way to remember is -- and I like this one -- is to call it the 'Four Rs'. There's different orders, you know, but I like this particular order. The first one is 'regret', the second one is 'reliance', the third one 'the remedy'. The fourth one -- 'resolve', or different words you can use there; and that's where you determine to make changes.

#### *Regret*

So the first one is acknowledging, you've got to acknowledge, you know, if you've got a sickness, you've got to recognize what it is, don't you? As long as you live in denial of the sickness, there's nothing you can do; you can't go further. You've got to first acknowledge there's a problem. And you've got to be sick of it, fed up with it. And then you've got to want to change it. And then you use the practice as a medicine to try and prevent it, to try and purify it and heal it; and then you have to make a determination not to do it again, 'cause you don't want the same sickness.

It's pretty reasonable. You've first got to acknowledge you've got cancer, and regret all that smoking. 'I'm sick of this suffering. This is crazy, I don't want this.' Then you do practices, you know, to purify it. Then you determine never to do it again. This is reasonable; it's practical, it's common sense.

So, the good analogy to use here -- because it's easy enough when it comes to smoking and overeating and all the usual things that we do; but when it comes to our moral stuff, we get -- we make this other whole set of rules and we get all guilty and ashamed and neurotic and all this thing, you know; we're ridiculous. Completely ridiculous. We're like children. But the same things apply and that's why it's a good analogy the lamas use and I like to use this one: this is the analogy of having taken poison.

So we know perfectly well, if you announce, you know, 'Robina! There's poison in your dinner, that you just ate!' Your instantaneous response, you know, would be, 'Oh! Bloody hell, what a fool!' Well, we'd say that in Australia; 'bloody hell' we'll say; 'What an idiot,' we'll say, then we'll instantly say, 'Quick! Where's the doctor?'

Now, we don't do that. We're dumb, when it comes to doing things like getting angry and killing and lying and stealing and getting depressed and harming others and all the rest of the rubbish we do. Not to mention the torturing and everything, if we're a torturer. We'll go, you know -- what we do now is -- if we eat the poison -- one of our first responses is, 'Who put poison in my dinner?' I'm going to try and find the person to blame, and then you go and try to work out who to sue, because they put poison in your dinner. Meanwhile, you're dying. But all your thoughts are for blaming. How dumb can you get? I'm happy to

blame a person, but meanwhile, take care of yourself first, please... So blame is pretty useless, which is our typical mode.

Another typical mode is guilt -- 'Oh, I ate poison. Oh, I'm such a bad person. I ate poison.' Every day, you're getting sicker and sicker... 'Oh, I'm such a bad person, I ate poison.' We love to live in this one. Completely useless. Complete waste of time. Totally impotent. It's the same as blame, but you're the person you're blaming. One is anger, one is self-blame. They're the same problem. Totally useless.

The third one, even more ridiculous -- and we love this one --

'Robina! There's poison in your dinner!'

'There is not!'

We call it living in denial. And why it's reasonable, you know, is because our philosophy in the world *is* blame. It *is* to do with whose fault is it. And simply because we can't bear -- we don't think we can change, so we therefore can't bear to take responsibility. We don't know what to do with it. I mean I can see working with people in prison, they were just on the edge of their seats when they heard about purification -- because there they are: murderers, old gangsters, thieves, whatever; living with the incredible burden of being a bad person -- 'I'll go to hell, I can't change...' They heard there were practices they could do, because they weren't innately bad; yes, there's no karma you can't purify. They just loved it. 'Wow, you mean I can change? Incredible'

### ***Blame and Guilt***

So we've got to be accountable. And so, this whole process is based upon the understanding of karma. It's based completely on the recognition that you don't want suffering. This first step is all about yourself. So, we have guilt, now, which beats ourselves up. 'I'm just a bad person.' And that is just the natural one that we run to. Blame or guilt, we run to these spontaneously because they are a natural response to having ego-grasping, of having this ignorance that clings to the self-existent 'me'. It's this dualistic state of mind that naturally blames others, or naturally blames yourself. And we have to really conquer that. We have to argue with that wrong view. And this is the view of accountability. This is the view of karma -- cause and effect. That's why it's an excellent way to think about in order to loosen the grip of ego-grasping. In other words, it's one of the first examples of dependent arising. Karma. The first example, remember, of dependent arising is cause and effect -- that things exist in dependence upon causes and conditions. Well, karma is a perfect example of that, the first level of dependent arising. Which is a perfect way to think about in order to realize emptiness. It loosens the grip of this frozen, concrete, set-in-stone 'me'. Either 'poor me' -- or --it's usually the 'poor me' that bad things happen to -- or 'I'm a bad person.' So we've got to really argue with that instinctive feeling which is very mistaken. And that's why His Holiness -- so sweetly, when he was asked one time -- what's the difference between guilt and regret. It was such a sweet answer, but quite profound. He said: 'Guilt -- you look in the past and you go, 'I did this and I did that and I did this,' and then you go, 'and I'm a bad person.' That's the response. They come together for our mind right now and we don't see them as a different thought. We assume that if I've done bad things, I must be

a bad person. That's how we think. That second thought is the view of ego, the view of ego-grasping, that over-exaggerates the badness, and paints the entirety of myself with that brush.

The same with blame. 'You are a bad person. You did this and you did this and you did this and you're a bad person.' This is what delusion does. It exaggerates. And it's just not accurate. Forget being not morally right -- it's just not accurate. It's an exaggeration. It isn't accurate to conclude because you've killed and lied and stole, you're a bad person. You're not. That's mistaken. Your actions are bad, no problem with that. That's clear. That's more precise. Meanwhile, anyway, simply speaking, as His Holiness says, 'Regret -- you say the same thing. You say, 'I did this in the past, and I did this, and I did this...' but you're second thought -- and we have to cultivate this consciously -- it doesn't come naturally -- the second thought is different. So instead of saying, '...and I'm a bad person,' you then say instead: '...and what can I do about it?' You change the thought. We have to cultivate that view. So, the added part about what regret is, therefore, is actually it's like -- the simplest way to put it in our words -- it's like compassion for yourself. Like the poison -- the reason you say, 'Oh my God, what an idiot! Quick, where's the doctor?' -- it's obvious. You don't have to state it. You know that poison will cause you suffering, and you know you don't want suffering. Therefore you go, 'Oh, what an idiot! Where's the doctor?' Not, 'Oh, aren't I bad, I ate poison,' and you stay stuck in it. It's just plain idiocy, isn't it? So, we have to cultivate this view.

### *We Have to Say the Words*

**37:07**

That's why in this first step, when we do it, we have to say the words. You know, you sit down at the end of the day, and you check up, what you've done that day to harm others with your body and speech. And maybe we don't do that much -- but you know, we do some things...you know, you bad-mouth your husband, you talked about your girlfriend behind her back, you know... you took the pencil at work and you never returned it. I mean, maybe you're not going around torturing and killing too many people, but whatever it is, you've got to acknowledge it. 'I did do this and this...' and then you check the main things in this life -- maybe you had an abortion, maybe you went fishing, maybe you're a hunter... you acknowledge it. And you regret it. And this is regret; regret is this whole attitude that has: one -- acknowledges that you did it, two -- 'I regret this. Why? You've got to say it. 'Because you know what? I don't want the suffering that will come from that if I leave that seed in my mind.' Because if I do leave that seed in my mind -- that poison -- it will ripen as my suffering and --hey! -- I do not want suffering.' So you've got to speak this out, because this attitude does not come naturally. Even if we say the word regret, it still feels like guilt. So, we have to spell it out to make it a new thought. It's a really crucial point, I tell you. It's not enough just to say, 'Oh, I regret killing and lying and stealing.' It feels like guilt, so you've got to change the words. 'I regret this. I regret stealing that pencil, 'cause I don't want to have -- you know, the simple thing about karma is, everything you do, you leave a seed in your mind that can ripen as that experience for yourself in the future. Even just this -- you know you don't want -- you just have to think; do I like being stolen from? Nope. What causes people to

steal from me? I must have stolen from them. So if I've just stolen a pencil, then I'll get stolen from in the future. I don't want that. It's just logic; you've got to think it through, if you apply the law of karma, you know...and that's your choice, you don't have to. This is Buddha's view, that's all.

So you've got to be logical. Think it through. Make it real for you, not just some religious feeling. Not some weird, guilty feeling. That's useless. It's practical -- I regret having done this because I don't want to be stolen from, I don't want suffering, I'm sick of it. Yet again I've shot my mouth off -- shouted at people. I'm sick of this habit...first of all, too, you can even right now see the suffering and the hurt it causes you, the pain of that anger, you're feeling all caught up in it and fed up with it and you're so sick of it. You've got to feel that pain and be fed up with it. 'I'm sick of this suffering... I'm sick of this boring habit.' And we're just talking here of the habits that we do that harm others; we're not looking at just our own problems yet. We're looking at the actions of our body and speech first -- what we do to harm others first -- killing, lying, stealing, bad-mouthing; there's only so many names for them. You regret them. Remember the things, your old habits in this life -- you know, maybe you're addicted to sex and you harm people with your sexual attachment; but you look at the suffering you're causing yourself... And this is the key point again; this is the key point here.

### *The Buddha's View of Morality*

**40:42**

You see, this is a very interesting point, let's look at this a bit more -- Buddha's view of what morality is. It's a really important point to think about. The usual view we have about morality, which is why we're like children and resisting it mightily, is because we think it comes from somebody on high forcing it upon us: either God or our mother or the judge or the police, you know. We think it's done to us. It isn't like that, not for Buddha. Buddha -- you know, like it's true -- if I'm a Christian, and I asked a Catholic priest this -- I said, 'What defines something as a sin?' He said, 'It's going against the will of God.' That is what defines a sin: something you do that is against the will of God. Now, that's reasonable if God is the creator, and that's reasonable if you are a Christian. That's appropriate. That's correct. But that's not the definition here. Completely different. Going against Buddha's views is not what defines something as negative. It's got nothing to do with it.

That's like saying, 'Why is smoking bad? Oh, because my doctor told me.' Excuse me, that's absurd. Your doctor's merely a messenger. The reason smoking's bad is 'cause it'll hurt you, dear. Well, why is killing a bad action? What defines it as bad is really simple; it's because it harms another. Buddha says this is a conventional truth that you can prove quite quickly. You just do your market research on this world, in this room and you ask around, 'Do you like getting killed, stolen from, lied to, kicked in the teeth?' Everybody will say 'no'. So we can deduce logically that a negative action is one that harms another, because you've just proven it by agreeing we don't like it. That's what makes it negative, people! Not somebody on high, it's not set in stone...it is not, in other words, self-existent. It is a dependent arising. It's empty, as well. That's what it means.

That's Buddha's view; it's a natural law. So, what a negative action is, is one that harms another. But in this very first stage of practice where you regret doing actions that harm others, the reason first -- you have to hear this point -- the reason here in 'Regret' that you regret it is not for the sake of others; it's for *your* sake. So, a negative action is defined as an action that harms another; but at this first step, you regret it because -- guess what -- your doing it programs your mind to keep doing it and to have it done to you, not to mention being born in the lower realms. So, you regret it because *you* don't want the suffering. This is a crucial point. We've got to understand this, not just be vague about it. 'Oh I do my Vajrasattva practice, oh I regret lying killing...' We don't even give it thought, you know, we just wishy-washy gloss over it.

So a negative action is defined as one that harms another, but at this first stage -- and this is the very meaning of the first level of practice in Buddhism -- in the first scope of practice, junior school, I like to call it -- (His Holiness uses that as well. I thought -- that's good; His Holiness agrees with *me*.) He uses -- this time he said it's like the education system...and it's true! In Tibetan medieval language they call it the first 'scope' of practice; we call it 'junior school', you know. So junior school level of practice is, you're controlling your body and your speech. So, the reason you will regret killing and lying and stealing and bad-mouthing -- and there's not that many actions you do with your body and speech that harm others, sexual misconduct, lying, killing, stealing, you know, shouting at people, harsh speech, talking behind backs; there's only so many... you can think of them easily enough, and you regret them. Cause, you know -- and you say it -- 'You know what, I'm sick of this suffering, I'm sick of the pain it causes me right now and I do not want the karmic fruits of this in the future. No way!'

Then it makes it very real for you, because it's about yourself. Don't feel bad about this. You need to -- don't feel guilty, like I should just be having compassion. Compassion's 'university', people! You've got to recognize your own suffering before you recognize the suffering of others. You've got to be sick of your own suffering -- this is what renunciation *is* -- *you're sick of your own suffering*. That's why you've got to contemplate what these ridiculous things that we do, do to *ourselves*. Don't gloss over this step, it's extremely important.

So, you regret the things -- you remember the things, today, yesterday, this life -- the things you've done with your body and speech to harm others. That's it. And you regret -- and you say, 'I regret this from the depths of my heart because you know what, I'm sick of suffering and I don't want all this misery any more. I don't want to keep feeling this way and I don't want the karmic results for me.' It's genuine, then and you can say this 'cause you know it's true. You know you don't want to be killed, lied to, bad-mouthed, kicked in the teeth, stolen from; you know that. Well then, regret having done it yourself, 'cause that is the cause.

Then, of course you can think of -- anything in this life, whatever, if it makes sense to you, the idea of karma, you can say, '...and I regret anything I have ever done, since beginningless time to any sentient being.' And if Buddha is right in asserting, as he does, that we've had beginningless lives, that we've had countless lives as animals, and that mightn't be the most suffering life, but that's

where we do the most harm; animals just in their nature harm and get harmed. Look at one whale; opens its mouth for one mouthful of one breakfast on one day and forty million creatures go in his mouth! And you get guilty cause you killed one person! Get some perspective, please... That's a lot of sentient beings. So they live in a killing environment; they live on killing, animals. So, the harm we've done to sentient beings as animals is inconceivable in comparison to what we've done as humans.

So if our minds are beginningless and we've had these lives we've done countless things and that means those karmic seeds are on our minds *now*. So, you better regret them, cause you know you don't want that suffering again, hell! 'I regret anything I've ever done to any sentient being since beginningless time.' *Regret the lot!* Because I do not want suffering -- we've got to add that thought. 'Because I am sick of suffering. Because I do not want suffering.' You've got to say that. That's what makes it real, and not just some nice religious feeling. Not just guilt. That's regret.

And then of course, if you've taken vows, lay person's vows -- pratimoksha vows in other words -- vows of individual liberation, pratimoksha -- the vows you take for junior school and high school -- if you've broken those, then you deeply regret having broken those. If you've taken bodhisattva vows, then you deeply regret having broken your bodhisattva vows. If you've taken tantric vows, you deeply regret having broken your tantric vows, because these are lifelong vows. So you regret these, hugely, because you don't want the suffering.

### *Refuge -- Relying on Buddha as the Doctor* 47:43

Then, you've covered everything now, okay. Now you think, 'Well, good! Whom can I turn to? Where's the doctor, please?' So you turn to Mr. Buddha. He's our doctor. Second step: Reliance. Let's do two parts: where you rely upon the Buddha; that's called 'Refuge'. So what does that mean? Let's look at this again, carefully. If I'm a Christian, I would rely upon God, because he's my creator. So how I get purified is by requesting him to forgive me. Well, Buddha will forgive you; he's a nice guy, I promise. But it's got nothing to do with purification. Nothing. It's nice to be forgiven, but it's not the point. It is not the discussion. Quite different.

So we rely on Buddha as if he were the doctor -- he's got the methods; he's got the medicine. So, 'Thank goodness I've got a decent doctor,' you think. And you do a little prayer, you visualize Vajrasattva -- the particular practice here is we're going to be doing -- mentioning -- and the one that all the lamas praise; this particular manifestation of the Buddha in the bodhisattva aspect called 'Vajrasattva'. He's like the main Buddha. The main Buddha in the sutra teachings and all the regular teachings is Shakyamuni, the monk, you know. And that's actually the manifestation of that level of practice, junior school and high school. The manifestation of completely subdued body, speech and mind. That is what the monk is a manifestation of: that level of practice. In the bodhisattva path, the Buddha manifests as like, gorgeous, you know, hands and arms and

silken clothing; they call it the 'royal aspect', because that's coming from Tantra, where that's a whole different discussion and it has to do with enhancing the senses and energizing, you know. It's quite different, another level. So, Buddha in that aspect is called 'Vajradhara', or in Tibetan, 'Dorje Chang'.

I asked Lama Yeshe, 'Who's Vajradhara?' and he said, 'Very simple. He's the biggest Buddha, dear.' I was very proud to know I liked the biggest Buddha... So basically, that's the Tantric aspect of Shakyamuni Buddha, and he's blue. But for purification practices, we use another aspect of Vajradhara -- he looks the same, but he's white, and he's called 'Vajrasattva', and it's to do with emptiness. He's particularly to do with emptiness, because realizing emptiness, is when you've finally cut the root of the delusions. Until then -- this purification practice -- we are simply stalling the ripening, we're weakening the seeds, we're like burning them, we're not ripping them out completely. Until you've realized emptiness, you will never rip out delusions, you'll always have more suffering... you've got to stop their ripening, though, and that's what the purification process does. So, one relies upon Vajrasattva.

So, one visualizes him above one's head, and then one takes refuge, says a prayer remembering the Buddha, grateful to have a Buddha, and then grateful -- if one has a lama -- who manifests as the Buddha for our benefit, you know, to show us the way. That's what refuge means. So refuge is like this, you know: you rely upon the doctor. Now, you've got to look at what it means, 'rely upon the doctor'. Why would you rely upon a doctor? Because you need their medicine; it seems kind of obvious -- not 'cause they've got some cute nose, or something. So you go to a doctor because you've checked up and you realize this doctor has the medicine that you need. So you rely upon their advice. It's perfectly reasonable. So this implies here having thought about the Buddha, and wanting to rely upon the Buddha, 'cause you want his medicine, not because he's going to forgive you. 'Cause you want his methods; that's what reliance is, that's what taking refuge means.

So, in other words, if you've taken -- you know, you can have the Buddha there, but if you've never thought about suffering, and you haven't regretted anything you've done wrong because you haven't thought about suffering and its consequences, then the Buddha will be pretty meaningless to you. So, in other words, if you haven't taken poison, or you don't realize you've taken poison, you might have heard about some amazing doctor who's got every antidote to every poison on earth, and you go, 'Oh, how interesting... but how boring. Who needs him?' You don't care. But you check when you've taken poison or you've discovered you know you've taken poison; you're going to hang on every word that doctor says. So, reliance on the Buddha is based upon the recognition that you've got these imprints in the mind that you want to pull out real quick. In other words, that you need -- you're suffering, you're sick of suffering, and you need the doctor's medicine. So one has to think of these things carefully; it's practical, you know, psychologically practical.

*Reliance --and Compassion/The Second Part of Refuge*  
52:32

The second part -- the second part of Reliance, and this is a bit curious, is called this, you know. Why it's called reliance -- it's where now you think about compassion for those you have harmed. In the first one, it's like I said, it's like having compassion for yourself. You're regretting the harm you've done for your sake. So in a sense here, what you now've got to cultivate is you think of those you've harmed, and you regret for their sake and want to purify yourself for *their* sake, because you realize -- you know, you have this regret, this sadness that you've harmed them. Now, it's the sake of others in this second step. But you can't have that until you've got the first one. Compassion is based upon this first one. You can't have compassion for the suffering of others until you've got this real sense of renunciation for your own suffering. It's impossible, you can't. You've got to have this one first.

Why? Very simple. Renunciation has two parts: The first one -- we're talking about here, regret -- the first part is, you are sick of suffering. Now, we all know that -- we're all sick of suffering. But the second part's crucial; you now know why you're suffering -- your past negativity and your delusions. When you've got these two, that's renunciation. And all compassion is, is these two -- but instead of yourself, it's applied to others. One -- you see people suffering. And you find it unbearable. But, two -- you now know why they are suffering; and that's the big shift here. Not because they're poor innocent victims, which is the only people we have compassion for now -- we love to have compassion for innocent victims, usually animals and children. Not like that -- quite different here. You have compassion when you see suffering because -- two -- you now know why they are suffering -- because of their karma and their delusions. Because they are the source of their own suffering. And when you can have this -- when you can do it for yourself: you're sick of suffering, and you know why you're suffering; you want to change. So then you see others suffering and you know why they're suffering: 'cause they created the cause themselves. It's a crucial difference and one has to cultivate it carefully. Again, it's completely based on the teachings of karma, so one has to think of this so carefully, analyze it so carefully. Because the feeling we have now is guilt and shame and hate and blame, you know.

Then poor, innocent victims. We only have compassion for innocent victims, because we assume the cause of suffering is the horrible oppressor. Buddha says, 'Wrong view.' Because actually, when you've got this view of compassion, you'll have even more compassion for the oppressor. That's a fact. Why? Very logical... It's like a mother for her junkie kid. Everybody else hates him -- he lies, he steals, he's a pain to be around...but the mother, her heart breaks for him. Why? Because he is causing himself suffering. *That's the basis of compassion.*

So, you see people who are the victims of suffering, you realize it's the result of their own past actions and your heart breaks for them, but you have even more compassion for the people who caused it, because the people who are the victims are just finishing their suffering -- the ones who caused it are just *beginning* their suffering. So, once you've got this first for yourself, which is renunciation: I'm

sick of suffering, I know why I'm suffering: karma... it's easy then to have compassion for others. You can't get it properly until you've got it for yourself. This is a reasonable psychological kind of progression, and all of it's based on karma.

So you have compassion now. You think of those you've harmed, and you know what it's like to suffer so you know what it's like for their suffering. You caused it, so you regret for their sake, now. Compassion for others. And if you're brave enough, you have compassion for those who have harmed you, 'cause they're going to suffer in the future. And of course, the dynamic of all this is you know -- you know you caused them suffering in the past -- that's how come they're causing you [suffering] now -- it's sort of like it's just obvious. When you've got karma down, you can own it so strongly.

In 2003 I remember -- in New York -- I was there for a conference that Richard Gere had organized -- a bunch of ex-prisoners -- when His Holiness was there... Twenty ex-prisoners who had been meditating in prison, you know -- like, ex-Buddhists, a whole section of them -- (ex-convicts?) twenty of them -- black and white and male and female, Puerto Rican and Mexican and the whole works, a cross-section of American society. People who'd been in prison and had done some kind of meditation. So people like me were invited as well, had this very nice talk all day, just a lovely conference, you know? And they all met His Holiness. So, among them they invited also two young Tibetan nuns who'd been tortured and sexually abused, basically, in prison for a couple of years for just being nuns. So they were telling their experience. And there were tears, you know. So first of all it was really obvious to all the Americans that their suffering was more than all of theirs put together; very clear, these two young nuns. But secondly, it was really clear they weren't angry, which was a big surprise. Because we just assume -- because we have a victim mentality, and because we think we're innocent victims, and we think suffering is caused by others -- we assume anger is normal; because anger is blame, isn't it?

*But if you have the view of karma, you don't have blame. You've got to hear this. They weren't blaming. They were sad. If you'd given them a key, they would've happily walked out of that ugly prison. And then they said -- big surprise, you know, again, because of the view of karma -- they said, 'And of course, we had compassion for our torturers, because we knew we had harmed them in the past.'*

So, this is a huge point for us. This is why we can't just gloss over karma, we've got to really give it a thought. And this is the basis of all of Buddha's teachings. This is the basis of emptiness, even -- cause and effect. If we look at Buddha's view -- his philosophy -- carefully, you cannot gloss over karma. It is a way of spelling out the law of cause and effect. Really think it through -- it's the basis of all practice, it's the basis of compassion.

***The Third Step -- The Remedy***  
**58:39**

So then, the third step: you think -- so now you take the medicine. You apply the antidote. You take the Remedy. So here -- you know, you can say in Buddhism, there's a whole medicine cabinet of remedies. But all the lamas in the Tibetan tradition praise this particular meditation, this particular visualization, this particular mantra as a really potent medicine. So, often this step is simply called 'applying the antidote,' which is a fancy way of saying, you know, it's obvious -- 'take the medicine, 'whichever the opposite is, you know -- if you're sick, if you've got a headache, you take a pill that stops headaches; it's the antidote. It's obvious.

So, you know, anything here would apply. If you've got a habit to kill, you make a point of saving lives. You go get a bunch of worms. Instead of having them killed being bait, you release the worms. It's a powerful thing to do. If you have the habit to kill, you know, one of your practices could be -- one of your antidotes could be to help sick people -- anything you do that's opposite to that... if you're regretting lying, you make a special point of telling the truth. You must do this anyway in your life. But here is a very powerful practice -- and one has to think about why they're powerful -- not just because it's religion, you know... very potent; visualizing Vajrasattva, and saying this particular mantra, said to be a very powerful medicine that works at a very deep level of your mind, you know. So, one does this visualization of Vajrasattva purifying the various actions of your body, speech and mind and reciting the mantra. That's the third step.

#### *The Fourth Step --Resolve*

**1:00:19**

And the fourth one -- as Pabonka Rinpoche says -- is the most important, this Resolve, or the determination to change. Now, if you can't own responsibility for what you've done wrong, you can never determine to change, 'cause you don't want to own it. This regret, and this determination to change -- the way I like to say it to myself -- is like you're really becoming accountable. You're really growing up. You're becoming mature. You're becoming your own friend. That's why this practice is so crucial to do. Not just to gloss it over, say, 'Oh I've done my Vajrasattva mantras...' That's not enough, I tell you. That's just not enough. You've got to think through these four steps. It's psychologically really profound. It's like inner therapy, I'm not kidding. Things really shift if we can do this properly, 'cause this is where we get the courage to know we are in charge of our life and we *can* change. Because it's the power of our own will, our own determination to change.

So this fourth step -- I've become dehydrated in Missoula, are we high up or something? No wonder. Dry I am. Not as high as Santa Fe, is it? You see water bowls go down visibly, in front of you...okay. So this fourth step, again, is practical. You make determination not to do again. So, if you have taken vows -- I will never kill, I will never lie, I will never steal -- you've taken those five lay vows, and they're lifetime vows, so obviously you need to reiterate that vow. Every time you do it, it's like digging a groove in your mind. So, it's not enough to say, 'Oh, yeah, I took vows twenty years ago... when was it? Twenty years ago I vowed I wouldn't kill...' but you've never thought of it since. It's like saying,

'Oh, I did pushups twenty years ago, you know... I work out in the gym.' I'm sorry, you don't! It's like saying, 'Oh, I'm a pianist, I played piano twenty years ago.' See, again we see these things as so self-existent. It's not enough. It's an ongoing, dynamic daily thing.

If every day you say, 'I will never kill,' I mean, excuse me, guess what the result will be? It's hardly rocket science. If every day you say it, that protects you every day from ever killing. It's obvious. It's so embarrassingly obvious. But we forget these things. So you need to reiterate your vows. 'I will never kill. I will never steal. I will never lie.' I will never whatever they are, you know.' I will never break my bodhisattva vows." I will never break my tantric vows.' You need to say this every day. Reiterate your commitments. And it's not just because you're hoping God will make you good or Buddha will bless you; it's you training your mind. Like if you do pushups every day, guess what? You keep getting better at it. We understand it when it comes to creativity and art and learning things, we just think this is 'religion' so we don't understand why I should say every day I'll never kill. 'Cause you're training your mind in that direction! Because everything comes down to the thought. All you're doing by becoming a Buddha is programming your mind with positive thoughts. That's all, people! It's nothing more secret than that. And so this is why they say a vow -- it's nothing abstract, a vow -- it's your mind, intentionally deciding daily, 'I will do this' or 'I won't do that,' In other words, you're practicing *that* by thinking it, like practicing piano every day, by practicing pushups every day. It's obvious; you keep getting better at it. It's practical psychology.

Then, of course, you don't lie to yourself, as Rinpoche says. If you're not ready to say 'I'll never do it again,' if you haven't taken the vow, and you're still going fishing every day or going hunting, and suddenly you're hearing it today that you shouldn't kill; you won't say today yet because you haven't processed it. Let's say lying is a really deep habit. Don't lie to yourself; it's plain foolish. Be realistic. So, maybe you'll say, 'Okay. I see the reasonableness of not lying. I'm going to give it a go. I won't lie for five hours'. Or you might say, 'I won't lie for ten hours' because you've got to go to bed soon. When you're asleep, you won't lie, believe me; you'll keep your vow. You be realistic; it's an incremental thing, and you've got to take this seriously on board. That's why you can't just do your mantras and think, 'I've done my practice.' It's not enough. It's a serious psychological procedure that you're involved in. Practice is real; it's you dealing with your own mind.

### ***Your Own Rubbish***

**1:05:45**

So, you know, you give yourself a timeline. And when it comes of course to, you know, your inner qualities, your inner things that harm you only, and I didn't mention this in 'Regret', but the same; it mainly talks about regretting actions that you do to harm others, but of course you can think of your own rubbish: your own angry thoughts, your, you know, sexual fantasies that are destroying you, your own attachment, your own -- you know -- depression. You can deeply regret these because it's obvious the suffering it causes you; because you're sick of the suffering. And here, you maybe can't say, 'I'll never be depressed again';

it's not possible, if you're caught up in the middle of it. But you make some decisions for yourself; realistic, humble decisions. 'Okay. I'm going to watch my mind like a hawk. I'm going to do my best tomorrow.'

Even you can say, 'I'm going to do my best not to speak the words to my husband' for example. Because when we're feeling all our problems, we want to vomit it all out to the person we're closest to. We can't hold it ourselves, so we have to dump it on somebody. I'm not being horrible about us now, we need to talk to people, it's true, but sometimes we're addicted to talking about it, which reinforces it. So, maybe the way to help us with our -- let's say your angry thoughts or your jealousy or your depression, which we always want to talk about to other people -- we always put ourselves down, 'Oh, I'm no good, I can't do this...' it's just vomiting it out, you know; 'cause we're not able to hold it ourselves. So maybe we can vow -- at least, 'I can't say I won't be depressed, I can't say I won't be angry again, But at least I can vow that for twenty --four hours I won't speak the words to anybody else.' This is profound. This is amazing; really shifts something inside us for our own benefit. Totally for our own benefit.

See, it's sort of like a session of therapy, you're doing before you go to sleep. It's so worthwhile, I can't tell you. 'Cause normally, we love to talk to ourselves about ourselves, but it's always negativity; beating ourselves up, or all resentful 'cause no one loves me and it's not fair and I'm better than they think I am. It's always ego talking; we never do it the constructive way. But this practice is really constructive thinking; really being your own therapist, really being your own boss, really being accountable, and really being courageous. This fourth step is real courageous, you know.

This is how you change. This is what purification *is* -- these four steps; not just doing a few mantras mindlessly. You've got to do all four steps, because each of these four steps purifies one of each of the four ways that karma ripens; they've got their particular function.

So, for example, regret is so tasty in terms of what it purifies -- I mean, all of them altogether purify everything; but regret has a particular function. So you know, let's say, someone bad-mouths you at work, and you're freaking out about it. You know you did nothing wrong and these mean people are talking about you behind your back and it's so distressing, isn't it? You feel so impotent; you feel you can't do anything about it. And you feel, 'It's not fair, I didn't do anything.' But then you have to remember, when you sit down and do your regret, 'Well guess what, Robina, if this is happening, logically, I must have done it before, otherwise it wouldn't be happening to me now.' So, then what do you do? You think to yourself, 'I regret whatever I must have done in the past life -- who knows which life -- that is now ripening as this particular suffering; because regret purifies the karma called 'experiences similar to the cause', which is this exact stuff that's happening to you. Of course, in the long term, it's really going to purify it so it won't happen to you again in the future; but don't be surprised, if you consciously think of this particular event, and you deeply from your heart take responsibility and regret whatever I must have done in the past life -- and of

course, one doesn't remember it -- that is now ripening at this moment in these people bad-mouthing me, that first of all makes you more courageous, instead of like a victim, and you realize there is a cause, in your past life that you don't remember, like those young nuns; they knew this, so you become more brave, and you accept it more; rather than feeling 'it's not fair, why are they doing it and ...' The victim is so strong in us; whenever the harm happens.

So this regret can even help shift things right now. But in general, regretting lying, regretting killing, regretting stealing; whatever it is, they will ripen. They will purify the experience happening to you, especially in the future. They're cleaning it up for the future. They've got a very real function.

The second one, Reliance, it purifies environmental karma. So my feeling is, I don't quite understand this one, but it seems like it maybe is the compassion aspect, because, you know, as the lamas say -- they have this saying -- that 'the ground that you fall down on, that hurts you, is the very ground that you rely upon to stand up.' So the very sentient beings you have harmed are those sentient beings you need to generate compassion. You rely upon them in that sense. So they say this purifies environmental karma.

The third one -- doing the mantra, doing the actual practice -- that purifies the lower realm karma -- being reborn in the lower realms. The future suffering lives.

And the fourth one is obvious. The one of determining -- if you say every day, 'I will never kill again,' guess what that purifies? The tendency to kill; it's so obvious it's a joke. And this is the most important.

### *'Go and Talk to Geshe Lama Konchog...'*

**1:11:34**

That fisherman -- he had the lower realms in the past life. He finished that karma by having all the lower realm suffering and eventually got a human life like a miracle -- his throwing karma of virtue ripened; but because he hadn't purified all aspects of that killing, he had the residual result of the habit to keep killing, which is the worst one. And then what happened, he also had -- 'cause that sent him straight to the lower realms again -- I'll tell you the finish of the story, I think I've always told this story; you've probably heard this many times if you've heard me before; but he got two results: he also died: he drowned scuba diving when he was twenty-nine; his mother told me the story about this when I met her at Kopan. And she was devastated; cause she always thought -- a lot of people think, 'Oh, he died doing what he loved' -- I really think that's such a stretch, you know, to think that you're going to be happy dying while you're scuba diving -- 'Oh, I'm dying, among the lovely fish...' I don't think so. You'd freak out completely, you know. So she suddenly heard about karma from Lama Zopa, and she's thinking, 'Oh my God, my poor boy,' 'cause he'd been a fisherman all his life, killed hundreds of thousands of fish, and he died scuba diving; so she wanted to know where he'd been reborn; and I said, 'Well, go and talk to -- the lamas never tell you these things', I said, 'but go and talk to Geshe Lama Konchog.' So she went to Geshe Lama Konchog, this amazing old lama who's a great yogi, lived in the mountains for years naked, no food, no sleep, no

clothing, six foot of snow in the winter; highly realized lama, amazing being, whose reincarnation is now about eleven or something, in Kopan. Maybe you saw that film he had...have you seen that little movie? But have you heard about -- he's got another reincarnation, a little girl, have you heard about her? Oh, let me tell you about her -- I'll finish the story first, okay, about the fisherman, then I'll tell you the story about this little girl.

So, anyway, I said go and see him, talk to him. And they never tell you what they see, but he's outrageous. So she mentioned the name of her boy, and he said -- he checked up his computer in his head, you know, and he went, 'Ah, yes.' He said, 'First of all, he was born in the animal realm and now he's in the hell realms.' It's not funny, I know. I mean, I'm just telling you what he said, okay. You can believe what you like. So, she went -- how interesting her response -- she said, 'Oh, my God,' she said. 'What can I do for him?' The first thing she said was this. And he laughed and said, 'What do you mean *him*?' He said, '*Everybody*.' She said it was very powerful for her mind to hear this, because it really helped her have compassion for the suffering of sentient beings out of ignorance doing things that harm ourselves, you know., and that's just the story. You can believe what I'm telling you, or not. I'm just telling you what he said.

Anyway, meanwhile, his reincarnation is in Kopan now, that movie you've seen, what's it called? 'Unmistaken Child,' right. Well, it's so interesting... about a year before Geshe Lama Konchog passed away, this little girl was born to my friend Thomas, who's German, and his Estonian mother, and they live in Findhorn, you know, Findhorn in Scotland... it's been around for forty years, this place right in the northeast of Scotland, it's a big spiritual community, very loosely based... several hundred people live there; they do wonderful, wonderful things. So Thomas lived there for years and anyway he had this little daughter and he said from the time she could talk, she announced -- she'd see pictures of Geshe Lama Konchog and she announced, 'Oh, that's me, by the way...' She was very clear, always crystal clear, she said exactly who she was, and she always talked about dharma and showed special qualities and anyway he didn't know what to think... The thing is, Geshe Lama Konchog hadn't died yet; he died a year later. This is quite common; these great bodhisattvas, they can manifest their minds in many forms simultaneously.

So anyway, eventually she got older, all the time saying who she was and acting like she was quite special and showing qualities... He then told Lama Zopa, told Lama Lhundrup at Kopan, and they kind of checked up and -- Lama Zopa especially -- and it seemed -- they would sort of agree that she was but it was a bit of a problem because Tibetans are pretty traditional; they like nice Tibetan boys; I mean to have this wretched blond *girl* be the reincarnation of their holy Lama was a bit much for some conventional Tibetans, you understand. Not being rude about them, but that's okay...

So anyway, they used to criticize Thomas a bit and say that he was pushing his daughter and all these things...but eventually what they asked one old lama at Kopan; who's a really special lama who does these observations, you know, and he went into some trance and whatever; and he definitively said, from his point

of view, 'Yes, she is the reincarnation.' And even one of the monks who didn't particularly like this -- I heard a story -- Rinpoche had a picture of her on his altar and he gave this picture to this monk and he said, 'You put this on your altar,' you know.

She's this little girl Thubten Dechen... she's now about twelve and she's quite remarkable... I've known her since she's been very little. There's lots of photos around, check on the website; you'll see it. Thubten Dechen. Ah, she's, ah, I've met lots of these little reincarnations and they're mostly the boys; and in general they're really intense and wild and powerful, you know. They're quite extraordinary. But she, since I've met her, and her father says she's always like this, she's the most disciplined, controlled child I've ever met in my life, you know. And when she speaks -- I can't describe -- you feel you just have to hear what she says. Her words are so ordinary -- but you've just got to hear what she says. She's such an extraordinary person. Her name is Thubten Dechen. Look out for her, she's going to be quite an amazing teacher. Anyway. She's said to be an incarnation of Geshe Lama Konchog. So, back to purification.

Ah, where were we? Oh, yeah, so I've talked enough... so now you have questions? Questions, now, about purification? 8:15, alright... Questions, questions, please? It was a lot of information... Yes?

***Purifying Sickness -- 'It's the Dirt Coming Out'***  
**1:16:39**

Q: So, can you talk about... sicknesses' purification?

Ven.: Okay. So, anything -- alright, so this is a proactive way of getting ahead of the game yourself by consciously, intentionally changing things, okay? But in general, you could say very simply, in general, anything that's called suffering is the result of negative karma, isn't it? In general. Therefore, any time you have any suffering, even a moment of it, that's the finishing of that seed. Every time a fruit ripens, it's the end of that seed, isn't it? Do you understand my point? So, you can say it, necessarily, every bit of suffering you have is itself the purifying of as particular karmic seed. So from that point of view, that's why -- if you're really trying to practice with this view of karma, you learn to be delighted that it just finished. I remember when I did a conference in Florida, years ago, there's a rabbi, me, a Catholic and a Lutheran; and the topic was 'Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?'. Of course, it was easy for me -- I went blah-blah about karma, right... I don't understand what the Lutheran and the Catholic said, but never mind... but the rabbi, he went like this -- he clapped. He said that's what we agree with, we agree with that. And he was a kaballah rabbi. And all the Jews in the audience were gobsmacked, they'd never heard this before. And he said -- they talked about -- they have karma and reincarnation, you know. It's an Australian saying, 'gobsmacked'. Anyway, he said, 'We have a saying, every time something bad happens, you think 'Great! One less debt to repay!'

So, yes, of course, every bit of that suffering is necessarily the finishing of that karma, which is a very good reason -- yes, it's painful -- but to at least interpret it

that way rather than thinking, 'Oh, this is bad.' It's extremely important to think this. And that includes, you know, when you start to practice, you might suddenly get more depressed than you've ever been for years; you might get lots of anger coming. It's the dirt coming out. And that's another way to look at it. It's really important; if you're working hard on your mind, you are practicing, you often think you're getting worse, because your own junkie habit -- you're kind of disturbing the peace; you're in a washing machine -- so all the junk's going to come out. That's an extremely important one... It is a sign -- even getting more angry, more depressed *can* be a sign of purification. It's extremely important to remember that.

A friend of mine, a monk, he's doing full time, years and years and years of retreat in Rinpoche's center in Big Sur, you know, in California. And one time -- he's been retreating for twenty-five, thirty years, you know -- and one time he was out of his brain with anger and rage. He was really like almost mentally disturbed with it. He was so distressed and he went to Lama Zopa; and Rinpoche laughed and laughed and said, 'Fantastic! The dirt has to come out! The dirt has to come out.' And I think this is an extremely important thing to remember.

I can see in my own mind, when I first got involved in the Dharma, and the lama put me in a particular job; and the job was called being a secretary -- I nearly fainted, you know, 'cause I just assumed I was going to run this project... So, I've always had this energy, I like to do things, I never thought in my whole life to be a secretary, never occurred to me in my entire life, the label 'secretary'! Or even the -- for me, it was very fascinating -- even the concept of 'helping people'. I was quite a generous kind of person, apparently, but I just had this wish to *do* things... I never thought of helping people, it didn't make sense to me, this concept of helping people, I really mean it, I can't describe it to you, it was most odd.

I remember even when the first job I did for Lama Yeshe; it was this printing job, because I used to be like a writer and a graphic design person, you know, I was always on the propaganda side, when I was a communist and a feminist, it was always on the propaganda side. So I did this book, you know, and I presented it to Lama -- the woman in the Melbourne center, I did it for her; but I did it, I did the work. And Lama said to me, 'Thank you for helping my nun.' And I thought, 'Excuse me. I did it. What do you mean, 'helping my nun?' I was the one who did it!' I couldn't get this concept, that I was helping somebody. Can you hear my point, people? You don't even know what I'm talking about, I think. Do you know what I'm talking about here? I was so into *doing things* I didn't think I was helping people; I just wanted to do it, you know, I did it. That's cool, nothing wrong with that.

So Lama, when I was first involved in the Dharma, and I ran into the publishing room like straight away and started transcribing and editing and all this and I just assumed -- I had all these ideas about publishing and lists of books and I was going to run it as far as I was concerned; and I read a little note: 'Fantastic! Lama says, Robina be secretary.' And I nearly fainted. I said to myself -- and I said

these words -- I said to myself, 'Poor Lama. He doesn't understand.' I swear. I'm not kidding.

So I got this job, to be the so-called secretary. And my boss, in this particular job, was a person who didn't -- it was about publishing, my first years in Wisdom Publications -- I'm confessing now, okay, this was about thirty-five years ago -- so this job, I was like a bomb, going in this direction, doing this publishing; I had so much energy for it. And this person that Lama gave the job to, to be the director, he didn't know anything about publishing. He was this hippie monk, you know? And I was so stunned when Lama appointed him director. I heard his name; I wanted to kill him already. And all I know is my first few years of working, I was like a maniac. I really sincerely mean it. You would have locked me up if you'd met me then, 'cause I was ranting and raving, but I knew it was my purification. I knew -- I'd lock my door at night, and I'd cry while I did my prostrations, 'cause of this rage I was feeling. I can't describe to you. So -- the point was, I did -- I had anger, but what I'm trying to get at is this: Of course I made a mess, but I knew it was my crazy mind; I knew it was the right job for me, I knew I had to work on it, so I struggled with this; do you understand what I'm saying? I was a maniac; you would have found me impossible to work with, but it wasn't the same as just being angry. Just being angry would have meant I would have been political, I would have tried to get rid of this guy, I would have never believed that I was wrong, I would have believed -- do you understand? That's when you increase the anger. So maybe I was increasing my anger, but I knew it was my problem. I knew it was anger. It was like a nightmare, are you hearing me, people?

So then I could see -- my kind Lamas, after two years of working with this fellow -- I was so mean to him, you can't imagine what I was like -- well, you can imagine, you see what I'm like now, you know... but I was out of control... I was like a maniac, you know. And I struggled and struggled and struggled with it every day. And after two years, I woke up one morning and I realized I didn't hate this guy anymore. And I happened to tell Lama, he was there, and he gave me this big kiss; he took my face and he gave me this great big kiss. I said, 'Lama, I don't hate him anymore.' So, in other words, I really did purify my mind; it took me two years of struggle. Do you understand what I'm saying, people? Whereas being angry means you believe it, you feed it, you know it's not a problem, you think it's everybody else's problem; that's when you increase anger.

But it's kind of hard, because you don't like feeling bad; and you think, 'Oh, I'm a Buddhist, I'm a nun, how can I be like this?' And you feel guilty... it's a real, real struggle, you know. So whether it's your depression, your anger, whatever you have it is... a friend of mine, he's a very normal fellow, he's a Swiss fellow, a dear old friend of mine... he never wanted to be a monk, he used to enjoy girls, he didn't care much, but he became a monk. The second he became a monk, he became obsessed with sex. Completely obsessed. He didn't have sex; he's a monk. But he nearly went crazy. So, this purification came up strongly. It's sort of like, as soon as you go on a diet, isn't it, or you start eating good food, well,

you get smelly farts, and your breath stinks, the things come out on your body, don't they, because you're purifying. So we understand what I'm saying.

When you go to the gym -- you think you're going to go to the gym to look all healthy, and you come home with every aching muscle in your body. You can't believe it. You know the pain is a good pain, isn't it? If you had that pain just by watching television, you know you got a problem... but if you have pain coming from the gym, you know it's good pain. So that's the difference. So you've got to be really intelligent in understanding this -- don't just have guilt, 'Well, I'm a bad person...' you know. It's really important you analyze it carefully like this, cause if you're really trying to work on your mind, your own stuff will come strongly up; so of course with my Lamas, they put me in that position -- I wouldn't have chosen it; and I had faith in my Lamas, so I accepted it. I realized they were helping me purify my crazy mind, you know. You understand, people, what I'm saying? You've got to really be careful with this, otherwise you'll get hopeless, you'll feel miserable -- 'I'm feeling worse, it must be meditation. I better stop meditating.' No, you feel worse when you go to the gym, you don't think you should stop the gym, you know the pain is good, it'll pass eventually. So you've got to be really intelligent how you interpret what's going on inside you. Yes?

### ***How Do You Know When A Specific Karma Is Purified?***

**1:25:48**

Q: You know, in the spectrum of transgressions, you know, from taking a pencil at work to, you know, maybe you were a hunter, the killing karma you would have had from before you were a Buddhist, you decide you really need to purify that; how do you know when you purify that...

Ven.: When you realize emptiness. When you realize emptiness. When you've realized emptiness. So you don't think of just this life, sweetheart. If it is true, if it is true, that you've led countless lives, if it is true, as Buddha says, then you have got countless negative imprints of countless killings and slaughters and murders and you've been Stalin countless times and Hitler countless times -- honestly, not kidding. So forget the few bit of hunting in this life. One has to continually purify; continually regretting the harm, because it just becomes a habit; and even if you're not doing it too much more in this life, you're still regretting it. And that increases the habit of the opposite -- of being loving and kind. You deepen and deepen and eventually you get to the level where you finally get concentration and you finally realize emptiness. That's when you finally purify. And you've got to keep doing this other stuff until then.

Q: If you're continuing to focus on a particular action, that's probably more like guilt over that... instead you should be going to similar...

Ven.: Oh, yes. Don't. That's right. All of them -- '*any* killing I've ever done, *any* lying, *any* stealing, *anything* I've ever done to harm sentient beings... I don't want all this rubbish.' You've got to keep doing it. The thing is, as you, as we keep progressing, we mightn't *kill* anymore, but we see the mental habits ever more deeply. We keep going to ever more subtle levels of them -- ever more subtle,

ever more subtle. You hear all the greatest lamas -- we just think they're pretending, but they're serious -- they see their minds in the deepest way. They see all the tricky ego and all the nonsense that it does. And so we'll always have to be regretting -- until you finally realize emptiness, there's negativity there. So you don't go on about just one action. That's just sort of guilt or neurosis. It's good to use one, because it's an indicator of the others... that's right, exactly... Yes?

### *Disturbing Thoughts*

1:27:39

Q: So, if we just have a thought in our mind about harming others in some way, and this really disturbs us, do you see that as something to be purified, or do you see that as the purification itself...?

Ven.: Well, you have to decide the difference, don't you? If it just pops up out of the blue -- you mean it pops up out of the blue? Or do you mean you're contemplating it, you want to do it?

Q: Well, sometimes something might trigger it, like, you know, if you suddenly think, 'oh I really want to kill that person...'

Ven.: Yeah, sure. Well, you've just got to watch your mind, you know. Sometimes, if it just comes up, out of -- you see, stuff comes -- you know, Jung talks about unconscious/subconscious... The Buddha's view of unconscious, if we've got past lives, must be pretty profound, must be quite deep. So, much of the stuff that comes into our minds daily is not triggered from what we're doing now; it's triggered from past stuff. We have no idea where it's coming from. So, you know, people can have very tortured thoughts and not know where they're coming from. So that's just from old past karmic habits. So some people, you have those thoughts, but you don't carry them out. The trouble is you carry them out as well. So then you have to just struggle with this. That's why they even say, you know, some people might get a series of deep, deep depression for many years. Nothing triggered in this life at all, we might think it's because of this and this and this, but it's some old bit of vomit from five and a half lives ago from having harmed sentient beings that you're now become paranoid or something -- it's not to do with even now, ancient, old stuff coming from way deep down... so that's why we really got to watch it like a hawk, and then at least attempt not to follow it, but to learn -- you've got to learn to live with it; you might have crazy thoughts popping up, not to be scared of it, not to follow them, but also not to identify with them. It's extremely important not to do that. You have to be very intelligent and recognize they're there, but what we do is go, 'Oh I am bad. I am so depressed.' Not true. That's too grasping at them...do you understand what I'm saying?

So, things can pop up out of nowhere. You have to look at them and observe them; as long as you don't identify with them. It's like -- I think of a head full of all these crazy roommates, you know. Some are angry, some are jealous, some are depressed roommates, angry roommates, crazy roommates; you've got to learn to live with them all. See them there, don't be scared of them, but you

know, don't get involved too close, but notice them, and sometimes tell them to shut up, sometimes pat them on the head, but don't identify them with being me -- this is more of an answer for general things, but this is really very important; we've got to be courageous, in other words. Because our attachment -- we're addicted to feeling good. So when we get on a spiritual path, we think, 'Oh, I'm going to feel good now.' Well, I'm sorry; don't hold your breath please. Feel good you will eventually. You've got to learn to live with a lot of shitty stuff first. That's why we've got to learn to be so intelligent about it. You get my point, people.

Q: So, would it be wise to still purify those thoughts...

Ven.: Well of course, darling, of course. Always. The more you mean, you know, 'shut up, you know, I regret this, I don't want this to continue...' and even just do a little mantras, be practical with it. Absolutely. Right there, hold it, a little thing pops up, a little tiny sprout, grab it right there, don't let it grow, you know. And sometimes, you know -- our habits -- you see, the thing is, we might have depression, we might have sexual fantasies, addicted to things, addicted to stuff, whatever it is; and we can see the suffering it causes us. And we desperately want it to go away, but sometimes it just won't for a long time... what I'm saying here is you've got to be brave to learn to live with it. We've got to learn to live with them. Otherwise we just have aversion for it. . We get angry with it and then we just ...double trouble. And then you just get braver.

Right now, because we just can't cope with all these things, we want to vomit it out to everybody, 'Oh I'm such a bad person, this is no good, I feel so bad I'm so angry.' We obsess about it all the time... Just shut up about it sometimes and learn quietly to live with it. And it's just part of our self, you know, we have to see it there, don't identify with it, it's old vomit coming up; and just learn to be brave, to keep living your life, you know. You understand what I'm saying. Like you see some people... is Deanna here tonight? Where is she? Well, I just want to mention Deanna. Deanna, I think -- I'm not trying to be personal here -- she has a lot of pain, right? I notice she never complains. Now some people -- some people, you always know they're miserable 'cause they 'll always tell you. I'm not being horrible now. So whether it's depressed, or whether it's physical pain, it's the same thing. Some people don't go on about it. I know one woman I knew was so profoundly depressed, she couldn't get out of bed. She never went on about it, she never complained, she never moaned. That's very, very admirable, you know. It's very courageous to do this. It's yours, you created it so you learn to live with it, and give nice things to other people. Stop dumping on everybody. And you know yourself, you can't bear being around people who are moaning and complaining. You know yourself, you get fed up with them; every time you see them, they're moaning on about their problem. Isn't it? So we can see, it's a burden to other people. And you analyze it, the reason we keep vomiting out our mouth about our pain, mental or physical, is because we can't cope with it. We're having a panic attack about it. We have aversion to it. We've got to be courageous; to learn to live with it, to know it isn't you and not identify with it. And then to see it as purification, to know it's your past karma; you created it,

and you have to really learn to interpret it differently. And then you just present a good face to the world. You don't complain about it. I can see this in one of my friends in prison. Some of them -- always depressed, cannot cope, don't know what to do... I mean, I don't -- I wouldn't want -- know how I was going to be if I was on prison on death row, you know. You'd be treated like an animal, stuck in this cell with nothing to do... But then the other ones, some of them, learn to live with this, and have happy minds, you know. It's incredible. So admirable. Are we communicating, people? Good. What else? Yes?

### *The Behavioral Implications of Working with the Concept of Emptiness*

1:33:39

Q: Say I've learned to understand the concept of emptiness. How does that next make the leap to feeling less fear, guilt...

Ven.: I understand. Initially, it doesn't seem evident to us, doesn't it? This is why you're asking the question. That's why another way to put emptiness is to see things as interdependent. See, um... Okay, let me use the example of those nuns in Tibet. There they were being tortured and sexually abused in a prison, right? Now, normally speaking, with the usual view that we have of 'I didn't ask to get born, it's not my fault, I don't deserve this...' we would literally have a mental breakdown, wouldn't we? Just about, we would. And we'd be angry, we'd be freaking out, we'd be raging, we'd want to blame, we'd want to sue...look at the torture we'd have in relation to those kinds of things. Now, their response -- they weren't angry, and they even had compassion. That is literally coming from understanding karma which is meaning they created the cause, this is not who I really am; and karma is dependent arising, and dependent arising is the flipside of emptiness.

Because, if you look at the normal ego response -- Lama Yeshe calls it -- the way we have ego now, 'self-pity', and I'm not trying to be cruel, now. But it is the way we suffer. And if we analyze, if we unpack self-pity, unpack anger, you see it is 'poor me, I didn't do this, I don't deserve this, why is this happening, there is no cause, I don't understand it, why me, what did I do to deserve it'; would you agree this is the way we think about suffering now? That is coming from the philosophy of 'I didn't ask to get born'. That's coming from the philosophy of 'no cause and effect', of 'no karma', of being an 'innocent victim'. That's the philosophy of the world. That's why we have our freaking out now. If you have the view of karma, it causes you to own responsibility for this thing that's happening: you've made your bed and now you're lying on it; which means there's no fear, which means you're confronting it, which means you're accepting it, and then it even means you can have compassion. So that's a very different way of interpreting a situation, isn't it? And all of this is implying: therefore this is not existing from its own side, therefore it isn't *causeless*. Because the way we have ego now, it's all causeless. 'Why is this happening?' and panic and fear. And that's because we are grasping primordially at 'innocent victim me' who didn't ask to get born. That's a way of expressing emotionally how it feels to have ego; whereas if you have this other one, it's more spacious. You recognize why. You know you did it. It's more spacious and it's linked to interdependence, which is the flipside of emptiness. One has to think about it again and again and

again. It's a practical thing, you know. It sounds so abstract, to hear about 'understand emptiness'. It really means to see interdependence and karma is a perfect example of how things exist in dependence upon various causes and factors and things, you know. Does it make sense a little bit? So, thinking about interdependence is the way to put it. Saying 'emptiness' seems a bit abstract, 'cause interdependence is the flip side of emptiness... 'cause the way ego is, grasping at the self-existent me -- this is the label for it -- is the one of thinking there's no cause, thinking it's not my fault, thinking 'poor me' and therefore the panic and the fear and the rage and the guilt and the shame and all the junk that arises when bad things happen. Does it make sense a bit?

And so finally, when through meditation and practice after years and years and years, and then much analysis and logic and thinking and meditating, one finally gets the direct insight into emptiness. That's when we finally have seen directly the absence of this fantasy 'I' that we've been clinging to for so long. That's when you cut the root of delusions then. Cause there's no longer the misconception. Therefore there's no longer fear, no longer anger, no longer attachment. I mean there's a way to go before you completely finish it; but you've made this major shift at that point. That's the real purification. That's when you cut the root. It takes time to think this stuff through, doesn't it... Someone else?

*The Family You Grew Up In*  
**1:38:31**

Q: So then presumably, eventually then you get to the point when you can look at maybe the family that you grew up in ....

Ven.: Can't quite hear you, darling....

Q: You presumably get to the stage where you can look at your own past, maybe if you were born in a family that abused you or whatever... you can say, 'Gosh, what did I do to be in that family...'

Ven.: Exactly... to create the cause to have this...

Q: And then you get to the point where you might need to go and apologize to your parents!

Ven.: Just about! I'll tell you one story, this is very hilarious... one of my friends told Lama Zopa, when she first met him -- she'd been going to therapists for twenty years trying to get past this problem. She'd been sort of, a little bit, not much, a little bit of sexual abuse from her stepfather. And she agonized and did all this therapy for years and she met Lama Zopa and she explained to him what happened, and she wanted advice from Rinpoche. He said, 'I want you to write a letter and apologize.' And she said, 'Oh, Rinpoche didn't hear me properly.' So, I told him it all again and he repeated it. Now, this sounds too shocking, doesn't it? So she said it took her two years and she finally did. It sounds a bit weird to us, It sounds impossible, even. But a simple example of this -- a friend of mine in Sydney, he was at a party -- he was a Buddhist -- some of his Buddhist friends were there and he was telling them about -- I've said this example a few times, I

think -- he'd discovered that his next door neighbor, he'd scratched his brand-new BMW, a big long scratch on the door; he'd discovered who did it, he didn't know *why* he did it, this old bloke next door, God knows what he was imagining. He got it fixed and he did it *again*, and he did it *again*...he couldn't believe it, he said, 'What am I going to do,' you know. Anyway, one of my friends, George, said, 'I'll tell you what Lama Zopa would do. He would discover what this old bloke liked. He would then buy him a beautiful gift, and he would apologize.'

So, if you analyze karma, this makes sense. It's sort of like, the thing was, you'd have to deduce -- and this is what often happens -- I'll finish the story in a minute -- but if you analyze karma -- okay, I'll finish this story first then I'll give you another example. So, the one of karma is, the trouble is it's two and a half lives ago that it happened, that we scratched his BMW, but we don't *remember* that, and this fellow doesn't know why he thinks...you know, this old bloke probably can't give a reason what he thinks he's doing it for, but it's because of the past karma he's projecting all this harm onto my friend John, right? Imagines John's doing this and John's doing that; so, much of the blame we get from people in this life is not because of what we've done in this life, it's because of past karma, you know.

That's why those girls, those nuns; they hadn't done anything to these ridiculous men that were torturing them, for God's sake; but they knew it was from the past. Much of what we experience in this life; the good stuff, the bad stuff is from old seeds in the mind, you know. Why you're rich in this life is not 'cause you're clever; it's 'cause you've got generosity karma from the past. So we don't realize this; we've got to really think about this. We just assume we got born in this life; this happened to me, I got lucky, or I'm unlucky. You know, from the second of conception, you've got all these karmic imprints of everything you've done in your life; you're programmed yourself to have the abuse, the rape, the multi-murder, the hundred million dollar gift, it's all from the past, you know, not just luck. We call it luck...

So anyway, John thought this was a great idea, so he decided, and he found out this old bloke liked golf. So he bought him these beautiful, expensive golf balls and he wrapped them up beautifully and he went next door and he offered them to this fellow. And, you know, this old bloke, perceiving no doubt that John had done all these bad things to him and that's why he scratched his BMW, he took the gift kind of blown out and John went back and he felt really good about this and he was having a cup of tea in the kitchen, and then this old bloke came in; beaming from ear to ear with his gift unwrapped of his golf balls, and he said, 'This is the kindest thing anybody has done,' and then the old bloke said to John, 'And everything is forgiven.'

Now, I mean, that's pretty brave to do that. People have wars with each other over something small like that, you know. And this other experience for me was a good one. When I was a radical feminist, and believe me, I was a *radical* feminist -- whatever I did, I did it radically -- and that was meaning I was a really far-out radical feminist, and I didn't talk to men, this is back in the sixties and seventies, the only contact I had with men was to abuse them if they dared to

look at me in the street. And because it was not politically incorrect to praise ladies' chests in those days, and I had a very copious chest, so I'd always be getting men saying things about my breasts and everything and of course, you just put up with it, poor girls, we'd have to run the gauntlet with these wretched men, didn't we, you know...I mean, people don't whistle in the street anymore, do they? If they did, you'd probably sue them now... Anyway in those days, it was unbelievable. So anyway, I made this decision. Any men, I would not just put up with it, and I would go and confront them, I would shout at them, I would sometimes punch them in the you-know-what, and I would abuse them in public and make them completely embarrassed. And I really did do that, I swear to you, I was terrible. So this particular fellow in north London one time who was in Harringate, all these Greek restaurants, these blokes out there drinking their ouzo, you know, and this fellow, he said something about my chest, and I walked up to him -- he was very tall -- he was eating his fish and chips, and he's very tall, and I shouted out loud to him, and then I punched him in the nose. Well, his fish and chips went flying, and then surprisingly -- most of the men just sat there completely embarrassed, you can imagine, this ridiculous girl comes up and punches you in the nose, you get a big surprise and normally they didn't respond -- but this bloke did. So I started running away 'cause he was chasing me, you know, and then he got me eventually -- and of course all the Greek men in the shops were probably thinking I was his wife or something -- and so he punches me back! My glasses gone, my earrings break, you know. But my response was interesting. I remember, in my mind, I remember feeling, 'Well done!' I quite respected him, because he didn't just become -- I thought, 'Well, that's just the way it goes. I punched him, he punches me.' Now, can you imagine how ridiculous I would've looked if I said, 'How dare you punch me! Who do you think you are? This man punched me!' All those witnesses would have said, 'What do you think, Robina, you just punched him, dear.' But the trouble is, most punches are two and a half lives between, and we don't remember. So, that's the meaning of this one of karma, it was really vivid for me, I wasn't a Buddhist then, I was a radical ...*something*. But it's a really good example. Of course -- I mean I'd looked ridiculous to complain. So that's those nuns, because they have the view of karma deep in the bones of their being, this was a real teaching for them, a real practice, as painful for them as it was, they owned it completely. So that example -- I totally owned responsibility; I realized I caused it. You understand? That's a good example.

Q: ...And so for them as well, the compassion, then, for those two nuns...

Ven.: The compassion of those nuns for the torturers....

Q: ...arose spontaneously, then...

Ven.: Well, they probably worked on it all their lives...they had to work on it, they meditated every day, you know, but that was their view since they were children, in the bones of their being; like the view of 'innocent victim' is the view of our being, you know. So, one has to really work on it, think it through logically. And it doesn't just come from a feeling, that's why you've got to study the teachings. This is simple -- you've got to know the teachings. How else can I

say these words if I haven't studied it? Or else I could know that much, but I couldn't explain it, the words, if I didn't know the words from studying it. It doesn't just come as some miracle vision in a bloody meditation, you see my point? It's coming from the words, it's like technical, to explain the teachings, you know. So important.

Then you've got something to think about. So it's not just a feeling. It's got to come from thinking, you know, and that gradually translates into feelings, you know. So those nuns, thought about that often, so it now became experiential for them, so they were able to express genuine compassion. Do you understand? That's how it happens. And I can say the same without any doubt for my own self -- my father sexually abused me -- me and some of my sisters. And I can even see as a little girl, we had compassion for our father, you know. We'd all kneel down, the seven of us, with my mother, all crying and say the rosary for daddy, because daddy was suffering -- he'd gone off to -- shouted it out and went off -- we all cried for daddy, you know. I remember -- as a little girl, I knew he suffered. I knew, I could tell -- okay, it wasn't right what he did, it was terrible what he did, but I always could see he suffered, and so it didn't take too much for me to have compassion for my father. I was very fortunate, isn't it, especially being a Buddhist, it helps a lot more now, because there's an explanation for it. Anyway, whatever. Eight forty-five, time to go... So we -- I won't read you through it, we've sort of done it by talking about it, I think. Don't you think? We've sort of done it by talking about it, haven't we? Huh? Yes. Okay. Can you just give me one of the copies, darling, and let me have a look at it... hand it around and I'll go through it with you together, maybe that's a good idea, we'll just go through it and, I mean, it's all the things I've discussed...

Q: Can I just ask...

Ven.: Yes, darling of course you can...

Q: When you said, 'Well done,' to the man...

Ven.: In my mind I thought, 'Well done.' I didn't say it to him.

Q: Yes. So. But it seems that... um... he had not only created the offense to begin with, but then, he deepened the karmic impact of it by going ahead and punching you...

Ven.: It's true... but in my mind -- forget him, okay, this is more about me -- because I did it, and usually the men became paralyzed and fearful and therefore didn't do anything... I couldn't help but sort of admire his courage, is was what I sort of meant. For my experience of it, I kind of thought, 'Well done' Of course he was wrong in the first, and he was wrong in the second, but from my side it was an interesting experience that I admired his courage In fighting me back. Do you understand my point?

Q: Uh huh...

Ven.: I was a bully as a kid. And anybody who fought me back I kind of admired... 'cause they were courageous enough to stand up to you. Do you understand what I'm saying? In my mind, it was interesting that that was my natural response. I didn't mind so much. I wasn't freaked out is what I'm saying. Yeah. Does that make sense? It was more about me than about him...

### *A Run --Through of the Vajrasattva Practice*

**1:49:00**

Okay. So let's go through it briefly. So, there's no negativity that can't be purified. This process is basically ... so as one Lama Yeshe says, we create negativity, oh, spelling mistake, sorry. So we purify with the four opponent powers, the practice, so you sit down, you prostrate, you do whatever, get your mind in a quiet state and you first do the power of regret. So then, all the things we've just been talking about. You think of the things -- and there's a bit of Lama Zopa in here... 'I've always been breaking my vows, blah blah blah blah... so you think about these things. And this is very brief -- I haven't gone into much detail in this practice, but, so -- the way I said it today -- you think -- there's a bit more advice -- you've got to just think, 'I regret whatever I did today, and in the past lives,' I should have said more in here... maybe I should do another version, do some more things in here... okay... I should have said more, didn't do enough, I'm sorry... You might just forget, you know. What you're supposed to do, when you do regret is you actually think through what you've done today. You think through what you've done yesterday, and then you think in general what you've done in the past... I haven't said enough here... So maybe you have to throw these out, or maybe you have to just transcribe the teachings, and add that to this. Are you hearing me, people? Cause, I've just quoted Rinpoche, and quoted Lama, but you know what you're supposed to think. You think, 'I regret the killing, I regret the stealing, I regret the lying, because I'm sick of the suffering... ' I don't know why I didn't put it all in, I forgot... I think I missed it out -- it was there normally, never mind. Then there's the power of Reliance, like I said, and you take Refuge -- and you take Refuge and you think -- and I've added a few stuff from Lama Zopa, about visualizing Vajrasattva, okay, and you do all that and you say a refuge prayer, and then you have compassion, there's one little line about compassion, I should have said more of that but I didn't...

### *...Purifying Negativities of Body*

Then the third one is the power of the Remedy. So basically, what you visualize is Vajrasattva above your head... so you visualize he very compassionately sends powerful white nectar, like coming out of a hose, very forcefully, from his heart. It enters your crown and pours into your entire body, filling you completely. It keeps coming` and it forces out of your lower orifices all the harm you've ever done to any living being with your body in the form of inky liquid, which pours out of you and disappears into space, not one atom left.

So you feel completely purified. You recite the mantra the whole time that you're doing this -- three or seven times or whatever. So have any of you not done this mantra before? Have any of you not done this mantra before? Yes? Okay, so I'm going to -- it's a long one, it's worth learning. I will say the mantra out and you can get the oral transmission of it from me, okay? So you listen -- read it if you

like as I'm saying it, so repeat after me: 'OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA, MANU PALAYA, VAJRASATTVA DENOPA TITHA, DIDO MAY BHAWA, SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA, SUPO KAYO MAY BHAWA, ANURAKTO MAY BHAWA, SARWA SIDDHI ME PRA YATSA, SARWA KARMA SU TSAME, TSITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM, HA HA HA HA HO, BHAGHAWAN, SARWA TATHAGATA, VAJRA MAME MUN TSA, VAJRA BHAWA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA, AH HUM PHET!'  
Say it after me: 'AH HUM PHET!'

Okay. So that's the mantra and it is worth learning it. So one thing that might be helpful -- it's not the same as these words here -- but I've got a CD of me leading it, but it's not quite the same visualization, it's a bit less words, I've added a bunch of Lama Zopa's words in here. But it might be helpful if you had that CD if you want it individually, just to get used to it, and to hear the mantra, it might be helpful if you'd like to do it. So anybody who wants it, I'll email the audio file to Bob and whoever wants it, you can get it from Bob. Alright? And it's helpful to learn it by having someone say it, you know, and then eventually you get to know it yourself. Because it's *you*, talking to *yourself*, really. It's not some religious thing. It's you being your own therapist, really dealing with your own mind. You get my point, people? It's really important.

So, you know, if you want that, it might help. I've added more words in this one, and added ways to think; and so it's up to you -- if you'd like that, please ask Bob and he'll send it to you, or do a CD or something of it, alright?

### *...Purifying Negativities of Speech*

So the second one... you purify first your body and then do another lot of mantras while you visualize purifying all your speech, all the harm you've done with your speech. So, during the second stage of the visualization, you visualize Guru Vajrasattva very happily sends powerful nectar from his heart chakra again, it pours forcefully into your crown, filling your entire body, this time forcing up to the top of your body, like when water filling a dirty glass forces the junk to come to the top and overflow, as Lama Yeshe says. It brings all the negativities of your speech, in other words it all forces it up and out of the top part of your orifices -- all the gossip and malicious speech and useless speech and lying and whatever. All is purified by this powerful nectar, leaving your body through the top -- leaving the body in the form of inky liquid, disappearing into space, not one atom left. Recite the mantra as you visualize this. Okay. And then this time again you feel happy -- at the end of this, you always feel happy -- that your speech is now completely purified and that no way could you do anything but say something beneficial or useful or appropriate or kind to others. Really want that. And the same with -- when you do the body. At the end of doing the mantra -- are you listening, are you listening, everybody? Don't get distracted. Listen to me. At the end of when you do the body one, you do the same thing. After you've done the mantra, you feel really happy that your negative actions of your body are purified and really imagine now it's not possible that your body could do anything but benefit others. That's when you do the body one.

### *...Purifying Negativities of Mind*

Now you do the speech one and then the third one is where you purify the mind now. So think, Guru Vajrasattva very compassionately sends this time light from his heart chakra and this powerful -- not nectar this time but light, okay, more subtle -- this light enters your crown chakra and fills your entire being and just like when you turn on a light in a room, the darkness is instantly dispelled, so too, just as the light hits your heart chakra, the darkness, the negativity of your mind -- all the anger and violence, and depression, resentment, jealousy and bitterness etc. etc. are all instantly dispelled. Not one atom left, and while you're visualizing this you recite the mantra. And again at the end you feel happy that all your delusions, which are the cause of the harm that we do with our body and speech are totally purified, gone, finished and that no way is there any space in your heart now for anything but love and kindness and forgiveness and bliss and compassion. Something like this.

### *...Purifying the Imprints of Negativity*

So, now purification of even the imprints of negativity of speech, body and mind. This time, imagine the Guru Vajrasattva sends light again and it fills you completely and eradicates even the subtlest imprint of all the negativity on your mind. It's like the lamas always say during this subtle one is like you -- once you remove the garlic from the jar, you've now got to remove even the smell. So this is like removing even the subtlest imprints. And again you feel delighted having done the mantra.

### *Resolve*

**1:56:50**

The fourth step is Resolve. So the fourth step in the purification is such an important one -- is the determination not to harm with our body speech and mind again. Without this, we keep doing the same old thing. Determination to not harm again is like a beacon that guides our body speech and mind in new directions. So, actually, you can vow not to do certain things, you know, you reiterate your vows and so on. Or otherwise you don't allow yourself like I said, just make a decision. But the crucial thing is you've got to involve yourself in this process because you're talking to yourself. You're giving yourself a timeline. You're giving yourself courage, you know. You've got to talk to yourself in this very constructive way. That's what this practice is. So next what Lama Zopa says -- when you're finished, he says meditate on emptiness. So, emptiness is no 'I', no creator of negative karma, there's no action of creating negative karma, there's no negative karma created... place your mind in that emptiness for a little while. In this way, look at all phenomena as empty. They do not exist from their own side. This is just a rough way you do the meditation. Then you dedicate. A few prayers of dedication, okay.

### *The Meaning of the Mantra*

**1:57:50**

So, the one I've done on this tape is a bit shorter than this, but if you'd like to do it, it might be helpful to have... then on the back is the meaning of the mantra, a rough meaning of the mantra. 'OM' means the qualities of the Buddha's holy body, speech and mind; all that is auspicious and of great value. 'VAJRASATTVA' is the being who has the wisdom of inseparable bliss of

emptiness; and 'SAMAYA', a pledge that must not be transgressed. 'MANU PALAYA', lead me along the path you took to enlightenment; 'VAJRASATTVA DENO PATITA', make me abide closer to Vajrasattva's holy vajra mind; 'DIDO MAY BHAWA', please grant me a firm and stable realization of the ultimate nature of phenomena; 'SUTO KAYO MAY BHAWA', please grant me the blessings of being extremely pleased with me; 'SUPO KAYO MAY BHAWA', please bless me with the nature of well --developed great bliss; 'ANU RAKTO MAY BHAWA', bless me with the nature of the love that leads me to your state; 'SARVA SIDDHI MEM PRAYATSA ', please grant all powerful attainments; 'SARVA KARMA SU TSAME', please grant all virtuous actions; 'TSITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM', please grant your glorious qualities; 'HUM', the vajra holy mind; 'HA HA HA HA HO', the five transcendental wisdoms; 'BHAGAVAN', one who has destroyed every obstruction, attained all the realizations and passed beyond sorrow; 'SARVA TATHAGATA', all those who have realized emptiness, knowing things just as they are; 'VAJRE MAME MUNTSA', do not abandon me; 'VAJRA BHAWA', the nature of indestructible inseparability; 'MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA', the great pledge being, the great being who has the pledge, the vajra holy mind; 'AH', the vajra holy speech; 'HUM', the transcendental wisdom of great bliss; 'PHET', clarifying the transcendental wisdom of inseparable bliss and emptiness. That's what it means, okay? That'll do.

### *Summing Up*

Anything else? People? No more questions? Does it make sense, what I've been saying? Okay. So, it's up to us, you know, to be our own bosses. To be aware of our suffering, to be sick of our suffering, to want to change, you know, we *can* change... and to use these methods if they appeal to us, to help us change. So, like anything, it takes effort in the beginning, but like anything, the more you do it, the more you get the benefit, and the more sad you will be when you don't do it. You know, it's like if you go to the gym every day, you miss one day, you feel like it's a great loss, isn't it? It's like that. So, tomorrow, we're going to talk about something else, The Wheel of Sharp Weapons, we'll see where we go, I've never done it before but we'll try...

But the other thing was, some people asked for Refuge, so if anybody would like to renew their Refuge and take the lay person's vows, we're going to do that tomorrow after the teachings. So if you have any questions about that, we could answer that now. No? Alright, fair enough.

### *Taking Vows, Retaking Vows; The Dharma Relationship*

Q: So Robina, it's also for those who want to do it for the first time, right?

Ven: Absolutely, yes, yes, those who want to do it for the first time, and, have we done Bodhisattva Vows here before? Deanna?

Deanna: I don't think so.

Ven: So, is anybody who hasn't taken Bodhisattva Vows and who feels they would like to, maybe we can do that as well. Yeah, okay...but the thing I've got

to say and it's hard to say 'cause it's me sitting here, but you've got to be really clear that the person you do take these things with, you're developing a relationship with, as one of your teachers. So you need to be very confident about the person you take this from. So, if you feel that confidence and you've checked up and you feel confident, then that's good. But you've got to be very aware that that's what's happening -- you're creating a Dharma relationship with that person. So, if you want to -- we can talk about this tomorrow if you like, unless you have questions now about the Bodhisattva Vows...anybody who's thought about the Bodhisattva Vows and would like to take them, if you've been around for a bit, and you've taken the Lay Vows already, or if you'd like to take the Lay Vows, and take Refuge. If you want to think about it today, in just general, and then ask questions tomorrow, we can do it that way.

Q: So, we can retake our Bodhisattva Vows as well?

Ven.: Absolutely. You can. Definitely you can. It's excellent to take them again. It's absolutely excellent to take them again. It is absolutely excellent to take them again. And your lay vows as well. Absolutely yes. Very good to take them.

### *The Benefits of Retaking Vows*

**2:02:20**

Q: What are the benefits of taking them again?

Ven.: What's the benefit of eating, after you've eaten the first time? You eat a second time, don't you? You get the benefit every time, don't you? It increases. If you keep eating good food, it keeps making you healthy, doesn't it? Isn't that true? What's the benefit of renewing your vow to benefit others? It's like regretting your negativities every day, it strengthens that habit in your mind, wouldn't it?

When you realize every thought, every thought -- your mind is made of thoughts, right? Well... If you keep increasing positive thoughts... it's like if you play piano every day... can you see what I'm saying? It's a simple answer. That's how you become it.

Q: I'm going to ask this for first time people who haven't taken Refuge before, but I took formal refuge at the Abbey and they had us dress in white...

Ven: Oh yes that's very good, that's probably correct, Venerable Chodron's very correct; I'm not so, I'm a bit lazy, I'm sorry. That's a good point. But I won't ask you to dress in white but if you want to, you're very welcome. I do admire Chodron in that way. She knows a lot more than me... But be clean, that's one thing, come nice and clean, and smelling good. That's a good thing to do. So if you want to ask questions about it now, you're very welcome...no one's got any questions?

Q: You mentioned having a Dharma relationship ...

Ven.: That's right. With the person you take them from.

Q: That applies to renewing the vows as well...

Ven.: Absolutely, of course. Yes, it does, exactly. Even, you know, even taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts from somebody... yes, so one has to feel comfortable about that, and choose the person you want to take them from. Not just grab the opportunity that's arising. So, someone did ask me, and I'm assuming -- who was it? Are they here?

Q: She's not here, she had to work tonight, she's coming tomorrow...

Ven.: Okay, so then just think about these things. Think about it and if you have questions tomorrow, you can ask them then. Nobody has questions now? Good. All right. Yes, sweetheart?

Q: I want to thank you especially, tonight I think that many things you talked about I had heard before, but I also learned a lot, especially how to handle things about karma and things that are happening, how to treat somebody who did something to us...thank you very much.

Ven.: Thank you, darling -- it's a pleasure. Good. Okay, let's dedicate. Thinking, here we've been two hours -- two hours and three minutes, actually, we started at 7:01 and it's now 9:04. So, think of it this way, and this is answering your question -- what's your name? Leah's question. This is answering your question. The more we realize that every thought we have is basically -- it's programming yourself. Every time you play piano, you know that's the way to become a better piano player. So, every time you have positive thoughts, this is helping you become more loving and more wise and more kind and reiterating your commitments to being of benefit to others and so on. It just makes sense, you know. It just makes sense when we think of it this way rather than like a religious idea. Just a practical thing. So we think -- for two hours we've been sitting here. Many, many thoughts have arisen in everybody's mind, including mine. So we delight we've had these marvelous thoughts, and we've just sown these marvelous seeds, you know, in our mind. How extraordinary! We've done two hours of incredible gardening, and I'm not joking. Those thoughts have gone in. So we want to nourish those seeds we've planted with our effort from this second forward with our practice, with our determination, you know, so that these seeds we've planted will ripen in the future in the development of our amazing potential so we really can be of benefit to sentient beings. So, delight in this evening what we've just done. Delight in ourselves and each other. And then we dedicate those seeds so that when we do become a Buddha -- what's the point of it? So I can help others. And then the second prayer is: May compassion -- bodhicitta grow and grow...

Ge wa di yi nyur du dag....

Lama sang gye drub gyur na

Dro wa chig kyang ma lu pa

De yi sa la go par shog

Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe

Ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig,  
Kye wa nyam pa me pa yang  
Gong na gong du phel war shog

Okay. Thank you so much, everybody.

Transcribed by Fran McDermott