

**Kalachakra for World Peace Graz 2002****TEACHINGS BY HIS HOLINESS THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DALAI LAMA ON:****THE MIDDLE STAGES OF MEDITATION**

by Acharya Kamalashila,

**THE THIRTY-SEVEN PRACTICES OF BODHISATTVAS**

by Ngulchu Thogme Zangpo,

**THE LAMP FOR THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT**

by Lama Atisha Dipamkarashrijnana

**Day 1, October 15, 2002**

Today we have gathered here in this beautiful city of Graz. A few years back, when I visited Graz, I was requested by the Mayor to visit this beautiful city again and I was asked that it would be very nice if I were able to confer the Kalachakra initiation at that time. Graz being located in the center of Europe, it would be easy for many interested people to come from different parts of Europe. Particularly since many Tibetans live in Switzerland, it would also be very easy for these Tibetans to come to receive the Kalachakra teachings. Therefore we have gathered here to receive the Kalachakra empowerment.

Normally, when I confer the Kalachakra empowerment, it is presided by three or four days of preliminary teachings. These religious teachings are related to the common practices of preparing our mind, during which I will make an attempt to give an introduction to the Buddha's teaching. As usual we will have here three days of preliminary teachings.

His Holiness then asked how many Tibetans were here and asked them to raise their hands, and he also asked the people from Mongolia, Tuva, Kalmykia and Buryatia to raise their hands.

The Tibetans and all those living in the Himalayan region – they are also Buddhists like the Tibetans – and similarly the people from Mongolia and from the neighbouring republics in Russia, we are all the same in following the Buddha's teaching right from the time of our forefathers. In these areas people primarily practice the Buddha's teaching or Buddhism, and there are also pockets and areas where Bön is practiced. For those of you who came from different other parts of the world, like those that came from Europe or from America, Buddhism is not your religious tradition. In your case most of you either follow Christianity, Judaism or Islam. Therefore I normally tell people that it would be much safer and much better if you follow the religious tradition of your forefathers, because if you try to follow a particular tradition which is not in the

culture that you inherited from your forefathers, you might show great excitement and embrace that religion initially, but later on you might find a lot of complications. It is even possible that you gradually will belong neither here nor there. Therefore it is much safer and much more reliable to follow the religious tradition of your forefathers.

His Holiness was inviting an abbot from Mongolia to sit, and jokingly told him: “Even though we have prepared a slightly higher seat for you, it doesn’t have a back, so make sure that you do not fall from the seat!” Then His Holiness was also helping the MP from Mongolia and told him that there was a Russian translation; to make sure that he was able to listen to this Russian translation.

However, although Buddhism is not the religion that you inherited from your forefathers, depending on your personal interest, personal mental disposition and – to use Buddhist terminology – due to your past life’s habits many of you might find the teaching of the Buddha much more relevant to your mental disposition and interest, and thereby you might find Buddhism much more beneficial in transforming your mind. In the case of the religion of your forefathers it may not be very efficient in transforming your mind and therefore you might not only show interest in the Buddha’s teaching but you might embrace the teaching of the Buddha.

However this is a really important point: to justify that they have adopted a new religion or embraced Buddhism, to justify that change people sometimes adopt the tendency to show a little disrespect towards their previous religion and make some kind of sarcastic remarks, which is really not good. Even if in your case the religious tradition of your forefathers may not be very suitable for your temperament, this, however, is not the case with everybody. The religious tradition of your forefathers has benefited millions of people in the past, it is benefiting millions of people presently and it will benefit millions of people in the future. Therefore it is important to maintain respect.

His Holiness asked: “Are there some Chinese?” It seems there are none. Oh, there are some there!

Among the people who have gathered here it is also possible that there are some who are practicing their own religious tradition and among the audience there might also be people who do not follow any particular religious practice. In the case of those who are already practicing one or the other form of religious tradition, even though your religious tradition is a different one, by listening to the Buddha’s teaching it is possible that this will also provide you with some new insight, strengthen your own understanding and so forth. In the past I had the opportunity of giving talks and teachings in various places, which were attended by religious practitioners from among the Protestants and Catholic. Many of them came to me and said that this had benefited them in strengthening their own religious tradition. And even if this is not the case, it will definitely help to bring more harmony and unity among different religious traditions.

As far as the actual teaching is concerned, we have chosen three texts: the *Stages of Meditation* or *Bhawanakrama* by Acharya Kamalashila, the *Lamp on the Path* by Lama Atisha and the *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas* by the bodhisattva Thogme Zangpo. In terms of the sequence, the text that came first was the *Stages of Meditation*, which was followed by the *Lamp on the Path* and the *Thirty-Seven Practices*. However, I am not going to read everything that is found in these three texts, rather I will select important, pertinent points from these three texts and then try to explain those points to you.

With regard to the transmissions of these three texts that I have received – in the case of the *Stages of Meditation*, I have received the explanatory transmission (*bshad lung*) of all the three stages of meditation from the late abbot of Sakya monastery, Sangye Tenzin. He was a very special lama and even though he is no more, his reincarnation has already come. He was really not only a learned man but a great practitioner and it seems that he had received these teachings from a lama, who was a master practicing dzogchen and who came from the Kham area and he [who – Sangye Tenzin or the Dzogchen lama?] received this teaching in the Samye monastery.

With regard to the oral transmission of the *Lamp on the Path*, I have received it from the Kinnauri [= Kunu ?] Lama Geshe [?] Rigzin Tenpa who had been trained at Drepung monastery and who, in turn, had got it from Kansag Dorje Chang. I also received the explanatory transmission of the commentary of the *Lamp on the Path* from the late Lama Serkong Rinpoche. And it seems he had received it from a very famous Geshe, who was also a hermit, named Gendun Tashi. It was just before the uprising took place in Tibet.

As to the the explanatory transmission of the *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*, I have received it from the Kinnauri lama Tenzin Gyaltsen. Even though he belonged to the Sakya [? Kagyu in the German translation] tradition, he himself was a practitioner of the non-sectarian tradition. He had also received this transmission from a lama, a dzogchen master from Kham.

Human beings in particular, but basically all sentient beings that have discrimination, that have the power to make a distinction between happiness and suffering, good and bad, what is harmful and what is beneficial — all sentient beings that have this power to cognize and differentiate between these different types of feelings, we are all similar in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering.

When we look at the question of origin, how it is possible to develop all these experiences of pain, pleasure and so forth, there would be much to say and there are lots of diverse interpretations that could be offered. Today I cannot go into the complexity of tracing the origin of how these different types of feelings developed, but what is obvious and clear to all of us is that we do have this appreciation towards happiness and disliking towards the experiences of pain and sufferings. Therefore it is extremely important to lead a life that brings harmony and peace and that doesn't bring disturbance and turmoil.

When it comes to the question of achieving peace and happiness, it is wrong to think that all our peace and happiness comes just from external material prosperity. Through relying on material facilities it is possible that we can enhance our physical happiness and physical pleasures and remove some of the physical difficulties. What we get from material facilities is limited to the experience of the body.

Unlike other species of animals human beings have a tremendous capacity to think, to calculate, to judge and to make long-term plans. Therefore the pains and pleasures that we experience as human beings are also much stronger and much more powerful, and therefore it is possible that human beings experience additional sufferings which are very much related to the capacity of human thinking. For example in the case of human beings, unlike animals, we are not satisfied with achieving some kind of temporary happiness and being able to remove some kind of temporary sufferings. As I said earlier, we human beings have the capacity to make long-term planning and calculations, and therefore we also make divisions between ourselves and others. Based on this division we talk about different nations, different races, different religions, we make countless divisions, and based on them we develop many types of discursive thoughts, mental misconceptions, sometimes too many hopes, sometimes too much doubt.

Therefore, purely based on human intelligence and conception, we experience many types of unhappiness. This is very clearly outlined in the famous text called *Four-hundred Verses* by Aryadeva, where it says: “The superior people or the supreme people, they experience mental suffering, and the ordinary people experience physical suffering.” This means, those people who have more power, more wealth, they may not have much physical suffering, but they experience much more mental suffering. Now in the case of ordinary people, they have more physical suffering because of not being able to obtain enough clothing, enough food and so forth. Thus it is clear that human beings experience much additional suffering because of the way we think.

As I said earlier, the physical suffering can be alleviated, can be minimized by material development, by gaining access to material facilities. However, the suffering that you encounter due to your mental outlook, due to your mental attitude, cannot be minimized and reduced by increasing material facilities. A clear example is that we can see many wealthy people, who have all the material facilities at their disposal, but who nevertheless continue to experience many types of mental suffering. This is something we all can observe. Thus it is very clear that the uneasiness, the problems and sufferings that are purely a result of your mental attitude, mental outlook, these types of sufferings can be minimized and eliminated by changing your mental outlook and mental attitude and not through external material facilities.

To summarize this point, when we talk about experiencing happiness and suffering, there are two ways of experiencing happiness and suffering. One very much related to sensual experiences, that means the pleasures and pains that we experience through the five sense faculties, and then there is another level of experience of happiness and suffering, based on our mind or mental attitude. Of these two the happiness and suffering that

you experience through the mind is much stronger and more powerful than what you experience through the sensual powers, the sensual faculties.

A clear example is that even if you have all the material facilities at your disposal and you may not have any types of physical problems and sufferings, but when your mind is not at ease, when you are mentally suffering, then these physical comforts are not able to overcome the sufferings that you are encountering at your mental level. On the other hand, even if you are encountering some physical uneasiness, suffering, but if you are mentally accepting that situation, then you will be able to tolerate that physical suffering. Take for example at a person that is totally committed to undertaking some religious practice. Even though while pursuing that religious practice one may have to encounter many physical hardships, because of a sense of contentment, sense of satisfaction, because of having a clear sight of the goal that oneself is pursuing, that person would see those hardships as a kind of ornament rather than as a difficulty. So one is able to overpower those physical sufferings through mental readiness to accept the situation by seeing greater purposes. There are many examples of how we are able to overpower the physical sufferings when we are working for a more important purpose, more important object. In such a case, although we encounter a lot of physical problems, we treat those physical problems with great delight, great joy, and as an ornament.

To sum up the point, out of the two experiences that you encounter through your sense powers and through your mind, the one that you encounter and experience through your mind is much more important.

When it comes to dealing with mental problems, as I said, with the problems that are purely the result of your mental attitude and mental outlook, these can be minimized and eliminated by changing your mental attitude, mental perception. Therefore there is a way, there is a means and there is a method to remove mental problems. And therefore it is important to know the methods and means by which we can minimize and remove many of these mental afflictions, mental problems. Furthermore, when we talk about these means and methods to remove these mental problems, it is important to know and to recognize the inborn good human qualities.

For example, I perceive it like this: if you look carefully at this human society, you will find that we are social animals. This means that we live in a society and we are totally dependent on each other. Right from the time when we are born until the time when we become an adult, until we are able to look after ourselves, we need to depend on others' kindness, even for our physical well-being. This is so because of the very structure of our biology, the very structure of our body. The more we show closeness and the more we develop compassion and care towards each other, the more we will be able to achieve peace and happiness. Because of the benefit of these fundamental human values we can say that these fundamental human values are important, they are necessary, so therefore they are required qualities.

In the case of some other examples, like the offspring of a butterfly, or the offspring of a tortoise, it seems that

there is not much dependence between the mother and the offspring of the tortoise and butterfly. For example after the eggs have been laid, in the case of the butterflies, the offspring is unable to meet their parents, and in the case of the tortoise, they just lay the eggs and then they disappear. Even if you bring their mother near the offspring, I doubt that these offspring will be able to respond or show any kind of love and affection towards their parents, because they lead an independent life right from the birth. This is maybe due to their past life habits or due to their physical structure. In the case of the offspring of the tortoise, because of their past life habits or their physical structure, they are able to look after themselves. When they hear the sound of the waves of the ocean, then they gradually move towards the ocean and are able to take care of themselves. The mothers obviously do not come to invite the offspring and teach them to swim and so forth, these things are not there. So therefore they lead an independent life, and there we do not see much affection between the offspring and the parents.

Now in the case of human beings, because of our physical structure, right from our birth we are able to show strong love and affection towards our parents, particularly towards our mother. I'm highlighting these points not from the view of accepting a past and future life or as a religious subject, but if you look carefully at how human beings survive and how human beings develop, you will find that it is for our survival that we are totally dependent on human values, human love and compassion. And in the case of human children, right from the birth they are dependent on the milk of the mother, then gradually until they are able to look after themselves they are again totally dependent on the kindness of their parents and even after they have grown up they are dependent on the kindness of other fellow human beings.

As long as you have a human companion, as long as you have somebody who is looking after you, you feel much more peace, much more relaxed, much more at home. So therefore it is important to lead a life where you do not harm anybody and where you try to help everybody as much as possible. If you have this sense of love, sense of affection towards other sentient beings, as a response you will be liked and you will be loved by everybody, and at the time of death also you will have no anxiety, no fear, no mental disturbance.

However, when we grow up, sometimes a kind of human intelligence strongly comes into the scene and sometimes this human intelligence gives us empty hope. We learn new subjects, acquire new knowledge through our human intelligence or human wisdom. With this kind of wisdom we think sometimes, particularly in the case when you are very successful you might think: "I can bully other people, I can exploit other people, because I have this wonderful wisdom and intelligence, so in my case the fundamental human values are not important." You get this kind of sense of empty hope and in this way you develop a different kind of mental attitude and mental outlook, and you do not hesitate in exploiting and bullying other people, as if through that way you were able to achieve some benefit.

However in reality, if you lead such a life where you do not care about the happiness of other people, then

gradually you will find that everyone becomes your enemy, whether you look right, look left, look back or in front, you will find that there is hardly anybody who likes you. And because of leading such a negative life, at the time of your death also everybody might enjoy that now you are going to die. You yourself might also start repenting by looking back and reflecting on the kind of way of life that you have lead. You might again feel very disappointed that because of your way of life nobody is taking care of you anymore. Therefore it is clear that if you ignore these fundamental human values then it is hopeless to expect genuine happiness or long lasting peace, and therefore when you finally die, you will have nobody to look after you, nobody that loves you, and you will leave this world empty-handed, with a great sense of emptiness, a great sense of disappointment. Thus, such a way of life, not caring about other sentient beings, is really a foolish way of leading a life.

On the other hand, if you are able to nurture and cherish these fundamental human values, assisted by the great human intelligence and wisdom, then you will be able to develop the human compassion to a limitless quality. Therefore leading such a way of life is really the way of the wise and you have made your life meaningful.

In the major religious traditions great emphasis is laid on cultivating these fundamental human qualities like love, kindness and so forth. When we view these different religious traditions, the message that is being taught by these different religious traditions, I feel that they can be understood from two perspectives, two levels. The first perspective is through their philosophy, and the second perspective is the practical aspect. So the purpose of these different religious traditions is how to nurture and how to cultivate love, kindness, patience, contentment, self-discipline, generosity and so forth. So therefore the message of all these major religious traditions is how to purify, how to transform one's mind. And such kinds of practices, which are the essential message of these various religious traditions, are very beneficial in our day-to-day life. And the reasons why we should cultivate these positive qualities, is explained in the philosophy of these various religious traditions.

Generally I think that these major religious traditions of the world can be safely categorized into two sections – the theistic religions and the non-theistic religions. In the case of a theistic religion one believes in a creator god. Such a concept also has a very powerful message, because when you believe that this very life has been made by a creator god, that inculcates within you a sense of intimacy to the creator. And the stronger you have that feeling of intimacy to the creator god, the stronger will be your interest in following his messages and in fulfilling his wishes and his thoughts. It is through this way that one is born in heaven. The other thoughts and wishes of the creator god are to help others, to benefit others. Thus, this kind of strong intimacy strengthens your practice.

We can see certain analogies in the case of Buddhist practice. Even though in Buddhism we do not accept a creator god, the stronger your feeling of closeness towards the Buddha, the stronger will be your spirit in undertaking the practices of his teachings. Therefore, through their philosophy the practices of love and

compassion and so forth are strengthened.

Out of the countless sentient beings, because of our special human intelligence, we human beings have different religious traditions in our society. Within human society we have people with so many types of mental dispositions and interests, and therefore different philosophies of different religious traditions came into being. As I said earlier in terms of our day-to-day practice, like the practices of love, compassion, patience and so forth, these are the main messages of all the religious traditions. Therefore I would say that the main messages of all the religious traditions are same. But when it comes to explaining the reason why we should develop these fundamental human qualities, there may be different interpretations and thus there are different philosophical traditions. These different philosophies are important because of different human mental dispositions. For some the philosophy and the view of a creator god is very powerful in instigating oneself to engage in the practice, whereas for others the non-theistic religion is much more suitable. It is in this way that the different religious traditions came into being in the world, and it is important to pick a religious tradition, which is most suitable to one's own mental disposition.

With regard to non-theistic religious traditions we have the Jains, and then among one of the ancient Indian philosophies called Samkhya there are two groups, the theistic and the non-theistic Samkhyas. The non-theistic Samkhyas obviously do not accept a creator god and neither do Buddhists accept a creator god.

With regard to the Buddhist philosophy, after achieving enlightenment the Buddha turned the first wheel of the doctrine when he taught the famous *Four Noble Truths*. This teaching of the *Four Noble Truths* summarizes the fundamental teaching of the Buddha and they are the most important features of Buddha's teaching.

The four truths, as you are all aware, refer to the true suffering, the true origin of suffering, the true cessation and the true path. As I have said earlier, by nature we all want happiness and do not want suffering. In the case of experiencing suffering we do not want even the smallest type of suffering, in terms of experiencing of happiness we want the highest and the maximum type of happiness. Thus, when the Buddha taught us the *Four Noble Truths*, he was simply talking about two levels of experiences, the experiences of suffering and the experiences of happiness. And through these teachings of the *Four Noble Truths*, the Buddha was saying that we have suffering, we want happiness, the suffering comes from its cause and the happiness also comes from its cause. So therefore the happiness that we want, that we would like to achieve, should be cultivated by properly nurturing and cultivating the causes and factors, and the sufferings that we do not want, the pains that we do not want, they should also be eliminated, not by praying, but by recognizing the causes and factors and by eliminating them.

Therefore, when the Buddha taught the *Four Noble Truths* he taught two sections of truths - the sections that are related to the afflictive class and the sections that are related to the pure class. The sections that are related to the afflicted class here refer to the identification of suffering and the causes of suffering, and the pure class refers to the true path and the true cessation or nirvana that is actualized or achieved by following the true path.

A detailed understanding of these *Four Noble Truths* can be obtained if you contemplate and reflect on the five-part illustration within the illustration of the wheel of life, where there's a clear depiction of the twelve members of dependent origination – how our impure life moves within the cycle of existence propelled and projected by ignorance and then by action and so forth. When you study these twelve members of dependent origination, you can study them in their proper and in reverse order. In their proper order the twelve links of dependent origination illustrate that it is basically ignorance, which is the root cause of our birth and our experiences in samsara, and it is the cause of all types of afflictive emotions. Therefore it is by putting an end to ignorance that we will be able to get out of samsara. In its reverse order it is saying that if you put an end to ignorance, your negative actions will cease, and this will in turn cease leaving imprints on the mind and so forth. Thus, when you make such an endeavour to put an end to the afflictive emotions, starting from eliminating the ignorance, gradually you will be able to suppress it and then step-by-step completely eliminate the ignorance, which is the root of samsara. Finally you will be able to achieve true cessation, which means a state where we have put an end to all types of sufferings and afflictive emotions and this is the state of liberation.

Through such kinds of explanation the teachings of the Buddha tell us that the happiness and sufferings that you experience are merely dependent on their preceding causes and factors and that they do not come into being without causes or from inconcordant causes. This means, an impermanent phenomenon can be produced by a preceding impermanent phenomenon and not by a permanent phenomenon like a primal substance, which is not compatible with the result. And similarly, what we experience is also not a result of a creator god, because a creator god is believed to be partless and permanent, and, as we said earlier, a permanent creator cannot produce an impermanent experience, or impermanent fruit.

This is clearly explained in the Buddhist teachings, I think it is in a text by Asanga, where he speaks about the arising of the conditioned phenomena depending on three factors. The first factor is called the unmoving factor, this is a factor that really has the necessary qualities to produce the result, then secondly the factor should also be impermanent and thirdly the factor should also have the necessary potential and the capacity to produce that individual or particular result. So therefore it is by explaining this process of interdependent origination, the mutual dependence of all phenomena, that in Buddhism the experience of happiness and suffering is explained.

Let us look at the beginning of the *Stages of Meditation*. To read the beginning line from the *Middle Stages of Meditation* by Acharya Kamalashila, the text reads:

Homage to the youthful Manjushri.  
I shall briefly explain the stages of meditation for those who follow the system of Mahayana  
Sutras.

I will briefly explain the historical background of the composer of this text. As it is outlined in the text itself, it was composed by the great master Kamalashila, who was a student of Shantarakshita. His teacher Shantarakshita also visited Tibet. It seems that these three parts of *Stages of Meditation* were composed in Tibet by Kamalashila and the text that we are reading here is the *Middle Stages of Meditation*, or the second part of the *Stages of Meditation*. I always choose this second part of the *Stages of Meditation*, because this second part is very comprehensive and it includes all the essential meanings of the three *Stages of Meditation*.

It seems that this text was composed in Tibet itself, however at the beginning it says in Indian language this is *Bhawanakrama* and in Tibetan *Gom-rim Bar-pa*. Even though this was written in Tibet itself, this word in Sanskrit, *Bhawanakrama*, is used at the beginning as it is the tradition with the translated texts that are composed by many Tibetans. This line in the Indian language is used at the very beginning of the text to show the authenticity of the teaching, that the teaching has its authentic source in the Indian Buddhist masters and is not something that is composed at random by the Tibetan masters.

The real vigor of the flourishing of Buddha's teachings took place through coming together of three great teachers – the abbot Shantarakshita, Acharya Guru Padmasambhava and the Tibetan Dharma king Chögyal Trisong Detsen. And it was the abbot Shantarakshita who for the first time in Tibet ordained seven monks. These seven monks were in fact called the seven monks under probation. So it was at the time of Shantarakshita that the real Vinaya was established and Shantarakshita played a very dominant role, not only establishing the foundation of monastic discipline, but also in terms of serious study of the words of the Buddha and its commentaries. And the main task played by Guru Padmasambhava was controlling and disciplining the non-religious forces, which were creating obstructions and hindrances for a smooth flourishing of Buddha's teachings. And Guru Padmasambhava also gave very secret tantric teachings to selected few including the Dharma king Trisong Detsen. Another important teacher of this period was Kamalashila.

So the primary or the main responsibility of establishing Buddha-Dharma in Tibet was held by Shantarakshita, but later on Buddhism degenerated in Tibet. During the subsequent or second stage of advancement of the Buddha-Dharma in Tibet, Atisha visited Tibet and played a very important role, not

only in explaining certain meanings of certain texts, but in further strengthening the teachings and the system that had been established there in Tibet by the abbot Shantarakshita.

When you read all these accounts, one thing that becomes very evident and clear is that the tradition of Buddhism that is being practiced in Tibet is none other than the Nalanda tradition. If you read texts like Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom*, Chandrakirti's *Madyamikavatara* and Aryadeva's *Four-hundred Verses*, these important texts are still studied in the major monastic institutions. Thus, if you read these texts you will find that these are none other than those texts composed by the great masters of Nalanda.

In terms of the historical evolution and development of Buddha-Dharma, the Buddha-Dharma first came into being in the Pali language and then in the Sanskrit language. Here it is interesting to note that in the Nalanda Monastic University there was a complete practice of all the traditions that were preserved in the Pali traditions as well as in the Sanskrit traditions. There is a complete practice of the monastic discipline, and practices related to certain levels of concentration, and this was also supplemented by the practices of various levels of the stages of the path – the profound and the vast path – which is explained in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, and similarly there were also practices of the secret tantric teachings. So all these teachings were available there in the Nalanda Monastic University. It is very clear that all these traditions that were practiced in Nalanda were later preserved and practiced in Tibet itself.

Let us look at the time when various texts were translated. In Tibet we have the ancient Nyingmapa tradition, which primarily focuses on the teachings left behind by Shantarakshita. Then, in the ancient Kadampa tradition we will find that it primarily follows the teachings of Atisha. As to Atisha himself, in the later part of his life it seems that he studied in the Vikramashila university, but previously he was also a Nalanda scholar. And if you then look at the *Path and the Fruit* teachings of *Lam-dre*, which come from the highly accomplished master of Virupa, who inherited it from the great master **Neten Chöchön [s. D.]** – he was also known as the elder Dharmapala and he was also a Nalanda scholar. In the case of the Kagyüpa tradition, it comes from Marpa, Milarepa and Gampopa, and their tradition goes back to Maitripa and particularly Naropa. It is said that Naropa was not only a great Nalanda scholar, but he was also the guardian of the northern gate of that famous monastic university. Similar is the case of the new Kadampa or Gelugpa transmission, it also has its source in the Nalanda monastery. Thus, if you review and study all these four main Tibetan Buddhist schools, Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyü and Gelug, you will find that they have their source in the Nalanda tradition. And therefore we can very proudly and safely say that the Buddhism that is practiced in Tibet is the faultless tradition of the Nalanda monastery.

There are further reasons to prove this point. When it comes to expounding the meaning of the very vast and profound stages of the path, the Tibetan scholars always cite quotations from the great Indian masters, primarily from the Nalanda monastery. So this also shows the authenticity of such teaching.

In the case of Shantarakshita himself, he was a scholar from the Nalanda tradition. According to some of the Indian scholars, they say that Shantarakshita visited Tibet when he was 75 years old and he stayed in Tibet for around 20-25 years and passed away when he was around 100 years old. But according to some Tibetan scholars we say that Shantarakshita lived for 900 years, and one of my friends, an Indian scholar, says that maybe there was a mistake in number, it may be 90, not 900. Whatever the case, he was especially kind to the people of Tibet. Just imagine how Shantarakshita, who was already at a ripe old age, could have made it to Tibet! There was no airplane, there was no car or railway. At most he would have been riding on a horse, and in certain cases maybe on a donkey crossing those deep valleys with great difficulty. Just from that we can understand that it is really due to the compassion of these great masters that they have made it to Tibet. And not only that, before he passed away, Shantarakshita made a prophecy saying that “My student, Kamalashila, will come and visit Tibet and he will further preserve and clarify the sanctity of Buddha’s teaching.”

With regard to Kamalashila himself there are two stories. According to one story, Kamalashila visited Tibet and was later known as the great siddhi Padampa Sangye. And according to another story it says that this kind master was later killed by the Tibetans by harming his kidney. [? The German translation does not say so but states that Kamalashila was invited by Shantarakshita.] And so this text, called the *Middle Stages of Meditation*, was composed by this great master.

As you all know, Tibetans do not know Pali, do not know Sanskrit, and the kind of Sanskrit that we read in the Tibetan language itself is corrupted in the sense that our accent does not really correspond to the original Sanskrit tune or accent. So when we try to read some of the Sanskrit lines in Tibetan language itself, it sounds like a Mongolian speaking Tibetan. Thus in terms of accent we are really far from the original accent and I have here the occasion of listening directly to the recitation by great Sanskrit masters, and they are really very moving. When you hear their beautiful tunes, it reminds you of the great masters of the past like Aryadeva, Nagarjuna and so forth. Even though our accent is not good, we Tibetans certainly have preserved the meaning in the way the Buddha once said: “Do not rely on the words but on the meaning.” So I think it is fine that we are able to preserve the meaning. In this way we can say that the Tibetans have safely preserved the Nalanda tradition and we are practicing it.

If you read the *Stages of Meditation*, this text explains how the Buddha achieved a state without fault and full of qualities. The Buddha reached this state of having complete qualities and having no fault by depending on causes and factors. And this process of producing qualities and faults depending on their causes and factors is in tune with the way that things function. Whatever type of conditioned phenomenon it may be, whether it is a harmful object or a beneficial one, they all arise from their individual causes and factors. They cannot be developed by different causes and factors at random, they need to depend on their individual causes and factors that have the capacity to produce such results. And therefore all conditioned

phenomena, whose nature is momentary, whose nature is continuously changing, they have to depend on a cause and factor which is also momentary and which is also forever transient and changing. And it is within this context that the Buddha taught the *Four Noble Truths*. For example, when the Buddha taught the True Suffering, he spoke about the four features – that any object whose nature is true suffering is impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless.

When we talk about impermanence we have to realize that it has two aspects: the grosser level of impermanence and the subtler level of impermanence. The impermanence that has been taught by the enlightened Buddha is primarily this subtle impermanence. In the case of the grosser level of impermanence, this refers to those types of changes, those types of impermanent phenomena, which we all can perceive and feel directly. For example we can see the disappearance of continuity, we can see people becoming old and so forth. So all these gross changes that occur at the visible level clearly show that a much more subtler process of changes is going on underneath, because in the absence of the subtle level of changes it is not possible to observe these grosser levels of changes. And this shows that these changes very much depend on their individual causes and factors. Therefore it is wrong to think that the role played by the cause is only to produce a fruit and to let it exist and abide, and later, when it comes to the disintegration of that object, we need to cultivate a fresh cause for its destruction and disappearance. This is not the case. The cause by which a phenomenon is produced, this cause itself becomes a cause, becomes a factor for the disintegration and disappearance of that object. Thus when we view the subtler level of impermanence in terms of its momentary changes, we need to realize that it is the very cause that has produced that particular phenomenon, which is also responsible for the disintegration of that object. And this clearly proves the meaning of interdependent origination at the level of conditioned phenomena.

These interrelated changes that we observe on different levels, on the grosser level and on the subtler level, are nothing but the law of nature. It is not something that is created by the blessing and power of the Buddha, it is not something created by the force of the karma of sentient beings, it is the way things are, it is the way how the natural phenomena function, and therefore the causes and factors which produce these conditioned phenomena have to be impermanent, changing. Permanent phenomena cannot produce such a changing result.

And just like the happiness and the suffering that we experience – they depend on their causes and factors – similarly the experiencer or enjoyer, the sentient being that enjoys the happiness, that experiences the suffering, these sentient beings, the experiencers themselves, are also impermanent and not permanent.

If you take the example of an external phenomenon like a tree and so forth, it is clear that it arises depending on causes and factors. The same holds for the physical body of an individual person, it also

depends on its causes and factors. This is something that we all can perceive if we give it some thought. In the case of the internal mind, internal consciousness, it is also clear that the internal experiences are very much dependent on their causes and conditions, and within the world of the mind there are so many different types of the mind and each depends on its particular causes and factors. Whether it is a positive mental quality or a negative mental quality, they all depend on their individual causes and factors. In the case of positive mental factors like loving kindness, compassion and so forth, they are dependent on their causes and factors. It is the same with negative states of mind like hatred, anger and all those types of afflictive emotions, which create unhappiness in our mind, they are also dependent on their causes and factors.

Therefore, by observing this play of the cause and effect relationship in all realms and areas of conditioned phenomena, it is important to strengthen the causes and factors which are responsible for developing positive qualities like loving kindness and compassion. For example with regard to loving kindness, if you really want to strengthen loving kindness, then it's important to make your mind habituated with loving kindness and to cherish the causes and factors that are responsible for producing such loving kindness.

In the case of harmful emotions like hatred and so forth it is important to see the faults of these negative afflictive emotions. By seeing the faults we should distance ourselves from these afflictive emotions and not voluntarily welcome them, and it is through this way that we can minimize them. So it is this interplay of causes and factors that helps us to change our mind.

As outlined in the *Stages of Meditation*, when it comes to cultivating the positive qualities, it is important to unmistakably and correctly identify the causes and factors that are responsible for producing these positive qualities. It should be unmistakable in terms of its entity, the entity or nature of these causes and factors should not be mistaken, and it is not enough that you have correctly identified the unmistakable nature of these causes and factors, the numbers of causes and factors that are necessary should also be present. It is not enough that you have only recognized the correct identity of the causes and factors, or that the numbers are complete, this should be developed systematically, without disrupting the order.

For example in the case of cultivating a crop in a field, first of all the seed should be the correct one, the unmistakable one. In addition to that you would need all the necessary factors and causes, like water, manure, heat and so forth, and likewise the correct sequence should be observed. This means, you should know what types of moisture or heat are necessary before the seed is planted, what type of care should be taken when the seed is planted and what type of care should be taken when the sprout has been produced and so forth.

Therefore, if you ask for the complete, unmistakable causes and factors of achieving enlightenment, this is very clearly explained in the *Stages of Meditation*, where it says:

“Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets, the transcendental wisdom of omniscience has its root in compassion, arises from a cause – the altruistic thought, the awakening mind of bodhicitta and the perfection of skillful means.”

Kamalashila then continues:

Moved by compassion, Bodhisattvas take the vow to liberate all sentient beings. Then by overcoming their self-centered outlook, they engage eagerly and continuously in the very difficult practices of accumulating merits and insights.

This clearly shows that compassion is the foundation, the root, and induced by this great compassion you should develop bodhicitta, the altruistic wish to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Then, in order to further enhance the practice of bodhicitta, you should engage in the practice of the six perfections, and the practice of the six perfections is completed by undertaking a conjoined practice of calm abiding mind and special insight.

Here, just before the quotation that I have cited, is another quotation that I would like to read:

If you ask, “What are the causes and conditions of the final fruit of omniscience?” I, who am like a blind man, may not be in a position to explain [by myself], but I shall employ the Buddha’s own words as he spoke them to his disciples after his enlightenment.

It is very important to understand this quotation in its proper context. Kamalashila calls himself “like a blind man” and says that he is not in a position to explain the teaching of the Buddha by himself, without depending on Buddha own words. On the one hand he says this to observe a sense of humility, being a great practitioner, and on the other hand, he was giving his teaching purely to Buddhist followers, and therefore there’s nothing wrong in citing this quotation from the words of the Buddha himself. However, this should not give the implication that in order to establish liberation and omniscience, we need to always rely on a quotation or citation from the Buddha himself.

This point is very clearly explained if you read the lines of paying homage, which are found in the famous text of epistemology [what is its title, please?] by Dignaga, where he speaks about how the Buddha achieved a state of valid experience through the practice of compassion and so forth. Later, these verses have been explained in the second chapter of the epistemological text [= Pramanavartika ?] composed by Dharmakirti, where the whole concept and the qualities of nirvana and enlightenment are proved through logic and reasoning. Such a process of establishing the facts through the use of logic and reasoning is very important, because in terms of explaining this concept to a non-Buddhist, there’s no way you can recite

quotations from the words of the Buddha, because they will not readily accept such a quotation.

However, it is possible that in terms of understanding certain very subtle qualities of nirvana and enlightenment, we may have to depend on certain citations, but there also we rely on certain citations by first understanding and proving the teacher, the Buddha, as a valid, reliable master. And this whole process has to be done in the systematic order of how all phenomena are perceived.

Among the many phenomena we can distinguish different levels. The manifest level of phenomena can be directly perceived by our sense faculties, then there is the slightly hidden level of phenomena, which we cannot directly perceive by our sense faculties, but which has to be understood through inference, through logic and reason. And thirdly there exists what is known as the completely hidden phenomena, which have to be understood by relying on certain quotations and citations from the great masters like the Buddha. Dependence on such citations is again dependent on using reason, logic and one's own valid experience. For this reason the process of understanding through inferential cognition is said to be almost relying like a blind man. And it is through the help of inferential cognition that you need to prove that point through your direct experience later on. So there is no need to accept something merely on the ground that it has been taught by the Buddha.

Particularly when you follow the Bodhisattva-pitaka, you categorize the teachings of the Buddha according to the interpretative level and the ultimate level. This means that the very fact of the interpretative level of teachings shows that you do not have to accept everything in its literal form. And when you analyze such a teaching and use reason, you will gradually be able to understand it through direct perception. This process of understanding the different levels of phenomena is also in conformity with the Nalanda tradition. And if there is something that contradicts logic and reason as well as your direct experience, then, even if it is something that has been taught by the Buddha, you have to discard it, there's no need for you to accept it.

The teaching of the Buddha is rooted in the practice of compassion, as is outlined in the *Stages of Meditation* itself, where it clearly says:

Therefore, since compassion is the only root of omniscience, you should become familiar with this practice from the very beginning.

The need to develop compassion is equally emphasized in other major religious traditions of the world. In general all of us have a limited amount of compassion to our relatives, parents, friends and so forth, but in terms of its standard this is very low. So what we need to do is to further strengthen and enhance this limited kind of compassion that we have within us, so that it will grow to a limit where it will be able to

induce a special sense of responsibility to help all suffering mother [?] sentient beings. It is in this way that you need to develop a strong compassion towards other sentient beings, which is known as great compassion. [Here the German translation mentions a Tibetan term phonetically rendered as “raksam”. Is this appropriate in the present context?] In order to develop that great compassion it is important first of all to be able to see all sentient beings as something very close, something very dear to your heart, and this point is also clearly explained in the *Stages of Meditation*:

The compassionate mind has the nature of wishing all suffering beings to be free from suffering. Meditate on compassion for all sentient beings, because the beings in the three realms of existence are intensely tortured by the three types of sufferings in various forms.

In order to develop this kind of feeling of closeness towards other sentient beings, two types of techniques of generating bodhicitta are explained in the texts.

There is a process of developing bodhicitta through the practice of seven causes and effects, or seven cause and effect instructions, and also the process of exchanging oneself for the benefit of other sentient beings, as is being taught in Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* and in the *Precious Garland* by Nagarjuna. In this way you should develop compassion and loving kindness towards all sentient beings without any differentiation and discrimination. And on the second level it is important to know that in order to develop such a genuine compassion it is first of all important to clearly identify the sufferings by which all these sentient beings are afflicted, and therefore the three types of suffering are also explained here in the *Stages of Meditation*. Out of these three sufferings – the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change and the conditioned suffering – it is the conditioned suffering that needs to be clearly identified and recognized for a person who aspires to achieve liberation. This point is again very clearly explained in the *Stages of Meditation*, on page 6, where it says:

Pervasive misery is what arises under the power of causes characterized by actions and disturbing emotions. It has the nature and characteristics of momentary disintegration and pervades all wandering beings.

This clearly shows that it is the presence of this pervasive conditioned suffering, which acts as a basis for all the sufferings that we encounter at present, and it also acts as a foundation of inducing sufferings in the future. Furthermore, in addition to having the nature of momentarily changing like any other conditioned phenomenon, the cause of its momentary change is none other than the ignorance, which is the root cause of samsara, the root cause of the cycle of existence. Thus, its causes are ignorance, contaminated action and so forth. So this cause and factor, which produces these sufferings at the level of pervasive conditioned suffering, is not something auspicious, it is something very inauspicious, very disturbing, and very negative.

Even though there are many different philosophical interpretations as to the meaning of ignorance, it is enough to understand that ignorance here is a mistaken state of mind, a misconception of the reality. Therefore, as long as you are overpowered or controlled by this ignorance, the only thing you will experience is suffering and nothing else. As long you are controlled by this ignorance you will be enslaved forever and you will wander aimlessly within samsara. And as long as you are unable to free yourself from it, you will encounter uninterrupted misfortunes, tragedies, problems and suffering.

Therefore you should develop a strong wish, “How nice if all these sentient beings were separated from such sufferings and the causes of suffering!” And this in fact is the development of great compassion, and in order to develop such a strong sense of great compassion, as I have said earlier, it is a must that you should first clearly identify the sufferings. In order to clearly understand the suffering, in order to clearly recognize the suffering, first of all you should be able to understand the suffering related to yourself. Without having a slight understanding of suffering related to yourself, it is a lip service to talk about the sufferings that are being experienced by other sentient beings. You will have no real idea how other sentient beings suffer, unless you have that experience yourself.

In terms of actual practice, the sequence should be therefore to first clearly identify the suffering related to yourself, by which you are here within the samsara, and then secondly to develop a similar understanding of the sufferings of other sentient beings and then develop great compassion. Consequently, when you first reflect upon the sufferings by which you are afflicted yourself, through understanding that suffering, you will be able to develop a strong sense of renunciation; and when you contemplate the sufferings of other sentient beings, you will be able to develop great compassion. Thus, even though the text first explains how to care for other sentient beings, in terms of your actual practice it is important to first reflect on these different levels of sufferings related to yourself, and then develop compassion on other sentient beings.

With regard to the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* by Atisha Dipamkarashrijnana, he opens this text by saying:

In Sanskrit: Bodhipataprādīpam.  
In Tibetan: Jang-chub lam-gyi drön-ma.

The first two verses refer to paying homage and making a promise to compose the text:

Homage to the Bodhisattvas, the youthful Manjushri  
I pay homage with great respect,

to the Conquerors of the three times,  
to their teachings and to those  
who aspire to virtue.

Urged by the good disciple Jangchup Wö  
I shall illuminate the lamp  
for the path of enlightenment.

The next three verses speak about the three types of individuals with three different mental capacities:

Understand there are three kinds of persons  
because of their small, middling  
and supreme capacities.  
I shall write clearly distinguishing  
their individual characteristics.

As we have read in the *Stages of Meditation* by Kamalashila, when it comes to achieving enlightenment, it is important to cultivate unmistakable causes and factors with complete number and proper sequence. Here the same point is explained by expounding on these three types of individuals with different mental capacities. This means that at the initial stage, when our mind is not trained, we should not try to reach out after the higher subjects, or higher paths of practices, we should be content with grosser levels of practices and studies. After that we can move on to the second stage, where we try to understand a subtler level, and finally, when our mind is well trained, we should make an attempt to reflect on even subtler levels of teachings.

The same method should also be observed in the case of development of the spiritual path. Since all these spiritual paths and visualizations are dependent on each other, as is explained in the four reasonings, four logics – the law of nature, the law of function and so forth, it is important that one is able to undertake a systematic practice, as all these visualizations and paths are interlinked. Thus, if you undertake a systematic practice it will be much easier for you to develop the path. It is in this context that the three types of individuals as practitioners and followers of the stages of the path have been identified.

When we talk about three individuals, the individuals with low mental capacity or small mental capacity refers to those individuals, who strive to obtain only the pleasures of this life. Atisha says in the third verse:

Know that those who by whatever means  
seek for themselves no more  
than the pleasure of cyclic existence  
are persons of the least capacity.

In the case of the lesser individuals there are again two types, one are very ordinary lesser individuals, and the second are the lesser individuals as explained in this particular text. The 'very ordinary lesser individuals' applies to those, whose aim is to fulfill the pleasures of this life alone, and the 'lesser individuals' explained in this text refers to those beings, to those individuals, whose wish is to achieve higher rebirth, a higher state in the next life.

The case of individuals with middle mental capacity refers to those individuals who are fed up with the pleasures of this world, and who have developed a strong wish to get liberated from the sufferings of conditioned existence:

Those who seek peace for themselves alone,  
turning away from worldly pleasures  
and avoiding destructive actions  
are said to be of middling capacity.

It is these practitioners who see the afflictive emotions and the self-grasping as the root cause of the cycle of existence, the root cause of sufferings, and their aim therefore is to sever, to eliminate the ignorance which is the root cause of samsara. As a facilitating factor they also engage in the practice of development of calm abiding, and as a foundation of this practice they also observe ethical discipline. In this way the main practice and path adopted by the individuals with middle capacity is the practice of the three trainings, that is calm abiding, ethical discipline and wisdom.

After such a practice of the individuals of middle mental capacity, one is then gradually able to see how oneself is afflicted by different levels of sufferings. And when one reflects in a similar way on how other sentient beings are afflicted by these different levels of sufferings, then gradually one is able to develop a wish to acquire enlightenment for the sake of helping all sentient beings, and in this pursuit one develops an aspiration to become enlightened. Such a level of mind is called the mind of an individual of great mental capacity. In the fifth verse one reads:

Those who, through  
their personal suffering,  
truly want to end completely  
all the suffering of others  
are persons of supreme capacity.

Here too you can clearly see that there is a sequence of practice, there is an order of practice, depending upon your mental capacity.

With regard to the actual practices of the individuals of small mental capacity and middle mental capacity, the explanation in the *Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas* is much clearer. The *Thirty-Seven Practices* is a text composed by Ngulchu Thogme Zangpo. The first verse is paying homage to Avalokiteshvara, the second verse is making a promise to compose the text, and the third verse explains the preciousness of human life, the freedom that we have and the rarity of obtaining such a precious human life. The process of making this precious human life meaningful is through hearing, thinking and meditating on the teachings of the Buddha, and all these points are explained one after the other, and we will talk more about this tomorrow.

His Holiness said, “As I was giving the teachings in the form of lecture, there’s no need to make a mandala offering, and sometimes in fact it gives the impression that unless a mandala is made, it is not possible to give a teaching, but that is not the case.”

For those of you who are more rigorous, and who are more interested, then in the morning or whenever you have time, try again to reflect on the points that I have already explained and read the texts, it would be quite helpful.