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**ACI Course 5: How Karma Works**  
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**presented by Geshe Michael Roach**

**(RAW TRANSCRIPT)**

**CI 5, Class 1—INCOMPLETE TYPING**

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: refuge]

I, I'll go through the course really fast with you and then we'll, ya know, then we'll start in serious. This is basically a course in Abhidharma, this is your first course in Abhidharma.. We studied five great books in the monastery. The plan of the five year course is that you spend a year on each but, but maybe one course each year on each. So you have done, ah, higher Madhyamika school twice already, you've done the lower Madhyamika school and you've done, the, ah, sutra school. Okay, you've done the, the logic school already. You've been introduced to those three. Abhidharma is a new school for you. Ah, normally in the monastery, in my monastery we don't do it till our fifteenth or sixteenth year. Ah, we had a real rare opportunity, with Rinpoche started in 1974 or '75 to teach Abhidharma and he taught it for ten years. And, ah, we went through the whole text, ah, very, some people memorized it and ah, I was lucky, I go the whole thing and memorized about half of it. And ah, we translated the, the, the translat... the commentary by the first Dalai Lama. Which was one of the things that made him famous and then after he died, they decided to make him the first Dalai Lama. He was a student of Tsongkapa, Je Tsongkapa. So that, that's, I love Abhidharma, it's , it's very dear to my heart and um, this is your first, ah, introduction to Abhidharma. We're gonna the fourth chapter which is dedicated to karma. And it is probably the best, ah, presentation of karma if you don't count Je Tsongkapa's:

[b:Lam Rim Chemo]

So we're going to spice it up with a little bit of :

[b:Lam Rim Chemo]

So, ah, the first class is, be an introduction to Abhidharma, ya know everyone

throws around the word Abhidharma and nobody knows what it is. Ah, there're a lot of strange books out called Abhidharma that have nothing to do with Abhidharma and, ah, you'll know that after you finish tonight's class, and then a little bit about the school where it comes from, the school of philosophy that [unclear]. The second class will be ah, a little bit about what is karma. Ya know, we spoke, we've spoken about it before, about how a movement of the mind is the basic kind of karma and we'll talk about it. And then the detailists, and they're the Abhidharma school, they, they believe in a certain kind of special colors and shapes form, I should say physical matter, that you can't see, that, ah, has to do with ethics or your morality and we'll talk about that. It's a very special idea of their school. Ah, number three we'll talk about the different kinds of deeds, bad deeds, good deeds, what makes a good deed, what makes a bad deed, and what is motivation, how does motivation affect it. Ah, number four is, we're gonna talk about karma and what you get back. You know, what kinds of results do you get from certain kinds of karma. And, ah, we're going to use Je Tsongkapa mostly for that and then we'll also refer to the first Dalai Lama. Ah, I felt like, ah, the Abhidharma doesn't really explain how karma is carried with you until it comes back to you. Ah, it is not very detailed on that. So, I, I have found ah, Je Tsongkapa presented the mind only school in his, in his, ah masterpiece on ah emptiness called [unclear to me.] And there's a beautiful section in there about how karma is carried, the, the way in which karma is carried and that's ah presented by the mind only school. And that's actually accepted by the higher school's, we accept their presentation of the mind, of how, of how karma is carried. We also by the way accept, even the higher school's accept the Abhidharma presentation of karma, well, almost everything, okay? So ah, we're gonna talk, I, I think it's important for a westerner to, to hear a decent explanation of how karma is actually carried otherwise it is hard to accept it, for me. Ah, and I, I was just, I love that explanation, it's a really good explanation of how karma stays with you. Ah, number six, is even more interesting, which is, ah, what's the relation, relationship between karma and emptiness and why does there have to be emptiness for karma to work and, ah, why was it's Tsongkapa's, ah, whad'ya call it, ah, fixation, where he was fanatic about the fact that (portion of tape is repeated here) karma and emptiness are inter-related.

That morality and emptiness, are, are dependent on each other, that they are closely intertwined and, and, he felt that most schools were either emphasizing one or the other and missed the whole point that they are interrelated. So we're gonna cover that from the monastic texts of Sera Mey which are the best ones. Ah, class number seven is ah, the, there's a thing called black karma, white karma, and there's a very important concept called path of karma or path of

action. And then we're gonna get into the ten root nonvirtues, okay, and we'll talk about those. Class number eight, ah, there's a concept called most basic virtue, which means the, the, storehouse of virtue within your consciousness, within your mental stream. And there's a way with certain mistaken actions that you can destroy that. And I thought we'd better get into that [laughs], okay. Ah, that's very important [unclear] and I thought we'd better get into that, [laughs], okay. Ah, that's a very important concept the Abhidharma takes a lotta time to explain it and I think we'd better know about it. Um, and then there's the distinction between projecting energy and finishing energy. Ah, Karma has two different ways of producing it's result and we're gonna study those two different ways, the two different kinds of energy karma has. Ah, class number nine is the five immediate, immediate misdeeds means immediate bad deeds, means after you commit one of these in your life and if you leave it unconfessed and unpurified, then right after you die you go to hell, the lowest hell, ah, that's why they're called immediate, there's no ah, there's no other birth between that and hell. You go through a bardo but then you go straight to hell. Ah, there's no other birth between that and, that life and the next life in hell, the lowest hell. So we'd better know what those five are. And then the idea of a schism. Schism means, uh, the, one of the most serious, maybe the most serious bad deed you can do, of the five, is to split up the sanga, to ah, cause a division among practitioners of Buddhism. Ah, so we, ya know, that's something that technically we can't do, it has to be done during the time of the Buddha. It has to be, there're a lot of things that you should know about that. But we can do what's called {je tumba}, you know, we can do something similar. And, and we're very close to that, I know I am. Ya know I live with monks, it's very easy for me to criticize one monk to another monk, or even just fellow students. And that, in the higher teachings, that's a very serious, ah, ah, infraction of the vows. So I think we'll spend some time on the idea of being careful not to split up the sanga. Ah, and then number ten, is, ah, what, what bad deeds are, are, more serious than other ones and what makes the same bad deed more or less serious, okay. And what, what makes a good deed very good, okay. So we'll study that. Ya know you can't do all the good deeds, that are possible, and it's important to prioritize them, ya know. So we'll talk about them. So that's a quick look at the syllabus. It's my intention to finish, finish, by December 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> or something like that. I mean I don't intend to go overseas and I don't intend to miss any classes except what's on here. So, ya know, we'll try to finish in time for Christmas and holidays and whatever, ya know, you have to go and be with your families and I want to finish well before the holiday season. So I will do the best I can to, I don't see any problems, but, ya know, karma will tell

[laughs][laughter]. All right, we'll get into Abhidharama. Any questions?

[student:] Do you have any idea when the ..... start....?

I would guess around March. In February I will be in retreat and in January I have to go to the debates although that might be moved up, I'm almost sure it will be March. And we're gonna try try to send out an announcement about a month ahead of time. Anne-la is very good at [unclear] Margie..[laughs] we're getting more organized, alright, a little bit. Abhidharma is a sanskrit word, the Tibetan equivalent is {chu ngunpa}. Please say {chu}[repeat], {ngunpa}[repeat], {chu ngunpa}[repeat]{chu ngunpa}[repeat]. Alright, we'll get into what it means later, alright? Ah, its one of the very first forms of buddhism that came in India. Normally its around the third council of, of early buddhism so it is one of the first forms of buddhism, it's a Hinayana form of buddhism. Some people call it Teravadan or Hinayana. And Hinayana basically means, in, in Tibetan, its explained as a school were people are working mostly for their own liberation, to become a Buddha, but not mainly, they cannot, they cannot, really, relate to teachings where you're supposed to do this for the sake of all sentient beings. In Tibetan, the word Hinayana means low capacity, small vehicular capacity. The word {tekpa} means vehicular, how much a truck can carry, how much a wall can hold up, okay, so it's a Hinayana school. And just, you don't have to know it, but we're studying the [unclear]tradition. There were eighteen divisions of it, long story, okay. The main book, this you have to know, that all Tibetan monasteries use, for the study of Abhidharma and, and, basically, most of the great scholars of each of the sects, you know, whether of the traditions, Sakaya, Gelugpa, Kagyu or Nyingma, most of the great scholars have used this root text, that's called the [b:Abhidharmakosha]. It's a, it's a long word, in Sanskrit there's no dividers between words, I mean the whole, the sentence just goes on without any spaces between the words. And when two words like have an "a" that meet, meets together, it forms a new long "a" and then, you can't break it up for people, it's difficult to make it convenient to people, you just have to write it out in this long string. Say Abhidharma[repeat] kosha [repeat] Abhidharma [repeat]kosha. In Tibetan, it's {chu} [repeat] {ngunpa} [repeat] {dzu}[repeat]; {chu} [repeat]{ngunpa}[repeat]{dzu}[repeat]. That's the main root text that we will use and that's the main text used in all Tibetan monasteries. It's about, it's about one hundred fifty pages, it's a long story to memorize, [laughs], but it's a nice, nice thing to know. Okay, this is the author's name, Vasubandhu, say Vasubandhu, [repeat], and in Tibetan is{Loppon}[repeat]{Yiknyen}[repeat]{Loppon} [repeat]{Yiknyen}. The Tibetans translated most of the Sanskrit names, into Tibetan, by syllable, which is why Tibetan is so famous for, for translating

buddhism accurately 'cause they were fanatical about translating every single syllable, even though it didn't make any, didn't have any meaning in some cases, ya know, {unclear}, nobody knows what the words mean but have to translate it. It basically means "wealth of the earth" or something but didn't have anything to do with, it wasn't a descriptive name that I know of. He was the author of it, what's his brother's name, half brother? [student: Asanga]. Asanga, he was the half-brother of Asanga. You know the story, their mother was a nun. She, she, she had clairvoyance, she saw that if she had children, she saw that Buddhism was declining in her time. And she saw that if she had children, they would become some of the greatest masters of Buddhism that every lived. So she purposely disrobed, she had one son by a king, one son by a brahmin. And, they became, those two became the two greatest scholars of Buddhism ever, if you don't include Nagarjuna and Je Tsongkapa, probably. They, they, wrote most of the books we study in the monastery. They wrote the whole, Asanga went and with Maitreya wrote the great five books of Maitreya and Yiknyen was responsible for the Abhidharma. Was he a Hinayana follower?

16.09

**CLASS 2: THE NATURE OF KARMA AND WHAT IT PRODUCES**

[b: Abhidharmakosha], it's very, very important [unclear] very, very important right. The first {le} means 'karma'. Deeds, actions - those are synonyms, you know. Deeds, actions, karma - okay. I, I ... you ought to know karma comes from the sanskrit word {kur}, meaning to do something. It's one of the most basic words in the sanskrit language - {kur} - okay. It probably came into [unclear] sometime, I don't remember. Anyway, {le-le}. The second name means 'from'. Unfortunately they're spelt the same and sound the same and mean two completely different things. {le-le} [repeat]

{Jikten} means ... {jikten} is the, is the Tibetan word for the 'world - the suffering world'. In sanskrit it's just one word - {loka} but in Tibetan they ... this is one of the early translations. They tried to catch the meaning, they made a new word. {Jik} means 'to be destroyed' and {ten} means 'a basis', so your body is a {jikten} and your world is a {jikten}. It's, it's, it's going to - sooner or later, it will collapse, it will fall apart. The world, meaning you and your environment, are both perishable, perishable things. That's {jikten}. So, {jikten} means 'the world'. It can also mean 'planet'. And in Buddhism a planet is a complicated thing. It's not just a round ball with people standing on it. Okay. [laughs]. That's a long story - I won't go into it [laughs]. That's the third chapter of the [b: Abhidharma]. But basically, it's got all of these levels - there's many levels that we can't see. You know, there's the hell realms, preta realms, on each planet they have their own hell realms, they have their own preta realms, they have their own partial hell realms, they have their own deity realms. You can't see almost any of it, you know.

[student: The [b:Abhidharma] isn't the English type of translation?]

It's been - since it's the main book of southern Buddhism, it's been translated many times by Sri Lankan scholars and things like that. There was a great French translation [unclear] - I don't speak any French [laughs] so ...

[student: But is there any English?]

And then someone translated that into English - Veo Prudent - and that's the other commentary. That's Vasubandhu's .

[student: Is that worth, you think, trying to read?]

It's pretty decent. It's very expensive, it's about, I don't ... two hundred bucks.

[student: Four hundred]

[student: Is it, is it very big?]

It's four volumes and it's well done. I mean I kind of ... like, and I haven't read much of it and we translated this first time on this commentary but we haven't polished it yet. About ... we started twenty years ago, finished ten years ago [laughs] and we didn't try ... we never got it cleaned up, it's on the disc. You can look at it some time. I can give you the disc. You can play with it.

[student: But it's in English?]

Yep, with the root text and the commentary. {Jikten na-tsok ... na-tsok} means 'various, multitude' - okay. {Na-tsok} means 'many different kinds' - okay. For example, {na-tsok dema} in the higher ... in the secret teachings there is a special multi-coloured lotus. It has different colours, that's {na-tsok}. So, {na-tsok} means 'all these different kinds'. {Kye} means 'they come' - okay. So the whole first line, the first line of the fourth chapter, is the most important line in the whole thing. It says... what did the third chapter talk about?

[student: The world and where it came from]

The world and the beings in it. And now he is opening up the fourth chapter. It's called {Sum Joi Wa}. It's called building a bridge in Tibetan. Good composition. Supposed to relate it to last chapter. So he says "and if you want to know where all these different planets come from, of the universe," and they have outlines of the planets, you know. There's this galaxy over there, this galaxy over there, you know, that planets named that, that planet's going to appear on this month. All those different planets and all those different beings living on those planets, came from {le}.

[student: What's { le } ?]

Karma - okay. And that's really, you know, you know, last class we were saying - if you came out of it, if you ever did come out of it, with a little inkling of what,

that you might, of some strong, lets say some decent foundation, that you might continue on after you die and that you were here before. That's enough, that was a big achievement. This class you, you're supposed to now focus on, on actions, your actions - what you do and then if you get some kind of instinct or feeling for how that creates your world, you know, how that actually determines your world and you. That you and your world are fluid and they, they're blank actually. They could have become anything depending on your actions now. And what you have now, whether you like it or not, the things you like and the things you don't like all came from karma. I mean, Geshe Darge , my first teacher, he used to say the feeling of the fan on your cheek, it's, I mean everything from there on up is from karma, I mean everything so ...

[student: If everything comes from karma and karma is caused by ignorance and attachment and all that, what caused ignorance and the attachment if mind is, what - how would we define mind? In other words, what makes a blink of karma?]

It's like original sin, I guess. [laughs]

[student: Yeah, exactly]

It's been lousy forever, okay. [laughs] I mean if you were in the last class you'd know that there was no beginning to your mind because there was always that death that came just before your first moment of consciousness and that death, because you have the kind of consciousness you have now, was a ... you had certain kinds of misperceptions at death and therefore you had to take them at birth. And that's ...

[student: Yeah, but that was a beginning for karmic ...]

No, no, beginning. No beginning to all the universes. I mean, universes come and go.

[student: Mind is endless and karma is endless]

[laughter]

[laughs] I just said that... we'll talk about it.

[student: I know what you're saying]

I know, I know what you're saying - it's beginningless - it is beginningless.

[student: So karma is beginningless?]

Yeah, yeah, it is beginningless. You know we've already proven that in the last course. We took [laughs], you know, three or four months [laughs] to prove that - the class was endless, the point was beginningless.

[laughter]

[student: [unclear] Mind was beginningless, not karma was beginningless. If karma is beginningless ... ]

If mind is beginningless, karma is beginningless because karma creates the mind. It has to.

[student: So then, how then if it is beginningless, it's endless?]

Yeah.

[student: Then how come we even think that that is possible?]

You can purify it but you can't destroy it. You can't destroy mind. You can put an atomic bomb in it's way ...

[student: No, I'm talking about karma. I'm not talking about mind]

Oh. There's a kind of ... according to [b: Abhidharma] there's a ...

[student: How can you get rid of it? It's like you can't get rid of your dhar .... of karma]

You can get rid of your ignorance, that's beginningless. You can get rid of suffering, that's beginningless. Just because it's always been that way doesn't mean it's always got to be that way - okay. {Le-le jikten na-tso kye}. So that's, that's Vasubandhu's first statement about karma. Why is he saying that? He, he wants to point out, he's trying to point out, two different things and the first one is this. Who's he, who's he mostly fighting with - do you remember? It's about the same people that Dharmakirti did.

[student: [unclear]

No, no, whoever the [unclear] were [unclear] Vasubandhu's time - that's two hundred years later. [Unclear] general word for non-Buddhist or Hindu and he's fighting with Hindus who believe in three different things.

[student: Can you say that sentence, the whole sentence before you go onto the next bit?]

Yeah, oh, why don't I give you the reading. It's there - the levitude of worlds come from karma. I say here deeds cause the multitude of worlds.

[student: Which would you prefer us to know?]

[laughter]

I'd, I'd use... deeds cause the multitude of worlds because that's what's in your reading.

[student: Cause or caused?]

Cause.

[student: So what is the basis to be destroyed fit in here?]

That's the translation, that's the literal meaning of the Tibetan word for world. {jikten} can also mean 'planet'. {Jikten bah} means 'a layman'. A worldly person - okay. And then Pabongka says "well, {jikten pa} means anybody who hasn't seen emptiness [unclear]". Anyway, [silence] three things that the, that ... I almost said Dharmakirti. Vasubandhu's fighting against three ideas. One of the main reasons he wanted to write that first line was because the people in India when he was there, believed in these three things, one of these three things. Say {gyu takpa} [repeat]

{Tsowo} [repeat]

{Wang chuk} [repeat]

Okay. {Gyu takpa} ... {gyu} means 'cause' and {takpa} means 'unchanging'.

{Gyu} means 'cause' and {takpa} means 'unchanging'. The second one is {tsowo}. {Tsowo} means 'main or principal'. That's the word for 'Principal teachings of Buddhism' in that little book's title. {Tsowo} means 'main or principal' - okay. You can translate it as primal energy, primal energy ..... and then the third one is {wangchuk}. {Wangchuk} gets the Tibetan translation of {Ishvrrar} and you can think of it as indra. It doesn't much matter.

[student: What?]

Indra - Indra's a Hindu God .... Hindu deity. There .... The ..... those were the three big ideas around in ..... in Vasubandhu's time... for what?

[student: Resistance ... ]

Where the world came from all right ... where the world came from. {Gyu takpa} is, was impersonal. {Gyu takpa} was like a big bang theory or something like that - okay. It's a cause but it .... nothing came before it, nothing caused it. It was the first cause of all.

[student: Uncaused cause?]

You could say uncaused cause [laughter].

[student: Original cause?]

Unchanging cause. If it's uncaused, it's unchanging so it's the cause of all causes. Not, not necessarily a being {tsowo}, {Tsowo} is like, it's hard to describe but it's like a being but it's not like a being. Anyway it's the energy in the universe that creates things - okay.

[student: It's not the energy itself, though]

It's hard to describe because it's so... doesn't exist. But anyway it's a ... for example they believe there were twenty five different divisions. {Sum-kyer} school who believed there were certain numbers of existing phenomena and there was this energy or being. You can say primal energy - okay - and, and he had a permanent part and an impermanent part. And the impermanent part does things and makes the world and things, things like that. It's like a primal, it's an energy behind the universe.

[student: The force]

The force. [laughter] They did have vague ideas.

[student: The force]

The schools are very well developed. The ideas are hard to describe. This is like the cause of all causes. This is like the force - really that's not a bad translation and {wangchuk} is, that's a creative god - okay, a creator being. That's a guy who, I think they say he stirred up the ocean with a big stick and I don't know what happened. Something...

[student: Feminine?]

It's ... I don't think of him as feminine. I think it's a him. I think Ishvara is a ...

[student: You said Ishvara?]

Well, a lot of Tibetans say Indra - Indra's actually somebody else but they get .... I mean, you go to India and try to ask the difference between Ishvara and Indra you, you know it's pretty confused now. There's two hundred, there's hundreds of Hindu [unclear], there's thousands of deities. And if you ask what's the difference, if you ask [unclear] - what's the difference between Krishna, Ishvara and Indra you know, you'll get - well, he's blue and he, you know, well that's about it, you know. It's all confused now. As far as I can tell. I'm not a very good ... I don't know much about it. The oldest schools were better and well presented in the Madhyamika schools. You can study the Hindu ... the real old Hindu schools, better in Madhyamika, than you can if you go to India nowadays. So those are the three, those three things according to the non-Buddhist caused the world.

[student: Didn't you say {tsowo} was also being - force or being?]

Yup - they think of him as a being. Primal energy.

[student: And what's the difference between {tsowo} and {wangchuk}?]

I don't know [unclear] [laughs], this is like ...he's more personalised, how's that. This is, this is like [unclear], sometimes he's not personalised and he, it's a ... it's a primal energy that exists behind all things.

[student: Sounds like paganism]

Like what?

[student: Paganism - that's what they believe, kinda ]

Yeah, it's like that. I, this is... [unclear] is explained better in Madhyamika than I'm explaining it now. But anyway there's these three things. These two are unchanging, maybe that's a good thing to say. This one is changing. These two are unchanging, this one is changing.

[student: How is {tsowo} unchanging?]

Excuse me?

[student: How is {tsowo} unchanging?]

He's just about to be unchanging, he never takes ... this is what the Hindus say.

[student: Oh, this is a being, this ... {tsowo} is a being?]

She asked me that, I ... generally you think of him as a being, but it's not very clear. I, I'll check [unclear] is not, it's like a being but it's like, hard to discover. It's a kind of energy. Number three is definitely a being. Number one is definitely not a a being. Number two is, I'll check and see if it says being anywhere. I mean it doesn't say being, but when they describe him in the same school {Samska} school, it sounds sort of like a being. One of his, one of the twenty five qualities is Being. Capital B. [unclear] anyway, so those are the three things that they said that the world came from. There are two arguments against those three and you already know them. Why, what's the big argument against this one? Argum... we could say argument eh? I ... there were a lot of them but I don't know if you remember any, any of them. [laughs] [laughter].

[student: That, well, I just remember the one, I remember, I remember the one where couldn't ... it couldn't be a personal being because that being would have had to suffer]

Yes, that, that was one of Dharmakirti's because he's perfect. To become perfect you have to have suffered first. It's permanent. He never was suffering before.

He didn't change, he never changed. That's not the argument for Vasubandhu. [laughs] Vasubandhu is concentrating on this argument that a being could have made the world in one shot. He could have made all of history in one moment. He - since there's no, since, since each period doesn't depend on the period before it. You know, nineteenth century doesn't depend on eighteenth century to happen. You can skip from seventeenth to nineteenth century. Seventeenth and nineteenth century can happen at the same time. There's no reason for there to be - what do you call it?

[student: Stages]

Stages or any progression in time.

[student: Linear]

There doesn't have to be linear - it will be one instant in time because he can create the whole thing in one moment. There's no need for him to, the fact that it takes time, the fact that the events of the seventeenth century have to, have to cause the events of the eighteenth century, is, is a problem if you believe in a creative God. It shouldn't require that. A God should be able to - someone who created the universe should be able to create it and then it would end in the same instant. There's no reason for it to, for things ... something to have to come before, something else to make it happen. Cos he's making everything happen. Those things are not causing each other. He's causing everything and that, you know it sounds silly - is actually quite correct. You just have to get used to it. You have to think about it. It, it .... in a world made by a person and doesn't depend on any causes, you know, he could just make it all - everything could happen in one moment and get it over with. Cavemen and the dinosaurs and everything else could happen and, and the space shuttle could all get, get it over with in the same second. That, that would be a quality. Doesn't have to happen in... in stages. The reason it happens in stages is that something has to cause it. The argument against these two - both of these are supposed to be unchanging and if the cause of things was unchanging then things have to be unchanging. Things could never get old, things could never decay, things could never arise again. Things could never fluctuate. There would be no fluctuation of, of anything in the universe - nothing would fluctuate cos it was caused by a permanent unchanging thing. The idea ... why, why, why, does the wall get older. Cos the energy that started it had a limit and the energy that started it is wearing out. It's, it's like a curve like that and the energy created the wall and then the energy is like dissipating even as, as we talk. The wall is disintegrating

as we talk and you can see that. Sooner or later this wall must fall down. Hopefully we will not be in here at the time. And that's, that's fluctuation - a permanent thing which never changes or never, never goes like that, wouldn't have, couldn't cause that. If the cause is like gets strong, strong, strong - creates a thing and then weakens - then the thing has to do that too. If the thing is doing that, if the thing is getting stronger and then, and then disintegrating, then the cause have to been the same. Therefore these two can't cause the world. Those are the main two arguments. What do you care. There are things called {du pas}. So you know {du pa}. {Du pa} {Du pa} means 'a shadow' but it's obscuration - mental shadow. And we have them and they come from your ... they are the pre-suppositions with which you grow up. They are the things you hear from your, from your childhood and now they, your mind is soaked in them and you don't even notice it, you don't know it. So arguments like these sound a little funny or they sound like not very relevant or something but the {du pa} we have is that we really do believe that the world came from some being cos that's the way we grew up. It just happens to, why people told us as we grew up. There's no evidence for it. There's no logic to it. There's no reasonableness to that statement that there's some guy we can't see and he made the world. It doesn't make any sense, but, but, since we grew up with it, we take it seriously. You know, God is spelt with a capital "G" , it's on the coins and on the money. It pervades your world and you believe it, a part of you believes it. That's a {du pa} and you have to try to break that down. Because if you want your world to become happy without suffering, if you want to remove the suffering in your world you have to come to a real strong intellectual understanding that your world comes from your actions - from, from what you do. And if you, if there's ... and as long as the other thought is ten percent of your mind, taking up ten percent of your mind space, you won't, you won't really act properly because you don't really believe it. Ten or twenty percent of your mind doesn't quite accept it so you won't follow the rules of karma. And, and then you'll never get out - you'll always have some suffering so that's, you have to work on that. It's important to know where the world came from. It's not just philosophers arguing and Buddhists fighting with the non-Buddhists and something like that. It's something ... you have to just give up all the old ideas and you have to think, you know, this world came from what I did and my later...my future depends on... my future depends precisely on what I do now.

[student: Trying to understand how these three points fit into the whole chapter of review of karma. So is this ... the idea is these schools had this position so to begin his chapter on karma he wanted to refute the nature of existence before he

moved onto other things]

He's trying to, what's his whole, in [unclear] what's his ultimate goal - what's he trying to do? He's trying to get you out of suffering. So he has to show the process by which suffering was created and basically your suffering is your world and you. So he's, he's trying to explain the process by which this world is created and where you came from. This is actually tied up with the Four Noble Truths. This is all part of them, it's Noble Truth. The world is suffering. Yep.

[student: So if I can pick up on what John was saying, an appropriate title for this section with these three would be the prevalent theories during Vasuhandhu's time of creation or at all times the arguments against karma.]

By the way I didn't speak much about it last time and I wanted to, but you have people ask why don't we just buy one of those translations that comes out of the understanding and use those. I say, well, I have a problem with most of it. What is it - here it is - one of the big problems is this. If you read Truka Rupa Dorge's explanation of the four schools you have to think of the four schools as - these are a design by an omniscient being to, to try to relate to all the possible kinds of beings there are in the world . Through-out all history he's using these four. In other words he's using those four and the first chapter in the 'Abhidharma' say's it because that's the nature of people's minds -there's four kinds of minds, mind sets that can relate to each one of these schools and it's not a historical thing. It's not like Nagarajuna (Two hundred AD), he thought up Madhyamika and then, you know, four hundred years later Chandra .... Dharmakirti he had a good idea and he added that and, it's not like... it's an omniscient being designing four schools for four states of mind of being. He can see two thousand years later what people are going to need and he designs it that way. So, yeah, normally it, it's not just a historical debate between [unclear] and Buddhists in eighth century India. They tend to be universal wrong ideas that beings have throughout history. Otherwise the Buddha wouldn't have designed it that way.

[student: It's like the three most likely possibilities if you don't believe in karma]

Very common.

[student: Whether those days are even now].

Yep. It seems to be a ment ... a thing that people have. They tend to want to believe in these things.

[student: The three greatest misconceptions about creation]

Okay. We happen to be, I mean our culture is pretty much into this one in the religious side and I would say into what, which one for the big bang if you are a scientist? Maybe {Du takpa}.

If you're into the cause of all causes. If you're a scientist.

[student: It used to be that, but now it's bang, bang, bang and it's always been going along, you know, it goes out, the explosion goes [unclear]]

I could never see why, if there was a big bang, there couldn't be one before it, [laughs] you know. But anyway, so that's, that's one half of what he wants to do with that statement. He's trying to do two things, as usual. We call {Nam chik} [unclear]. He's trying to say the world didn't come from those things, the world didn't come from those things. Your office at work didn't come from one of these things. You made it and you have to eat it [laughs] [laughter] and, and, you've got to get it into that mind frame - you know it's not like a guilt trip. It's like intelligence. So you can have a better office later. Okay. That's what you, that's what the world didn't come from. Then on the other side, what's he going to say?

[student: [unclear]]

Now here's where it came from. It's ... as usual there's a negative goal, a negative point to a Buddhist statement and there's a positive point. It's denying that the world came from these things and he wants to prove that it came from karma. [silence] Say {deni} [repeat] {sem-pa} [repeat] {dang de-je} [repeat] {deni} [repeat] {sem-pa} [repeat] {dend de-je} [repeat]. Okay. {Deni} means 'that'. {Deni} means 'that meaning karma', that and then {sem-pa}. You're going to get to know {sem-pa} very well okay. What's the Tibetan word for mind?

[students: {Sem}]

{Sem}. {Sem-pa} is not the same as {sem} okay. Be careful. {Sem} means 'mind'. {Sem-pa} means a totally different thing. People get it confused all the time. {Sem-pa} is this. It's a movement of the mind. It's called... in Tibetan it's called {il la chopa}, {sem il la chopa}. {Sem} means 'mind', {il} means 'object of the mind', {la chopa} means 'it turns the mind to the new object. {Sem il la chopa}. That's the ... and the function of it, the function of {sempa} is to motivate physical and

verbal karma - okay.

[student: So when they talk about the karma of body speech and mind, it's the karma of mind that generates the karma of body and speech]

Yep. It's the whole point. This is his next line. I'll repeat it. We'll talk about it more. So the, the most, the... you know... the virtual karma... you know... the real karma that's running things is {sem-pa}. {Sem-pa} is any... is the movement of the mind. Yep.

[student: What are the emotions that fit into body, speech and mind?]

They are different, they are different mental functions that will be linked with {sem-pa} at all times. {Sem-pa} is always present in the mind. According to Abhidharma there are five mental functions that are always present in the mind. They never go away. They will never go away.

[student: So part of the movement of the mind?]

The mind is always moving.

[student: Whereas the speech and the body are separate?]

Yeah, yeah. So the motivator, the source, is {sem-pa} - okay. {Sem-pa}. {Dang} means 'and'.

[student: And?]

A.N.D. {Dang} means {'dang'} {dang} means 'and'. [laughter] And {de-je} means, {de-je} means 'what it does', 'what it motivates' - okay. What it motivates. And then the next line says {sem-pa} [repeat] {yiky} [repeat] {leyin-no} [repeat] {sem-pa} [repeat] {yiky} [repeat] {leyin-no} [repeat] - okay. Yeh.

[student : Michael, you pronounce it - it's not {sem-pa.} It's like a b,p or something like that ]

It's not a b and it's not a p. You'll have come to Tibetan class to learn about that -okay. {Sem-pa} means that - we'll call it movement of the mind. Okay ? Is yin ... you go to the end of a Tibetan sentence for the verb.[laughs] {yiky le}. {yiky le} means 'karma of the mind'. Karma of the mind. .So how do these three lines go?

So try to digest it. All the planets in the world come from karma. Karma is when your mind moves and anything that, that motivates in your speech or body. Movement of the mind is what mental karma is. That's his first three lines. He, that's... he's setting up the whole presentation of karma right there, okay. When your mind moves you commit mental karma and those movements inspire you to say something like a bad joke and hurt someone's feelings which I do all the time, or move your arms, steal something, give something, kill something, protect life. But it's all... The drivers up in the mind. {Sem-pa} okay. Movement of the mind. Mental karma. So mental karma drives bodily karma and verbal karma. Those are the only three ways you can express yourself. Yuh ?

[student: Could you say that sentence again.]

[student (different): Does it happen also when you reach Buddhahood ?]

Yeh, in this school there's a thing called pure karma, but that's a long story - we'll get to that.

[student: But you still have the moment ?]

You still think - there was a school in Tibet that said the Buddha didn't have a mind, because they had a problem with that. But of course the Buddha thinks - he thinks in a different way .His thoughts are spontaneous but he still, he still thinks... yuh ?

[student: So that karma is only caused by, you know, impure minds or stained minds.]

It depends on which school you're in. The Madhyamika, or lower Madhyamika schools talk a lot about it and we'll talk about it too. They say... they say it has to be... there's two kinds of mental karma. One is motivated by {klesha's}, one is not. Those that are motivated by {klesha's} are dirty and those that are not motivated by karma 's, by {klesha's} are pure karma. It's a long story.

[student: Could you just run through that verse again.]

Yeh, the world - I'm going to paraphrase, okay? The worlds of the universe come from karma. .Karma is any movement of the mind and the things which it inspires. That refers to bodily and verbal action, you know, the things it inspires, it refers to that. [unclear]

[student: It refers to bodily ?]

Karma with your body and karma with your mouth.

[student: Okay]

[student(different):This is, you know , this is a very different sentence. The sentence we had two courses ago, we just had a six word original group sentence that said karma is the movement of the mind and what follows .So what's the difference, what are they trying to say here.]

Same thing, same thing, {demi sempa da le che},same thing. And the third sentence there is when the mind moves, that's what mental karma is. That's mental karma. That karma that we know.

[student: So what do they mean by that ? When the mind moves, when it's changing, what does it make?[unclear]

Having a thought .I,I...it's described in the scriptures as when the mind goes to another object.

[student: When what ?]

When the mind moves to another object. When the mind shifts. Any...I like to go like that and say [laughs], you know, that's mental karma. When your mind goes like that. Shifting. Most minute shifting of the mind. You collect karma by the millisecond.

[student: Okay. So what. The mind ...to me the mind is, you know, in a pure way or in a early stage, you know, before we get into judgement, we're learning, you know...a child, right, sees something, tries to understand what it is. You know, you know, it seems to me that the prime, one of the primary functions of the mind is not judgement or is do [unclear] but trying to understand the world. Why does that cause bad karma?]

I didn't say bad, I said karma. Don't think of karma as bad.

[student: But I... you know what I mean. It seems like it is pure]

Don't think of karma as bad. Don't think of karma as bad. Don't even think of karma as ... I mean there are pure kinds of karma.

[student: It seems like a lot of what mind does is trying to understand]

That's neutral. You know. If you try to understand the causes of AIDS to cure a lot of people, it's a great virtue and if you're trying to understand how to make money, how to cheat your friends, that's a non-virtue. Trying to under .... If you're just a pure scientist and you just want to know, that's called neutral. And there is such a thing. Okay. One more and then we've got to go.

[student: Is it a case of the mind when you're talking of the movement of the mind, it's a lot of what is contained, in that it is stuff that we would consider unconscious in the sense of when we say a thought - a thought is something that we have a self conscience of having a thought. I'm hungry, what time is it? But there are also, from my understanding, like the very minute things that are happening and what we would consider is the consciousness.]

He talks about that, I mean, some of the books talk about that. They say for example, sometimes you can be speaking and not be thinking I'm speaking. You're, you, you ... they describe a sub-conscious awareness that you're speaking and that is also karma. Okay. (laughs)

[student: Finally. The mental karma is motivating physical and verbal karma.]

It's running the machine, yeah.

[student: Right, so what's ... does it only, do ... does a mental karma only produce either a verbal karma, a physical karma or another mental karma, if you don't act on it - let's just say then it produces another mental karma.]

You mean if you control yourself or something like that?

[student: Yeah, if you have the mental karma to say something to somebody and you don't say it for whatever reason, it didn't produce a verbal karma.]

Well, I'm ... we'll talk about that right now.

[student: Okay, so ... can it do two at the same time?]

No, it can't, no.

[student: Can it create another mental karma and yet a verbal karma?]

Yuh, absolutely.

[student: Fine.]

Actually it can make four different results.

[student: Okay.]

Okay, I'll do one more thing and then we'll take a break. I'm actually being very good about [unclear]. So if I was to ask you [laughs] [laughter]. What are the two most basic kinds of deeds? What would you say? I mean, based on that last line I gave you.

[student: Say the question again.]

It's, it's called {Sem be lei} and {Sum be lei}. {Sem be lei} is mental karma. {Sum be lei} is, if you could think of {Sem be lei} as thoughts and {Sum be lei} as what you thought to do. Does it give you, make it ... does it give you some feeling? One is thinking to do something and one is what you do by thinking, meaning verbal and physical. So there's this big division. Over here is mental karma which is thinking karma and over here is what they call thought karma which is thought.

[student: Oh, having a thought]

What you thought to do - which means mental, which means verbal and physical karma.

[student: When you're saying this has already happened after you've had the thought then you speak it and you act it.]

Yep. So the speaking and the acting are all considered the second type of karma, motivated karma, and the first side is motivating karma which is mental karma. So they've got this big division. So if somebody asks you on the homework what are the two kinds motivat... you can say motivating and motivated karma, how's that? See one is a thought that is actually running the truck, and one is the

truck which is being run [laughs] - the deed that came out verbal.

[student: You're calling these the two kinds of karma. Is that what you're calling these?]

Yup, the most basic division of karma. There's motiva... there's motivating karma which is your thoughts, and then there's the physical and verbal deeds that motivating karma motivates.

[student: So it's considered just as bad to generate, like a tremendous amount of heat towards somebody even if you don't kill them or are [unclear] it's considered just as bad for your ... [unclear].

There's a lot of, there's a lot of detail about that. We'll talk about it, we'll talk about it. That's in the ... I think it's the eighth or ninth class. We're going to talk about how does your mind frame affect the, the severity of the deed. And we talk a lot about that. Is anger itself a karma, you know? Is ignorance itself a karma? That's a big subject. Is it, is it virtuous or non-virtuous or neutral? Ignorance itself.

[student: It's neutral.]

Is, is a very big argument.

[student: It's not caused, right, you've always had it.]

That doesn't mean it's not caused, in fact that might be a reason why it had to be caused.

[student: Well how could you have always had it if it was caused?]

Cos earlier instances caused later instances. Okay?

[student: {Gaucha}]

Are you cold?

[student: Yes ... [unclear].

I'll turn it down.

[student: You should turn it off.]

[Silence]

You don't have to write the Tibetan. You don't have to write any of it in fact. [laughter] Say {nampar rikje} [repeat]. {Nampar rikje} [repeat]. {Mayinpa nampar rikje} [repeat] {Nampar rikje} [repeat]. {Mayinpa} [repeat]. This was the first book I ever read in Tibet. I remember I would... Rinpoche would teach me in the early morning, he would go to school and then he would come back in the evening and I had to spend the whole day trying to figure it out - he didn't speak any English at the time. And when I got to this it took... it was very difficult. {Nampar rikje}. {Nampar rikje}. {Nampar rikje} means ... I have translated it as 'communicating'. Communicating as an adjective and I'll explain it. {Nampar rikje may...} what's {mayinpa}? Kylie, you know. {May..}

[student: (Tom Kylie.) Mind not communicating or something.]

Yuh, non-communicating. Now what does that mean? Obviously it's pretty confusing.

[student: Mean communicative?]

I'll tell you what it means. It means, [laughter] communicating the intent of the doer or not.

[student: Say that again.]

It's, it's, it's form, physical form, colour and shape, okay, which communicates the intention of the doer, of the person who does it and I'll give you an example - okay.

[student: Which are you talking about?]

{Nampar rikje} is communicating. It means - if you go to a, if you go to a, if you walk into a church and you see somebody down on their knees going like this, that's {nampar rikje}. Why? It communicates to you that they have some spiritual intentions, okay. As you look at them ... you may be wrong of course, they may be waiting to meet their crack dealer or something you know. [laughter] [laughs]. But, normally this, this is, this is a {nampar rikje} [unclear] this is - you know all those movies where all the Mafia guys pray next to each

other and plan hits and stuff. Not like that. It means the actual shape of the person, the outline of what the person's doing communicates to you something about their intentions. The other example is prostrations, you know. If someone is standing here and getting down on the ground, you know, you, you from that, that picture of that person communicates to you that he has some good intentions. That's called {nampar rikje}.

[student: You said through colour and form.]

It's actually in the shape. You can think of it as the outline of that person. In this school - we'll talk about it. The actual picture of that person doing that thing communicates to you that he has some virtuous intents.

[student: Be like people dancing would communicate happiness or something like that.]

Yeah, like that. Yeah.

[student: So when you say communicates in this sense, accurately communicates or is there ...]

They don't even get into it. You see ... skip schools, okay. Don't get, you're not back in Pramana any more. This is {Abhidharma}, very basic, you know. They don't even talk about... well, he might be fooling you.

[student: So what triggers, triggers some kind of understanding in you, whether that's correct or not, makes no difference.]

Yeah, they don't discuss it much. They don't discuss it.

[student: So a shape that triggers an understanding in you?]

Yeah, a shape that allows you to impute, can I say impute?

[student: Yeah, yeah.]

Some kind of motivation on the person whose performing the act.

[student: Does it have to be of a person or could it be a tree? Could it, does it have to be ...]

[student (different): Could it be a tree and the tree is bent over?]

We'll get ... I'm going to talk about it after the break. {Nampar rikje mayinpa} By the way, it's fine if you cough, I respect that you came and that's fine. We're going to break real soon. {Nampar rikje mayinpa} is a very interesting idea that only the Abhidharmist schools have and they believe that when you perform some very good deed or bad deed, actual some kind of form, some kind of extra - what do you call that thing in new age stuff?

[student: Halo or aura]

Aura, yeah [laughs] yeah, yeah, it's like an aura. An aura forms in you the moment after the {nampar rikje} and I'll give you an example. A monk goes before an Abbot - I mean a layman -and he gets down and the Abbot touches his hair and the monk takes his vows. He repeats them three times. He has his vows - okay. After he's repeating those vows after the Abbot, you know, as he's taking his vows, that's {nampar rikje}. If you came in the room suddenly and saw what he's doing today "Oh, somebody's taking vows, that's great." He has virtuous intention. But what happens when he gets up and walks out of the room and you meet him.

[student: He's still got a buzz.] [laughter]

He still has this, what they call ... it's not a bad word actually. Cos they describe it as being like light...

[student: A glow.]

... as stretching from the bottom of the feet to the top of the head, as staying with the person - doesn't make him fatter or heavier. [laughter] [laughs]. You know there's a question, you know, and it's somehow with him and it's actually an outline.

[student: And they have different layers.]

Well, in that case it lasts until he dies. I mean, if he took a vow til he dies, they say, the school says, the nature of that vow is, that is that outline, it stays with him [unclear]. I, this is, this idea is not accepted by any other Buddhist school.

[student: I like it] [laughter].

But I think it's a very useful idea. I used to think of it as a cosmic photograph, you know when I did something good or bad. Cos we grew up with the God idea right - that someone is taking a picture, you know, and that picture somehow stays somewhere, you know. Like I'd better watch out what I'm doing cos there's all these pictures being taken, you know. Its not ... maybe that's the kind of thought they had in mind when they, when they, when they describe this kind of {nampar rikje mayinpa} . An example is the vows of a monk. What are the vows of a monk? How do they stay on me, where are they?

[student: It could be like saying energetically you're affected - is that the idea?]

They're trying to say there's some kind of energy which is sticking on you, but it's matter.

[student: But the idea's not that you change your own energy, but you get something from outside.]

No, it's like a cloak.

[student: It comes to you from the outside.]

Yeah, and it's actual physical matter that we can't see.

[student: What are we, collecting cloaks all the time ... [laughter] laughs] ... and they merge with each other or, I don't know ...]

Usually with the Abhidharma, go to Sri Lankan time ...

[student: You can destroy this all by doing bad deeds?]

We're going to talk about it a lot.

[student: Does this have anything to do with creating different bodies?]

No, that's a totally different thing - yeah.

[student: Do they consider life matter?]

Yup, it's one of the kinds of colour.

[student: Kinds of colour?]

It's one of the divisions of colour.

[student: And I mean if the monk degenerates, breaks their vows, does the cloak degenerate?]

Yup, yup, it, it disappears.

[student: [unclear] disappears [unclear].]

They can destroy ... you can damage it too - when a monk breaks his vows, it's damaged.

[student: Someone told me you can take a picture and you can see the aura, you can see the colours coming out of the body.]

[Unclear] they say you can't see it. No, they say you cannot see it. It's {nampar rikje mayinpa}.

[student: With your eyes?]

You can't look at Michael Roach when he's dressed up as a businessman ...

[student: No, they say .....]

... and say "Oh, he's a monk..."

[student: With a special camera ...]

... yes, I see the {nampar rikje mayinpa}

[student: yes, thank you, kurlian - kurlian photography [unclear]]

Okay, take a break, quickly.

[student: Michael, have you ever heard of kurlian photography? I just [unclear]]

That would be expensive [laughs] [laughter] [unclear].

[student: This is called not communicating?]

Yup, it's at... it's the moment ... it starts the moment after he takes the vow. The moment after he does the not communicating, then that, then he stands up and he's walking around and somehow that vow is still stuck on him.

[student: Not communicating in the sense that he's doing anything specific that would make you interpret, but you see what's there.]

Used to be called uninterpretable form, but it was too long. In other words, you can't look at me, if I'm dressed as a layman and you look at me, there's nothing that can tell you that I have this virtuous intent, that I have vows sticking on me.

[student: [unclear]

Not apparent.

[student: Not apparent?] [unclear]

Talk to Vasubandhu [laughter] We're going to have five qualities - which you are going to have to memorize actually - of this stuff, and we're going to do after the break. That will be your last thing. I, I like the idea, I think it's a useful idea. What are we going to call this stuff?

[student: Which stuff?]

Which relation do you guys like ...

[student: which stuff?]

... non-communicating or ...

[student: Uninterpretable.]

[student: (different) Yeah, I like uninterpretable.]

[student: Can you see it though?]

[student: It's interpretable to the person.] [unclear]

So this is us - yeah, we had stuff in the last course.

[student: A lot of stuff.] [Unclear]

We're describing ... I'm now going to give you five qualities of this aura.

[student: The second one?]

[student: (different) Well, what are these two things, these, these {rikje's} ]

The two kinds of , two kinds of verbal - I should have said that and didn't say that - verbal and physical. Good question. Verbal and physical karma can be divided into these two.

[student: You're not saying one corresponds to verbal and one corresponds to physical]

No, nothing like that. You see there's a verbal {rikje},{nampar rikje mayinpa} and there's a physical {nampar rikje mayinpa},and you can guess what they are , you know. Like, the words of the monks speaking, as his lips move. You know, that's supposed to be the verbal one and the, the form of him bending down, clasping his hands, that's, that's ...those are communicating, and non-communicating is the moment after he's got that aura of that vow. The verbal thing takes it's own aura... the physical thing takes it's own aura.

[student: So every...]

I'm going...wait...

[student: Okay, go ahead, go ahead.]

[unclear]

I think I know what you're going to ask - it all came back.{yeng-dung [unclear]} That's the verse, the first part of the verse. [unclear] That's the first quality - okay. The first quality is [unclear] {yeng} - {yeng} means literally 'distraction'.

[student: The first quality of what - of {nampar rikje mayinpa}?]

Now we're describing the five qualities of this very special idea that only Abhidharmists have which is that there's some kind of aura, a nice word - I like it, because they actually explain it as a kind of light that you can't see. It sticks with the person's whole outline of his body. Sometimes they say it's like the oil in the oil seed. Like an oil, the oil in a sesame seed. It is just like ...

[student: Permeates]

Permeates it, yeah. Something like, and it's light. It is colour but you can't see and stuff like that.

[student: Could you just call it an energy field?]

I kind of like aura. Aura is almost pretty close to that. I dunno, but you think about it.

[student: Now is this only for good or can you have a bad aura too?]

I'm, I'm going to tell you.

[student: Okay]

So {yen}, {yen} means 'distraction', so the first quality of [nampar rikje mayinpa], the first quality of this special aura, is that even when you are not thinking about it, it's there. Even when your mind is on something totally different, that still stays and the, the root text says, even in periods of distraction. But it doesn't mean, you know, here distraction is a little bit strong. It just means, even when I'm not aware of my vows - my monk's vows - the, the aura's still there. {Yende sem mey pa ya} ... {sem mey pa} means - what does {sem} mean?

[student: Mind.]

Mind, that's {sem-pa} right. Now we're back to {sem} what does {mey pa} mean? Kylie, you know.

[student: (Tom Kylie) {Mey pa}?]

Yeah.

[student: Not, {mey} is a negative.]

A negative, yeah, not. It's... you, you have it even when you don't have a mind. Now is that, is that possible, to not have a mind? Is it possible for a living being to not have a mind?

[student: To not have a mind?]

It's just, you have it even when your mind is missing, and so the Abhidharmists say of course you don't - you must have a mind. We proved that in the last class. You never lose your mind - okay. Yuh. So it means there are certain kinds of deep, deep meditation in which your mental processes are almost stopped and that's called {sem mey pa ya}. {Sem mey [unclear]}. It's called mindless - I shouldn't say mindless - no-mind meditation, but it doesn't mean your mind has gone. It doesn't mean your mind has stopped. It means your mind is on an extremely subtle level, so even in those states, that aura's with that person. So not only - that's the second quality - so, in the first he's not thinking about it but the second quality is, that even when your mind is almost shut down you still have that aura - it doesn't go away. Even in periods of deep meditation, very deep meditation. There's this big debate, you know, when you're seeing emptiness directly, do you still have Bodhichitta for example. 'Cos Bodhichitta is supposed to be main mind. So there's this big debate, you know, - do certain mental states get lost when you're in deep meditation? So that was the second quality. {Yende sem mey pa ya} {ge-dung mi-ke kalin-dah} {ge-dung mi-ke} means 'it has an ethical component'. It is either virtuous or non-virtuous.

[student: What's the Tibetan word now?]

{Ge-dung mi-ke kalin-dah}. {Ge-dung mi-ke}.

[student: Is that three?]

That's the third one.

[student: Ge-dung mi-ke]

{Ge-dung mi-ke} - it's either virtue or non-virtue.

[student: {Ge-dung Mi-ke}.]

{Ge-dung mi-ke} - it's either, it's either a good deed or a bad deed, it's, it's - there are things in the universe which are morally neutral. This pen is morally neutral - we call {tung-ya}. It, it's not a good deed, it's not you know, it's not a good thing, it's not good or bad. It's not evil or good. But {nampa rikje mayinpa} , this aura, has to be one or the other. What's an example of a bad source in the Abhidharma later. Abhidharma in the fourth chapter gives a whole presentation on vows - I'm not going to do it. In the karma [unclear] I'm going to do it as a separate course for you but it describes all the vows it contains... all the... all the morality vows it contains and describes anti-vows and that's .... To give two examples - one is to say, "Okay I swear, I swear I'll be a butcher for the rest of my life". Like you go sign up for butcher school and you say I'm signing up cause I intend to, you know, slit animal's throats for the rest of my life which was you know, existing. And then, that guy when he, when he walks into the school and he signs the paper and says I'm going to sign up - I commit myself to this occupation, he gets {nampar rikje mayinpa} [unclear] and that's called an anti-vow. The other one is when you join the military - okay. [laughs] And you say I will fight, you know, I agree to kill people in the sense of my country. And that's a classical example of {nampar rikje mayinpa} vow form. You get an aura - an anti-vow aura forms on you. And then when you're dismissed from the service is disappears.

[student: All these examples have been about vows.]

Yeah.

[student: Are there non-situations where [unclear]].

What I'm trying to say ...normally they're talking about it being ... normally it comes up in discussions of very severe karma, you know. I'll have to see... I'll have to see.

[student: We, if you talk about ... ]

When even in the cases of a prostration, it's aura even in the case of a buyer, of a ... some kind of photograph is taken and it stays with you.

[student: When you ...]

Is it the, is it, is it karma itself, you know. Is it the transmission karma, no - that's not how karma boomerangs according to them. I, I ... let me look, let me check

[unclear] 'cos I'm not sure. I have the feeling that it has to be pretty severe. I think the motivation has to be pretty strong [unclear].

[student: So what happens to it?]

Well, it depends on ... it disappears.

[student: It disappears?]

[student: (different) As far as ...]

In the case of a vow ...

[student: Sorry, as far as joining the military, is it totally considered no difference in value whether it's a very just reason - you're really trying to save people's lives for you - or whether it's, ...?]

We're going to reach that. We're going to have this course [unclear] it's coming. They actually, they actually describe this question separately, you know. What if the, what if, what if the responsibility of the person who participates even on a, with a virtuous intention or even as a non-combatant. You know. How much karma does he collect relative to the people after the shooting begins.

[student: Does ...]

And that's, we're going to discuss it.

[student: Doesn't this idea of what's good and what's bad tie into emptiness and there's not good or bad so this whole concept of restructuring of good and bad...]

The whole point of the karma course is, is to, is to ... oh boy, never [laughter] that's [unclear].

[student: I'm mixed up there] [unclear]

In the path of emptiness there is good and bad. I mean - we're going to get to that. That's why we actually made a separate class out of that. I mean that's going to be -one class of this course is going to be devoted to, simply to that subject. Never, never. I had this thought, I read this story in a book about

Buddhism and the lady said she got, she got caught taking towels out of a hotel from a Buddhist conference [laughter] and she said it doesn't matter cos they're all empty anyway - that's the ultimate ignorance - it's because they're empty it does matter you know and that's another story. [laughter] They say, okay, next quality - where are we up to.

[student: Four]

{No-le is gey-del} {Gey-del} means 'continues on in a stream'.

[student: {Gey-del} or {Gey-drel}?]

{Gen-drel} actually.

[student: {Gen-drel}]

{Gen-drel}. And what it means is, they, they argue about ... what do we do ... It continues on after the moment of. The first moment is. {Nampar rikje} - I take the vow of saying something -someone sees my lips moving. They, they can interpret me. But then when ... how ... somehow it streams on. It follows on after me. Even though I move, you know.

[student: [unclear]]

Streaming on, following on. It's not like a discreet moment and then it's gone or something like that. It continues ... as I walk around, it goes around ...

[student: It continues in space and time?]

Yuh.

[student: Does it disappear over time?]

They don't say anything like that - I mean, if I take a vow for life then if, if I keep it, then, then, then when I die it disappears.

[student: So if you take a vow for two lives it'll [unclear]] [laughter]

There is no such vow. But I don't know how ...

[student: But maybe they just, it's just like that, that real strong good intention...]

Okay, fifth quality is [unclear] which means - do you remember that discussion we had about the elements? Wasn't there a {thangka} here? [laughter]

[student: The walls degenerated faster than we thought] [unclear]

I hope not. I was born in [unclear]

[student: Was that Tara, Green Tara?]

[Unclear] Okay, we don't have a {sema} about it do we? [laughter] Okay - anyway, the last, we talked, all right, about the wall and the four elements inside, you know, active inside the wall. The hardness, the wetness, the, the non-, you know, the four qualities. [Unclear] Earth, water, fire and wind - okay. And then actually they describe actual physical energies within all physical matter and that it wasn't just some silly thing that they thought there was little fires burning in the walls. So the last quality of {nampar rikje mayinpa} is that it has these four elements as it's causes. It's made of those four elements. So it's physical matter, okay - so this is a very special idea.

[student: Do all four have to be present?]

In the Abhidharma system all matter have all four and some other stuff too, [laughs] and it's just the predominance of one that makes something hard or wet or hot. But every ... all atoms, all atoms have, have the four. Even, even in usual atoms have the four according to the Abhidharma school.

[student: Do they believe that Buddhas or Bodhisattvas can see them?]

Can they do what?

[student: Can see this aura in people]

I haven't seen anything about it - I, I, I don't ... Buddhas can see it because it's a, it's a, it's a thing. Bodhisattvas they don't talk about much. They do have the word Bodhisattva but I, I ... they don't describe them much. Now could a person seeing emptiness maybe see it as [unclear].

[student: Yeah, a stream-enterer]

Yeah, I, I don't know, they don't talk ... I'll check. I don't remember anything like that. Okay - we should ...

[student: And they waited on top of each other to take a lot of different vows [unclear]]

Yeah, and then this evening I was reading this thing - it's in a great {sakya} commentary. We ... the {sakya} commentaries do this. The, the one {sakya} commentary to this is the best in the universe. And he, he says there was a big argument about whether it would make you, you know, if you add more it'd be easier, would you get heavier or fatter [unclear] he says, no, it's just like more light. Okay. It doesn't have an effect - you can't measure it by weight or by [unclear]. It's not like [laughs] the person gets bigger as the clothes get [unclear]. It's not like that. And then he says under [unclear] ... means 'they claim'. And Vasubandhu at the end of the verses that he knows are false, in the Abhidharmakosha, he puts this [unclear] which means 'they say'. So that's a code for all ... he was a Mahayana person. He, he identifies the universes where, where he doesn't really accept what they say but he records it quite nice. Okay. Kylie, you're the [unclear] for tonight.

[student: Quick question, do these five reasons apply to both communicating and non-communicating?]

Yeah, no.

[student: No, only not communicating.] [Unclear]

Communicating is normal - what you can see.

[prayer. Mandala]

[prayer.dedication]

I mean, there's no such Abhidharma vow.

[student: So if you took the Bodhichitta vow it would only last for one life and you'd have to start all over again.]

There's no ... they don't have Bodhichitta vows. There's no such question in the Abhidharma system.

[student: In this system?]

There's no such thing, they don't talk about it. There is no vow in the Abhidharma system which doesn't end when you die.

[student: What about when you say, "from now until attaining the height of enlightenment I take refuge."]

That sounds ... I don't know ... I don't remember. Let me check. Let me check.

[student: Is that another formula for refuge?]

I understand, yeah. Maybe it would stay with you for more than one life - it's a good question. I'll check. It seems to me it would, but I don't know how.

[student: But maybe ...]

END OF TAPE

## ACI Course V, Level One

### Class Three: Three Kinds of Karma, Four Kinds of Good Karma

You know what makes it virtue and non-virtue and what is virtue and non-virtue and then where does motivation play the part. I don't really like the translation virtue. I think, when I think of virtue I think of the cardinal virtues like patience and ah, you know...{gewa} means good deed more or less. The tibetan word for virtuous is {gewa}, okay, {gewa}. I used to get it mixed up with {dewa}, {dewa} means happiness {gewa} means virtue. Okay so don't get them mixed up all right and this is the definition of {gewa} okay. This is the what {gewa} is. This definition comes from Chim Jampey Yang is at the end of your reading. Chim Jampey Yang was a thirteenth century Sakya scholar and he.. you know as far as I can see he was the greatest abhidharma scholar in Tibet, you know, as far as what we have left in this...of writings and it's a fantastic commentary and if we ever get to study the whole thing it would be nice. No-one's ever tried to translate it, it's very long, very difficult to read, it's just beautiful it's a masterpiece so, you know, people say "Which sect do you belong to?". Sometimes I don't know [laughs]. It's a great, it's a great masterpiece. So say {du reshi la} [repeat] there's one word missing here. {du reshi la} means {du reshi la} means "in the short term", "in the short term." Okay. What is the opposite of that?

[student: in a long time]

Okay, in a long time all right. So in the short term...{nammin} say {nammin} [repeat] {nammin} [repeat]. {nammin} is a very very important word. If you're a buddhist you have to learn it. You know, it's related to a sanskrit word {budgetey} which means "to cook something" and it means karmic cooking, it means...{nammin} means a...the result of cooking, you know that result which comes out after time. So a {nammin} doesn't happen when?

[students: In a short term ]

Right away. Nagarjuna says it is very unfortunate that when you crush a bug your own ribs don't start breaking. They will but later and there's this time lapse which we'll explain when we get to the mental side of karma which comes in this course. But he said it's very unfortunate you know that when cut a...when you stab somebody with a knife your own skin doesn't open up and start to bleed. If

it did we wouldn't we wouldn't be here probably. Actually, it's worse than that, you will be cut many times, it would be a big...it's one of the nasty things about samsara in that it doesn't happen right away. Therefore it confuses us and therefore we still do those things. Okay so {nammin} means "karmic result" okay. Some people say ripening which is a good translation and {min} also does mean ripening like a ripe fruit is called {minba}. A blister which is ready to pop is called {minba} ripe. {yidu ongwa} {yidu ongwa} means "desirable, attractive". It comes from two words {yi} means "mind" {ongwa} which means "come" and it means you know if it pleases your mind, it comes to your mind {yidu ongwa} {dewa ngongwa} {dewa} means "happiness" it can mean physical or mental. There's two kinds of {dewa}. {[unclear] dewa} in [b: Abhidharma] means "physical pleasure" and {[unclear] dewa} in [b: Abhidharma] means "mental happiness" so that word...it's hard to use...I don't if there's one english word that covers good feeling physically and good feeling mentally.

[student: Bliss]

It's not bliss, there's a different word, it's not that strong. It just means wellbeing or comfort but mental and physical. {dewa ngongwa} {ngongwa} means to experience {ngongwa} means to experience. {dang} means "and" {tendu} means "ultimately" as opposed to {reshi} which meant for the time being, okay, in the short term. So {tendu} means "ultimately" {dukngyel dukngyel} is {dukkha} in sanskrit suffering and that can be physical or mental. I think suffering more covers both than than pleasure covers both mentally and physically right, I don't know. You can suffer in your mind and your new body. {dukngyel le} means "from" {le} means "from". {kyoppa} means "to protect" save you, okay. {nyangde} is the tibetan word for "nirvana" {nyangde} means "to pass beyond all sorrow" and it's the tibetan translation for the word nirvana, okay. {topje} means "it brings you" and that's the definition of {gewa}. {gewa} means good deed, good karma. All right so I'll give it to you in plain english all right. [laughter] I do the tibetan so I can waste time [unclear] finish everything in twenty minutes. Good deed is defined as something which in the short term brings you a pleasant experience, that is a desirable karmic result.

[student: Pleasurable]

Yeah experience, a desirable karmic result. It's in the last part of your reading, you don't have to write the whole thing and which which ultimately protects you from suffering by bringing you to nirvana and that's the definition of virtue, of a good deed.

[student: When they say short term, they don't mean very short term like it means like...]

Well there's three...you should know this is not in your homework or anything, but I mean...we're not going to get to this because the fourth chapter to the [b: Abhidharma] is huge right. There are three kinds of {nammins} there are three kinds of karmic results. One is called {tong gyur gyi le} {tong gyur gyi le} means "things you see in this life" and as I've said many times, this is the basis of the secret teachings. Secret teachings are based on the concept of {tong gyur gyi le} that if you were to perform some incredible virtue in this life, you could see the result in this life before you die. Then there's {kyene nyong gyur gyi le} which means "to be experienced in the next the very next life". And then there's the the third kind is that which is experienced in the second life and on. So you've got three periods. One is this life, number two is next life and number three is next next life and beyond, could be many many lives. We'll talk about a little bit about that like, you know, if you do one karma today can it hurt you in ten lives or just one life or. And if you...can you do ten karmas today which only hurt you in the next life and not in the next nine lives, we'll talk about that, the [b: Abhidharma] talks about that. So that's the...

[student: The categories for this three, I'm sorry, what was under...what category]

Those were the kinds of karmic results. They can come in this life, later in this life, they can come in your next life your very next life or they can come out in any life after that.

[student: Is there any very general rule to know which...]

Generally more powerful more sooner they ripen and as we spoke about in the last course, depends greatly on your mental state as you die. I spent last night with Alan and it was the first time I did it, a lot of the students have done it many times but he's finished I mean that's it, can't think straight, can't remember anything, can't walk, he was a student in this class and then it makes me think you know we'll all be like that. He just got it sooner you know, he was the first and there'll be number two, number three, one of us, you know and it's very much you know...wants you to...it's it urges you to practice if you see him, he was one of the most intelligent people I knew, you know, and that's it he can't do it now.

[student: Did he recognise you?]

Dimly, like for five minutes during the whole night, you know. It'll come to us, we just have to...the karma which threw us into this life is finishing, it's on its...it's in the process of wearing out and it will wear out and we haven't done anything extraordinary to make it continue so, it's where we will go. Okay, so {gewa} and the important thing is that what decides whether something is for the time being or ultimately you see what I mean. Is every good deed you do, does every good deed you do contribute to your nirvana?

[student: You're talking about the difference between desirable samsaric results versus desirable ultimate results]

Right. That's the basic thing. I mean normally your good deeds especially if they're done with ignorance and not dedicated to Buddhahood, just lead to a short term result which wears out like our own body like our minds right now, these classes will end, you know. There'll be a last class, there'll be a last time that we're together, it will come. The deeds we did to have these classes will wear out and that's a samsaric result basically. Your body is that kind of result it will wear out and when it wears out after that, the energy that gave it to you is gone, its finished. It depends on what new ones you make, so..

[student: So the only only the ones that they are good karmic results that it doesn't matter how awful they are I mean, as long as they are made under ignorance they're not]

Ignorance are not dedicated.

[student: Not dedicated]

Dedication means, you know, you as you do it you wish that it would help all sentient beings and that it would make you a Buddha and that it doesn't go to some temporary, you know, getting hagendaas for the next five years or something [laughter]. You know what I mean, in fact high arharts can purposely do karma like giving medicine to someone and get extra lifetime result and then they can decide to either use that or not to use that and or dedicate it to something else. So it's very important that you dedicate your good deeds, it's very important that you...first of all, ignorance means as you do a good deed, do

it by consciously knowing that while you're doing it, you know the object is empty, you're empty, your goal is that you and the object in the future reach some kind of permanent happiness. I mean you always should keep that in mind as you do a good deed, otherwise, mostly, it just will wear out and and it's actually another kind of suffering, a suffering of change right.

[student: So yeah I mean like when we do the meditations and we do the dedication, you know, somethings become almost rote you know. What I'm trying to say is that how much is this is there that consciousness or is it, you know, I mean a lot of times you may just dedicate and it...you're just saying it it doesn't mean anything]

Yeah no. It has to be it has to be conscious and purposeful you know that's the main energy that makes it go towards a higher result.

[student: So how do you know if...]

You if you if you don't consciously dedicate it but you say the words of dedication, it will still have some energy towards your nirvana but not but not as much as if you consciously dedicated it to that properly, thinkingly

[student: So that...I mean, I always wonder you know after the meditation and I'm feeling very good alright, so I sort of know, you know, something has happened for me, and then when I dedicate it to the world, it feels very much like you know new world...wishing ev...you know, I don't really see the energy going out there I don't really understand how that. Okay]

It has to do with ignorance and we'll talk about that. How much ignorance is there. We talked about it a lot at the end of the last class. The basic thing is just remember, I mean nothing that you do good can ever get lost you know, the perception of yourself doing good as you as you see yourself doing good and as you do good, it it creates a seed in your mind it it must and it will and it always will and and you can't avoid it you know it's the same for negative deeds for bad deeds you know

[student: So meditation is doing a good deed then]

Absolutely, well it depends on why you do it. Some people meditate for for pride that other people know that they're meditating and that's a bad deed. So it depends on your motivation [unclear]. There's a famous non buddhist saint I

mean you know he wanted everyone to think he was a great meditator. He got this anger and this competitiveness and he took a very bad birth from that. Yeah.

[student: I don't really understand the whole concept of how dedicating your virtue or karma or merit works]

We'll talk we'll talk about it. It's not an [b: Abhidharma] subject necessarily but we'll get into it when we talk about the nature of how karma works which is the name of the course. The name of the course doesn't really take...doesn't mean a lot till we hit the mind only school okay. Yes mr [unclear]

[student: No I'll save it]

Okay alright. So that's the definition of virtue. Definition of non virtue. I'll just write the [unclear]. {nammin} [repeat] {yidu} [repeat] {mi-ongwa} [repeat] {midewa} [repeat] {nyongwa ni} [repeat] {mi-gewa} [repeat]. {nammin} means, what do you remember {budgetey}

[student: Short [unclear]]

A cooking, a karmic cooking alright, a karmic result. There are other kinds of results flying around in the world. Karmic result is that thing that takes time it takes time, it gets it gets caused, it gets planted in your mind a perception is, a perception brews and then comes out later.

[student: What do what do you mean there are other kinds of results, other kinds of karmic result?]

Well. Well for example we we describe in the [b: Vinaya] and in other and in the [b: Abhidharma] in the second chapter there are five or six kinds of results, there are many kinds of results. It doesn't mean that...you had one in...we had a [unclear] for example in the in the pramana course you know. Your mind at the first moment of your in your mothers womb is a result, it's called a direct result, it's also a karmic result so it it it means there's different kinds of results not every...ultimately every result you can say is a karmic result. The [b: Abhidharma] doesn't agree with that but that's a long story. Okay {nammin} {yidu..yidu mi-ongwa} means "undesirable". {yidu mi-ongwa} means "undesirable" unpleasant I'm sorry undesirable. {midewa} means "unpleasant" and {nyongwa} means "experience".

[student: What does {ni}mean?]

That. [laughs] So...and it's referring back to the last definition, so it means that deed which brings you a karmic result which is unpleasant, that is, suffering, unhappiness. It's hard to just...I guess suffering's a good word, pain, pain is another good word. That's the definition of {mi-gewa}. That's the definition of a bad deed. I like the definitions, they have nothing to do with judgment or guilt, you know. Nothing, nothing to do with that. It's like if you do this it will hurt you and if you do this it will make you feel good and that's all. I think it's very very nice. The reason to be moral in a most animal way is for your own self interest, you know. Just do these things and you will be happy and do these things and you will suffer and there's no other being involved, there's no other people involved, there's just you. You know, it's what you decide you want and that's what you get, okay? Now we we we can't see the karmic correlations and that's in the...you people who have studied pramana, remember the the laws of karma were what? Were what kind of level of reality for us?

[student: Very hidden]

{shintu kok-gyur} {shintu kok-gyur} means?

[student: Deeply hidden]

Deeply hidden, not just hidden. Emptiness is on the level of hidden. Karmic..the laws of karma are on the level of deeply hidden and you can only perceive that how?

[student: [unclear]]

[student: By someone's word]

Based on on authority okay. You have to establish that the authority's authority that's why you can believe it but but you can't, you and I can't really see how killing the roaches in our apartment is gonna lead to a lot of suffering for us. You know, we we we don't see it directly, we just can't and a Buddha does. So we have to [unclear] if you want to know what's {gewa} and what's {mi-gewa}, by definition, you have study this, the books. You have to study what the Buddha said because that's the only way you'll get a really clear picture of what you should do and what you shouldn't do, and what is should mean. Should

means if you want to be hap..., you know, if you don't want to suffer, you know. So so you have to put a lot of, you have to put a lot of, I don't know, how do you say it? Trust or belief in in those books, you have to study the books on, the first part of the whole [b: Vinaya], the whole first section of the buddhist canon is sixteen books explaining what's gonna happen to you if you do certain things and that you have to study them, you have to read them. And you have to think that they are worth something, you know you can't pick and choose, I mean, if you do you'll just suffer. You know, you have to follow what they say, that's all you can do. You can't, even when it doesn't feel like what you wanna do, you have to distinguish between what you wanna do and what's what's gonna actually bring you happiness and what will actually bring you, you know, pleasure and and our our current ignorance. Ignorance is the state of thinking that if you lie and get money, that's the cause of the money. You know, or if you lie. I lied this morning when was it, oh. [laughter] Somebody called me. I was supposed to feed Alan at, I don't know, eleven o'clock and I got wrapped up in something. It was eleven thirty and somebody called and say 'Did you feed Alan?'. And I said 'Oh well, you know, the other guy said something like I could do it later or something'. He didn't really say that.

[student: What?]

But it was just an automatic thing, you know. I'm thinking that will make him feel better and me better, feel better but it's not. It just, it's unrelated to his saying okay that's alright, you know. The reason he said okay that's alright has nothing to do with my lie. My lie was not the cause of his saying oh that's alright. It had no connection. He believed me because I didn't lie before and because I lied now someone else won't believe me in the future [laughter] [unclear]. That's the true cause and effect going on. How can I prove it? Because sometimes when I make a lie it doesn't work. That's the proof. It's a very simple proof, it's so obvious that it...you miss it. If if my telling a small white lie was the cause of him saying oh it's alright then, then it would always work but it doesn't always work. The other kind of relationship where I tell the truth and then people believe me in...as a as a {nammin} as a karmic result in the future, it always works. Something that always works is a law and something that works half the time, you know, you lie you get a profit and sometimes you lie and you go bankrupt, that's not cause and effect. The lie had nothing to do with making the profit and the lie had nothing to do with going bankrupt. It...we just don't understand the cause and effect. We we...and therefore we just suffer and that's that's the whole point of karma, that's the whole guts of karma, you know.

[student: Well there are times when it appears to our limited perspective that somebody's doing something incredibly virtuous like trying to save someone's life and in the process they get killed. So is it?]

That's why it can't be the result of them helping the person.

[student: But if they didn't try to help the person, they wouldn't have been in the line of gunfire or...]

They would have yeah, they would have died some other way at the same moment. It's it's cool. [laughter] I mean but we can't do it. You know, it's [unclear].

[student: Yeah, what do you mean by in the same moment, I mean, I don't get that?]

I mean, the [b: Abhidharma], the [b: Abhidharma] actually approaches this question. They say "If the". It's exactly in the [b: Abhidharma], I could I could read it to you, I could show it to you. It's ah it's the bardowa, if the person in the bardo is meant to take birth as a certain kind of animal and that animal never goes into heat during that certain month, what happens? It's born into a similar kind of animal that does. You see it's it's a, it's called a {yowale} and it means that certain, most kinds of karma will will divert to a the same result in a different form if the conditions aren't ready for that karma to ripen. So if the person had never gone to help the person, he would have been hit by a car anyway or something. You see this is in the [b: Abhidharma] stating [unclear].

[student: But, I mean, isn't that impossible. Wasn't it the person's karma to die being helped by this person and that's it? I mean, you know.]

It's, technically yes.

[student: But [unclear]]

But anyway the [b: Abhidharma] does say that.

[student: You were just talking about lies]

Yeah

[student: I know that a lot of us[laughter]who lie from time to time, do so with the [unclear]]

What I'm saying is, all I'm saying is. By the way I'm starting to interrupt you and I'll let you talk but. What I'm saying is it doesn't work. It's dysfunctional. It doesn't really do...it only gives you...only the only thing that can come from a bad cause is a bad result, that's a law. That's just true with fruits and and kids and everything else, you know, if the cause is lousy the result must be lousy. We're just blind to it, we just...and we've been doing it so long we're just used to it, you know.

[student: So at any rate, we do lie a lot of times because by telling the truth someone's going to suffer a great deal, that's the way we feel or at least we fool ourselves into thinking that or that's actually the case. So if they suffer a great deal by us telling the truth, wasn't from us telling the truth, it was from something else and we shouldn't necessarily be influenced]

That's not, there, you are supposed to avoid, you know, at all costs...you're not supposed to upset people for example, you know. If if someone asks you a direct question...if someone asks you a ind...a question which is not totally direct and you know that a totally direct answer would upset them or hurt hurt them badly, you're not supposed to give that answer. Are you supposed to lie? No. I mean try to change the subject, cough, go to the bathroom[laughter] I mean I mean, do whatever you can, I mean, do whatever you can to avoid them. If have bodhisattva vows, they take precedence over your pratimoksha vows.

[student: Pratimoksha is?]

Is like like swearing not to lie. So then you don't break them. So a bodhisattva if you gotta keep your bodhisattva vows for example, you must you must lie to protect. The example is if if a person runs into your house and a mugger is running after him and he says 'did the guy run into your house?', you say 'no'. You know you look him in the face and say no and that's ah it's a higher level morality but but that's very very dangerous. You have to...it's extraordinary cases and we're not extraordinary people. We can't do even the unextraordinary things, you know[laughs]. Everyone wants to be extraordinary, you know, no one wants to follow the regular old rules, you know. Just, if you want to be happy do do the regular old stuff, you know, and we'll get into that okay. Okay, what's the ah...I have one more definition for you. {yidu eng} is the same one as

up there {yidu eng} means “a desirable result“. {mi ong} means what?

[student: Undesirable]

Yeah. {mi} is the negative in tibetan. {mi ong} means not desirable result, undesirable result. {kyepa} means “gives you” , here. {dinyi} means “these two” , these two. {le shenpay} means “other types than those“. {le} means “karma“. Is the definition of what do you guess? What’s left after virtue and non-virtue?

[student: Neutral]

Neutral karma, okay. {lung ma ten} means “neutral karma” , neutral karma. And I’ll read, I’ll say the whole thing in english. By the way {lung ma ten} is a great, is a very interesting word, okay. It means {lung du ma tenpa} and ah {lung du ma tenpa} means “not clarified by the Buddha“. Now is everything that wasn’t not, is everything that wasn’t clarified by the Buddha directly a neutral karma. No. But what it means is, it’s just a tibetan word, it’s the buddhist word for neutral and if the Buddha could speak forever about every kind of deed, he wouldn’t clarify this as virtue or non-virtue. Then you could say it was neutral, that’s what they are saying, okay. It’s not that the Buddha didn’t talk about it necessarily. It’s not that he he didn’t cla...there’s lots of things he didn’t clarify. In the [b: Vinaya], you know, [laughs] it’s huge but but that’s where the word comes from. So, just so you...she looked like she wanted to know, okay. So neutral karma means karma which is other than those two which give you desirable or undesirable results, karmic results. That’s neutral karma. Neutral karma is very much mixed up into, you know, ignorance which is not...where you’re not doing anything particularly at the time. You know, watch...sitting watching tv not thinking anything good or bad is is like a neutral karma. Ig...you are blanketed in blissful ignorance and that’ s the, that’s what’s, that’s what’s operative there, is is ignorance. Hatred and desire are pretty much grooving in the other way, in the {mi gewa} in the [unclear].

[student: Even when you’re sitting watching tv, you’re still thinking thoughts generating mental karma]

Yeah. Neutral, mostly neutral karma.

[student: Because it’s not hurting anyone or helping anyone?]

Mainly cause it's not, I mean, in the in the [b: Vinaya], they say {[unclear]} that means the main element of of morality is that it shouldn't hurt, is that you don't is that you're trying to avoid hurting other people or or yourself. For example we'll talk about it later, suicide is is a bad karma.

[student: So should you avoid neutral karma?]

You can't. [laughs]Your mind is still...you should actually, for the time being it's a better thing to be able, well virtue is better but that's why they say when you get anger, if you don't have the strength to go apologise to the person you got angry to, well at least withdraw from the situation, at least leave it alone. That it's the Dalai Lama loves that quotation. I think it's from Shantideva, which is you know like "If you can't stop hurting people...

[student: Don't harm them]

At least don't harm them". Was it, is that how it goes?

[student: It says be...]

"If you can't be good at least don't hurt people"[laughs] It means be neutral, you know, okay. So those are the three kinds of karma. Good good karma itself can be divided into four kinds, okay.

[students: {dundam gewa}]

{dundam gewa}

[students: {dundam gewa}]

{dundam} means "ultimate". That's the word by the way in ultimate [unclear] when we're talking about emptiness in the higher schools. {dundam gewa} {gewa} means what?

[student: Good deed]

Good deed, okay {dundam gewa}. What do you think is the ultimate good deed in the abhidharma school?

[students: [unclear]][laughter]]

[unclear] {moksha} liberation, okay, nirvana, alright. If you were in a debate in a monastery, then this would be a good fodder for the day. You'd have to say that this is not {gewa}, it's not an action which leads to a karmic result which is...

[student: It's a result]

It is the ultimate result, so but it's it's it's {tapoa}. It's nominally virtue, I mean it's it's the best thing that can happen so we'll call it virtue[laughs],okay. It's not, technically it's not a a a deed which causes, you know, those things. It is the thing that you get...

[student: I guess you could say it prevents you from doing bad deeds [unclear]]

That you could say, yeah. So that's the that's the first kind of good deed, alright. Yeah

[student: Are talking about yourself reaching nirvana or helping others?]

In [b: Abhidharma] it's mostly concentrating on yourself, yeah. It doesn't say Buddhahood and nirvana and Buddhahood are different. Nirvana is the permanent cessation of your bad thoughts which which you which causes you not to have to take a birth, a suffering birth. You still will go on and then Buddhahood is is when you remove both all your obstacles and and also become omniscient, so that's a different, okay. Say {ngowo} [repeat] {nyiki} [repeat] {gewa}[repeat] {gewa} [repeat], yeah {gewa}. By the way in the [b: Abhidharma] which you'll read there are four famous examples for these and the first one is it's a healthy body. A good strong healthy body, it's comparable to number one. Nirvana ultimate virtue, right

[student: A healthy body?]

[student: I don't understand how it relates...]

It's just an example we'll see why. Metaphor hows metaphor metaphor sorry that's better. {ngowo nyiki gewa} means "virtue by its very essence". Virtuous by essence. Virtuous by its very nature.

[student: These are you said three types of karma meaning good or bad karma, or just good karma?]

I'm going to get to the bad also [laughs]

[student: So which is which?]

I'm going to give you four actually

[student: Which word is which?]

{ngowo} means nature. {nyi} means essence very very nature. {kyi} means by by very nature and {gewa} means good deed. Okay, so good deed by its very nature. There are five. There are five things which are just by there very nature are good deeds okay and I'll give them to you. The first three are called the three roots. Three roots of virtue.

[student: This is the first three?]

Yeah, of the five.

[student: [unclear] number two]

Yeah we're all, we're still in number two, I didn't, your gonna get to number three and four after your break, okay. So there are three kinds of mental functions which are by their very nature virtuous. They can never be non virtuous, okay and those are. I'm I'm making a bad translation purposely okay and I'll tell you why [laughter]. When you have a negative word in tibetan this is also Chim Jampey Yang, you know that sakya great sakya scholar and it's also it's stated in the [b: abhidharma] by Vasubandhu. When you have this negative in tibetan, non non desire. He says that negative could be three things and you don't have to write these down. It could mean just a simple lack of desire. It could mean something other than desire like happiness or feeling good about what dinner you had and things like that. That's also a kind of non desire, right. So it it could be just that you don't feel any desire right now. It could be that your mind is on something else right now or it could be the active antidote for desire. You know, it could be actively not seeing this thing in the wrong way and therefore not wanting it in the way that you normally want it. So what, which one do you think non desire is?

[students: Antidote]

It's the antidote one. It's not just that you don't have desire at that moment and it's not that you're just thinking about something else at that moment. Non desire in abhidharma, as a root of virtue, as a kind of mental function, that is by its very nature virtuous is, you know, not having...it's it's understanding and not wanting that thing for the for the wrong reasons, that's that's non desire.

[student: Understanding what?]

Ultimately to have desire you have to misunderstand the object, you see. Desire when it's a trouble maker is involved with not understanding the object.

[student: So you understand the absolute nature of the object?]

If you want a beautiful girl to be your girlfriend, the best thing you can do is keep your morality. It's not an obvi...you know that's that's non desire. That's understanding [unclear] as something which when it moves into your consciousness, stupid desire has to move out, okay. Now of course they'll fight for a while, you know. Stupid desire will come back and kick out non desire [laughs]. That's buddhist education, you know. As you go through your spiritual education, there's there's a long period of very long period of...when they're both fighting and they're moving in and out, you know. Okay, non hatred is the same. That means to to want to avoid an unpleasant object. This is by the way the the chick what is the rooster and the, the pig and the snake in the middle of the wheel of life painting which you can see. You know, people say hatred and desire. It's more subtle than that. It's some...if it's gonna be the root of the wheel of life, it's gotta be more subtle than that. You know, I didn't want to rape anybody today and I didn't want to kill anybody today but I had those those animals in my mind all day long, you know. They're not there not as strong as as the word desire and hatred. You know, they're almost like liking and not liking for the wrong reason or with ignorance. They're very subtle you have them in your mind constantly. That's why you're collecting karma constantly.

[student: So same explanation you see the selflessness and so you don't]

[laughs] Wanting to avoid unpleasant objects, really. It's not as bad as hatred where you blow up at somebody and you want to choke them, you know. I mean that's what the words would imply. I I I don't know about that translation in this context.

[student: Same explanation as non desire, you see the selflessness and so you don't hate it]

Yeah yeah. You can dislike it but you know what to do to avoid it. You don't want suffering. I'm not saying you should enjoy it when the dentist is drilling your teeth but but you understand the emptiness of it and you do what you have to do, you...and I should say the guy at work right, the bad guy at work. Of course it's unpleasant. You should dislike someone who's a...who's trying to stab you in the back. That's a bad thing. How to get out of that is a different story, you know. It's not by avoiding him or hurting him or responding to him violently or...that's just doesn't work, that's not how to get rid of that guy. You should want to get rid of that guy. I swear to god in tushita heaven there's no guys like that[laughter]. You know, really. It's not like you reach some kind of I don't care attitude or something, it's not like that

[student: You swear to god]

You know, whatever [laughter]

[student: If we say like you know stupid hatred]

Stupid hatred. Yeah, I like that.

[student: As opposed to righteous indignation]

Yeah, yeah okay. What do you guess the third one is?

[student: Wisdom?]

Non

[student: Ignorance]

[student: Non ignorance]

Non ignorance and it's called wisdom, yeah. Actually no it's called it's called non ignorance [laughter]. It's called it's called {tig nun mepa} it is a negative. It is called non ignorance. You know I translated, you know I translated this book fifteen years ago and I translated this as as lack of and then...nowadays I think of wouldn't want it. I think non is better. It's not a simple lack of emptiness. It's

the active opposite of ignorance, it's wisdom. And obviously that's the root of the other two in the same way that...which one is the [unclear]. That's ignorance right, yeah. In the same way that the pig is the cause of...in some good wheel of life paintings, the rooster and the snake are coming out of the mouth of the pig. I don't know what...sometimes they're in they're in a circle. I don't know which one that is but the more, the older ones and the more correct ones, the the snake and the and the cock are coming out of the pig's mouth

[student: Cause cause he's the root of those two]

huh

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, cool

[student: [unclear]]

Oh cool [laughs]

[student: So so would say the...]

In the in the older paintings, sometimes they're in a circle, that also has it's own meaning

[student: Would the translations of attraction and aversion, would you consider those to be accurate?]

I I like them pretty well but maybe you should add stupid [unclear] [laughter]. I mean between us, okay, I don't want to see your next translation like that, you know. Nobody will buy it. Okay.

[student: Two more?]

I'll give you the next two roots and then we'll take a break.

[student: You said three roots?]

Well that's right. We had three roots of virtue and now I'm gonna give you two. These are actually I shouldn't call them roots. These are in in the [b:

Abhidharma] presentation of the mental function, which we should learn someday which is great, is called [unclear]. Anytime you have a virtue, anytime you're doing something good, these two are normally involved, okay.

[student: [unclear]]

They're literally they're called mental functions which are on the present in a virtuous mind. I don't know what you want to call them.

[student: The entire [unclear]]

These two that I'm gonna say now

[student: Okay]

Are always there when you're doing something good, defined in the [b: Abhidharma].

[student: Why do you put [unclear]?]

Cause cause I said I'm gonna give you five kinds of number two. I should have said a,b,c,d maybe, maybe

[student: Cause there are three roots there]

A. There are three roots and then there's two, what do you call, thoughts.

[student: What?]

Of virtue. These these two I'm about to give you

[students: Thoughts]

Are always there when you're doing something good according to the [b: Abhidharma] and they are d and e of number two. Is that better [unclear]?

[student: Yes]

Alright.

[student: Thank you]

No I like it. If you don't do this accurate, if I if I didn't fix it the way you said, you gotta see the homeworks I get back, you know. And it's my fault, you know. {ngo-tsa} (repeat) {trel-yu} (repeat) {ngo-tsa} (repeat) {trel-yu} (repeat). I would say for changing your character and your behaviour which is supposed to part of the reason for these classes, you know. I mean if you haven't changed your behaviour or or character much in the last year or two

[student: Or twenty [laughter]]

Then the classes are pretty much a failure, you know. Sometimes I don't think I emphasise that enough, sometimes I feel guilty, you know that I do too much scholastic stuff and not enough, you know, urging you to virtue, you know. But these are two very useful ones, you know, if you have them, if you think about them, if you meditate about them. If you don't meditate at the end of your homework, I'm not gonna take them anymore. I if if a homework comes in without meditation time on it, I'll give it back. If it says I was busy, you know. If it says, you know, my dog died and I had to leave, I don't mind, that's okay but if it's just you didn't think you had fifteen minutes to spend on it, you not never gonna be a teacher. You're never gonna be able to transmit anything to anybody. You're never gonna reach any spiritual five paths, cause you've gotta be in meditation to do those and you gotta do that for at least, you know, forty five minutes an hour a day. You you won't get anywhere so, you know, I'm serious about the last line. You really do have to do it, alright. Fifteen minutes, come on, you go to the bathroom, I don't care. Do it, I I used to do that, you know. I used to tell my...I was in the mini...middle of this management meeting Kylie knows they're like five hours long and the vice presidents all talk and I would just say I gotta go the bathroom. Nobody says you can't go to the bathroom, you know [laughter] and...

[student: [unclear]]

Go to the bathroom and put the seat down and sit down, you know [laughter]. Fifteen minutes come on. Twenty four hours that's one percent. Alright {ngo-tsa} (repeat) {ngo-tsa} means "to avoid a bad deed", and I don't know how to say it exactly in english, but it's it's because you would be embarrassed by yourself, shame. I translate it as shame.

[student: Because?]

It it it means that in a room with a guy's wallet, with no-one else around and no-one would ever know or when I used to be in a hotel room at the Princeton Club and they had xxx movies on cable t.v. No-one would ever know, you know, should I turn it on or not, you know. After a buddhism class [laughter]. I used to struggle, I used to struggle with that and I used to fail sometimes [laughter] and and that's that's called {ngo-tsa}. If if if you stop because you have the inner

[student: Conscience, right?]

[student: conscience?]

Well, when I get to the next one let's see, okay. I I don't know I'm not s...yeah yeah I'm not sure. Anyway {ngo-tsa} means for reasons relating to yourself you avoid a bad deed. That's the definition of {ngo-tsa}, you know. In a room by yourself out of your own self, what do you call it, esteem or something you you avoid a bad deed that's called {ngo-tsa}, okay. And {trel-yu} what do you guess {trel-yu} is?

[student: [unclear]]

This way you avoid a bad deed because you're afraid someone will find out, okay. You're you're embarrassed by, you know, that's where I don't eat after dinner if people are around but if they're not around I might sneak a cookie, you know. That's {trel-yu} but not {ngo-tsa}, you know. I'm embarrassed to eat in front of you guys but after you leave, you know, no {ngo-tsa}. That's tough, that's {trel-yu} means "in front of other people", that other people would find out. I mean a lot of people will keep the morality just because they they're afraid if other people found out. That's called {trel-yu}.

[student: But you're not talking about doing good deeds, you're talking about avoiding bad deeds]

Yeah, it's it's defined negatively, it's the word is {denbo} which means "to avoid a bad deed".

[student: So is not stealing a good deed? I thought being generous was the good deed and not stealing was the neutral deed.]

That's a good point but these are mental, these are these are mental functions.

These are are, yeah, it's defined negatively, it's not doing a bad deed because because you're embarrassed or you're ashamed.

[student: Not doing a bad deed is different to doing a good deed]

I know it's not as good as doing a good deed but these these two mental functions are always there when you're doing virtue that's what they say. I understand what you mean, to give is not not to steal. Charity is not not stealing, it's a different thing but but they're defined this way, that's how they define it.

[student: Couldn't you turn this around and say that you would do a good deed because you want others approval or you want others to find out?]

They don't they don't define it that way, it's defined negatively, okay. So that's the first two, we'll do the second two after the break in about ten minutes, okay.

[student: Michael, when you said refuge to the three jewels [unclear]]

Where does, where does taking refuge come in the roots?

[student: No no no, when you said [unclear]]

I doubt that [unclear]. I don't know what they were...

[student: unclear]

What's that?

[student: [unclear]]

I don't know [laughs], okay.

[student: Would you define not doing a non virtue as a virtue, is that how...]

That's what she asks and apparently the [b: Abhidharma] does. That's how they define it. [unclear] Is what I call {kedrun} it's this and and it is very important. One of the greatest forms of virtue you can do is to avoid a bad deed when you're on the verge of it.

[student: Oh really]

Yeah

[student: Oh [laughter]]

If you were just about to do something you that you really have an impulse to do and then your wisdom overcomes it, that's a great virtue and I think that's the idea, you know. Something you would have done...that's the whole point you know of morality is that...morality means you get close to falling and you stop. That's that we'll see it later with the non...with the...

[student: How about [unclear] making sure you don't get close to it, isn't that morality too?]

It's also a good deed

[student: What about when it's not clear what's virtuous? Like for instance if you were working for a political party or something and you believed that they had really good motivation and would help people but they wound up [unclear] horrible things?]

We'll talk about it. ([unclear]). There's four elements of a karmic path which means a complete karma and your somebody is virtuous, your motivation is virtuous, your {jorwa} your application of your own effort is virtuous. ([unclear]) was bad, you know. What actually happened was bad. ([unclear]) which means were you happy about that {mushi} or not. Did you take pleasure in the fact that they were screwing up people or or you didn't you you regretted it? So you only collected a quarter and a quarter of a karmic path is not very...in those that circumstance wouldn't be very...it's like involuntary manslaughter. [unclear] is a lot like court because a court is trying to be just, you know, and that's also true. You do collect some bad deeds. How did Nagarjuna die? Do you know?

[student: [unclear]]

Somebody cut his head off. Why?

[student: Cause he had cut a bugs head off]

He had cut a bug's head off

[student: A what?]

He had he had accidentally cut a bug's head off in a former former life. That's how Nagarjuna died.

[student: I've got a lot of lives to go]

You know I'm not, you know, I laugh and I say ah come on that's too much but it's really the truth and I don't want to downplay it, you know. We have to be that careful and if you are you'll be happy and if you're not, you won't. Got to practice. It depends on your ear. It is not either a k or a g. Depending on which course is ahead one is the guinea pig and still figuring out what to say when I'm doing the class.

[cut]

Ultimately virtuous. I mean nirvana is ultimately virtuous. Second one is virtuous by nature of, its own nature. You know, it didn't...there was nothing else it has to be. Just by being itself is virtuous, okay and now we get to a thing called {sumden} virtue, okay. {sumden} say {sumden} (repeat) {sumden} (repeat) {sumden} is a very difficult idea. It means "a mental link" and your mind and the functions going on in the mind are linked in five five different ways and we're not gonna get into that but what it means is that if you have in your mind a very very virtuous thought, that thought itself is virtuous. But what about your feelings at that time and what about your intelligence at that time and what about your very awareness at that time?

[student: Actions]

They all...not the actions, we're getting to that later. All of those mental things going on in your mind at the same time as you have a powerful virtue are also virtue because they are walked in the same room with that virtuous thought by association [unclear] okay. {sumden} means "virtuous by association". Yeah.

[student : Would it be possible to have a virtuous thought and then have the following emotions be different than that, non virtuous?]

And that's what we call ([unclear]). That's ([unclear]) which means black and

white karma mixed and that's an abhidharma discussion that they get later, yeah. Just think of them as discreet. The virtue is virtue the non virtue is non virtue.

[student: So feelings, what else?]

There's there's a lot of them but basically you can think of your capacity to feel, your ability to feel, your feelingness, your feeling ability at that moment when you have a powerful thought in your mind. You know your thinking to save someone's life then then all the functions in your mind become virtue by association. They are not virtuous by themselves but because they are present in your mind when that powerful virtue is present, they become virtuous by association and that's what {sumden} means, okay

[student: As functions rather than the contents of those things?]

Well

[student: Like you're feeling, you know, I have a certain virtuous thought. My feeling is virtuous by association]

Right

[student: Or my very capacity to feel]

It's a good question. The capacity itself and I don't want to get into it. That's a whole study of abhidharma psychology and that's difficult. The ability to discriminate which is going on in your mind. The ability to say this is Tom this is Eric. If I'm If I'm If I'm teaching this class with an extraordinary virtuous motivation and and that time I distinguish between you two, that function of discrimination is also virtuous by association. It's in the same brain as my as my virtuous thought and just by good luck he's also virtuous. Yeah.

[student: An example of it like rejoicing? If you do a really good act that's one thing and then being happy about it and aware of it and all that is [unclear]]

No different thing. That's a different thing.

[student: I mean...]

{sumden} means mental functions, which are normally neutral, are coloured by the virtuous thought that you have. They are like clear glass. Virtuous thought is like a deep blue and the virtuous thought is put into the same area so all the glass around the virtuous thought becomes takes on a blue hue and that's exactly the way {sumden} is explained. The the virtue is so good that the other brothers in the same mind at the same time which are all neutral, take on that tint of virtue and that's called virtuous by association. It's not a major concept, I mean, you don't have to be happy that your consciousness is virtuous when you're when you're when you're avoiding a bad deed but but it happens to be true. It's not one of the main points. Yeah

[student: It's like driving is usually kind of neutral but if you are driving to go to dharma class [unclear] aware]

It would be like that but {sumden} refers specifically to mental association, you know. It's only the association between mental things.

[student: So what if you can...]

Driving is an event. {sumden} means like if you're if you're very anger angry then your actual perceptive ability, your awareness of self is influenced, is tainted by that anger and becomes a non virtue, that's what [unclear]. The the actual awareness, the general mind, becomes tainted by association at that moment and it's not virtuous at that moment, [b: Abhidharma]. And the last one is...

[student: Michael, would it be accurate to perceive that as a link the chain reaction because the primary thought is virtuous, there's like a domino effect of like hanging down to all associated mental malfunctions?]

It's a good it's a good question. Now when you say a domino effect, you're talking a progression in time. When I say by association, one of the five qualities of association is that it's simultaneous, you know. It's not that you have a virtue and then two three seconds later, the actual awareness and your mind consciousness is virtuous. It's it's as soon as you have a virtuous thought, because you must have awareness also going on at the same time, your mind must be operating at the same time. The mind itself becomes virtuous

[student: So all mind...]

Because one function of the mind is virtuous.

[student: So all mind and mental functions are occurring simultaneously?]

All simultaneous yeah in a {sumden} situation. {sumden} means linked.

[student: I thought only one thing in the mind could be happening in the mind at once [unclear] you're saying all those things are happening...]

Oh no not, when you're talking mental functions and the main mind, they are operating at the same time. It's like the the engine on the ship and the and the front of the ship and the side of the sh, they're all operating at the same time. There there parts of the mind actually. Okay {kun long} means "virtuous by motivation". {kun long} means motivation. This refers to verbal and physical acts which are virtuous. They become virtuous by virtue of what?

[student: [unclear]]

You know, the thought that you do them with. There's this famous story in Tibet, I heard it in Dharamsala twenty years ago. I could I could visualise it cause this happens in Dharamsala. You're often walking up the mountain and the rain storm comes during the monsoon, you're constantly getting soaked and they have all these Buddha images out on the stones, on the rocks, you know. So there's this story about a guy who...this poor guy he's like all he's got is a a [unclear] which is one of those towels that the Indian people wear around their waste and they go round with nothing but that on and he's got these sandals on. So he's walking by this Buddha image and it starts to rain and he's got this...all he's got is that somebody should cover this Buddha image it's getting wet. If he takes his [unclear] off, it's the only thing he's got on, I mean that's pretty common in India. I tried to wear one once I couldn't keep it up [laughter] and then he's got his sandals so out of out of devotion he takes his sandal and he covers the Buddha's head with his sandal and it's you know it's a very virtuous act. Then five minutes later this guys walking down a path, you know, and he looks over there and some idiot's put a dirty shoe on top of the Buddha's head, you know, and he goes over and throws it away, you know, and he they both collected a huge virtue [laughter]. By {kun long} by by motivation. Same different opp... opposite deeds same {kun long} same virtue. It's a very famous example. Okay, so that's normally what you think of in when you think of virtue. You know, when I say virtue when I say good deed, you're thinking good deed mostly by motivation but just remember there's other things which are good deeds just by their very nature. To be embarrassed . I think I think it

was, I don't know, Socrates or somebody. He saw a young man and he he was he blushed and he said that blush was a sign of virtue, you know. You you are embarrassed about something, that's a sign that you care that that you do something right or not. That's that's virtue by by essence, you know. To be to be embarrassed to do something wrong is is is just by itself virtue and then other kinds of virtue like your consciousness, your very awareness are virtuous by association and then some deeds of not lying or or trying to help someone, trying to protect life, those are virtuous by your motivation and then ultimate virtue is is nirvana. So those are the four [unclear]

[student: Do these include bad non virtues also?]

Yes, good question yes. I don't think they include neutral, I'm not sure neutral karma and by the way the the metaphors which are not on your homework or anything okay, nirvana is like your healthy body. Virtue by very nature is like they say it's like a medicinal herb. It's like a herb that has the power to cure something and then virtuous by association is like the medium in which you mix it, you know the liquid in which you mix the herb before you drink it. Like the water, you know, in tibetan medicine sometimes you have to mix it into water and then you drink it. You know, the water by itself is neutral but as soon as you mix in all these herbs, the water itself becomes beneficial, medicinal. And then the the last one, virtuous by motivation they say is like a mother who's milk is is is beneficial or medicinal because she's been taking a lot of these tibetan herbs you know what I mean. Like the outcome of that liquid going through her whole system and coming out of as essence of milk, that milk itself has some kind of beneficial quality to it and that's that's virtuous by motivation. That's the metaphor and then poisonous herbs are the opposite, you know, if you want to talk about non virtue, then poisonous herb itself is what? What's the ultimate non virtue?

[student: Ignorance]

[student: Hell]

Samsara, suffering, suffering life, our suffering life is the ultimate non virtue, that's cool

[student: That's the result though?]

Yeah but so is nirvana. You see it's not a true non virtue. It's it's a metaphor.

It's it's...the ultimate non virtue and the ultimate virtue have nothing to do with it really, it's just ultimate goodness and ultimate evil. Ultimate evil is to live this lousy life that we're living, okay. That's that's the ultimate evil. That's compared to a poisonous herbs. What is...what is the second one? By by...

[student: By nature]

By nature, I'm sorry. Ultimate evil is is the sick body right and that refers to, that's a metaphor for samsara for this...for being locked into the kind of bodies we have that has to degenerate. Then secondly, what was the second one? Virtuous by by nature is the poisonous herbs. Non virtuous by nature is poisonous herbs. Non virtuous by association is the the water in which you mix the poisonous herbs before you give them to your enemy [laughs]. The water is nothing, it's neutral by itself but because it's mixed in the same glass it becomes non virtuous. And then the last one is what? Non virtuous by...

[student: Motivation]

Motivation. It's compared as a metaphor of a woman who takes that drink and then her milk harms her baby. The milk is...

[student: [unclear]]

Excuse me?

[student: Takes it for the purpose of harming the baby]

Yeah, you could say that. It's a metaphor. They don't say that but it's just that it's the milk is like the the outcome or the milk is the, what do you call it?

[student: Result?]

It's the consequence of the...in the way that a bad deed is a consequence of a bad motivation

[student: But if if she was taking bad medicine without knowing [unclear]]

Yeah, no obviously obviously yeah. Well...

[student: So it has to be knowingly right or for the purpose of harming?]

Yeah it does it have to be

[student: The motivation]

Yeah motivation of a...non virtuous motivation has to be pretty much has to be with with intent to harm except that there's some kinds of ignorance which can also be harmful but we'll get into that. By the way, there's a there's a lot of reading in your reading about motivation. It's very difficult. I never got it one hundred percent straight myself. [unclear] you know, cook it, it's not in your homework, I just I put it in there you could read it. It's about the nature of motivation, you know. It divides motivation into the motivation you have as you enter an act and then the motivation as you continue an act and then there's different, ignorance plays a different role in each of those and that's, I'm not gonna get into it cause I don't understand it myself completely and it's not it's not treated in the higher schools that I know of much. So I'm not sure where [unclear]. I I wanted to go over with you the ten non virtues with you in six minutes just so you can...you can't say you had a karma course and you never heard the ten non virtues.

[student: The clocks three minutes fast, you have nine minutes]

Okay, good. You know I'll take twenty anyway. {sokju} (repeat) {ma jin len} (repeat) {ngo gyam} (repeat). Okay, these are the first three of the ten. They're all done through the gateway of your what?

[student: Body]

Body as opposed to your speech or mind. When you read the reading you'll see in the [b: Abhidharma] Vasubandhu says I like for example, how many {kleshas} are there? How many bad thoughts are there? How many root bad thoughts?

[student: Eighty four thousand?]

There's six root ones. There's eighty four thousand total. There's also eighty four thousand bad karmas and and Vasubandhu says look if I got into them all, the book would never end. I'm gonna give you ten, okay. The point is these ten you're doing all the time. We are doing all the time. If you're if you're who you look to be which I don't have a {tse-ma} about, you're close to them or they're very likely I mean out of the eighty four thousand these are the top ten alright

and and, you know, if you do nothing else in the karma class, maybe we should just do this for the ten classes, I don't know but if you get some sort of increased awareness of how, or some increased sensitivity, to when you are close to one of these ten, that would be a great result in this class, you know. If you actually changed as a result of this class that would be great, you know. Are they e...you know, should you feel guilty or are they wrong, is someone gonna beat you up. It's not like that. These ten things by their nature will cause you suffering, must cause you suffering, must get you in trouble. Never will help you, never do them. If something good happens cause you did one of them, it had nothing to do with them, you know. Just get used to thinking like that. Just avoid them your life will be much happier, guaranteed hundred percent, okay. {sokju} {sok} means "life" {ju} means "to cut" and {sokju} means "killing". Obviously any living being so therefore including who?

[student: Cockroaches]

Roaches and yourself, okay. Suicide is also included here. I mean, I'm not gonna go into a big thing about all the different forms of all these but I I think it's important to say suicide and in the scripture it says {mi michapa}. {mi} means "a a living a a human or a human". {michapa} means "a an embryo a foetus". So according to Buddhism, a being is living at conception and to destroy that would be would be killing, would be murder. So that's that's just so you know that's the buddhist viewpoint, alright. I think that covers two that you might wonder about, okay

[student: What did {sokju} mean again. What cut?]

To cut life which means to kill

[student: Which ones but which ones?]

{sok} is "life" and {ju} means "cut". What's {dorje chupa}?

[student: Diamond cutter]

{dorje chupa} diamond cutter centre, yeah.

[student: Okay [unclear] can you explain it?]

Buddhism doesn't say that plants have life. It was a debate in Japan much later

maybe thirteen hundred years later. You know, they started to debate. The Japanese buddhists started to debate whether or not, you know, what's his name, lived in Kyoto, Saiygo started to debate it. But no in the classical scriptures there's no there's not there plants aren't considered life. They look like life, they act like life and in fact in the pramana scriptures there's an example the way that leaves curl up and die when you cut the trunk is considered a non {tse-ma}. So those of you who had the last class, to think that a tree has life in the sense of conscious life because when you cut it it dries up is a is a error. In according to Dharmakirti and so that's that's just, you know, a a a Buddha can emanate as a tree and even in some extraordinary cases a very bad person can imitate and look like a tree. Emanate, you know, take a birth as a tree and have some kind of suffering. You read that in Dante it's interesting you also read it in buddhist sutra so that's possible. But but in and of itself plant life is not life and in fact in Tibetan and sanskrit words don't they don't say to kill a tree, they say dry a tree and when a tree dies they don't say die they say dry. So they don't even use the words life or die or live. {ma jin len} {ma jin len} {ma jin} means "not giving". {len} means "to take", to take what is not given which means stealing, okay. If you say it is to take what is not given is even more powerful. I was with the Dalai Lama's biographer one day and we were pulling a leaf off a tree and we we both stopped {ma jin len}. Nobody gave us this leaf, you know. it was, you know, it was in someone's front yard, that's {ma jin len}. I can't think of anything special to say about that except that, you know, not paying taxes is {ma jin len}, you know. Social contract in which you've agreed, you know, you're expected...the the the custom of the country is very strongly considered in buddhist morality. It's not always correct but if the country says you can have abortion, that doesn't mean you should kill foetuses but if the country says you really should pay your taxes and if you've agreed to take all the benefits of you paying taxes and then you don't pay taxes, that's {ma jin len}.

[student: What happens if the taxes are used to [unclear]??]

If they're used for violence, it's your responsibility to at least to inform the authorities that you don't agree with that but you're not, you know, you can or cannot go to jail because you [unclear] but but you if you you really should inform them that, you know, I prefer that my taxes don't go for killing and I don't support the military effort that you're using with my taxes. Even though I feel that I'm not obligated to pay taxes, I want I want to publicly and formerly tell you that I I don't agree with that and I don't want the karma of my taxes going for that which is a karma, okay. {ngo gyam} which is in the [b: Abhidharma] by the way. {ngo gyam} means "sexual misconduct". The main

one is adultery but it's not limited to that. Homosexuality is considered {ngo gyam} and there's scriptural references for it. Masturbation is {ngo gyam}. Having sex with your relatives is, you know, within a certain number of generations is {ngo gyam}. Having sex in front of...

[student: Within a number of generations, you mean cousins?]

Well, there's a certain, I don't remember, I can look it up for you but like after ninth cousin it's okay or something like that. No what it means is there's many many kinds of {ngo gyam}. Consenting adults who are not married is not {ngo gyam}, okay. In buddhism, according to buddhism, you don't have to be married to have sex in buddhism, it's not a bad deed as long as and if if the girl is under age or if if according to the custom of that country it's it's underage that's also {ngo gyam}. So those are all, that's a long list to have sex in the presence of a Buddha image or a stupa or a church or a temple is {ngo gyam}. So those are, I you know, I had many students who have all of these things. Any kind of sex except for usual kind is also, like oral sex is {ngo gyam}. And that's you know I know that's not the custom of the country and maybe it's all many of the things I have mentioned but I think you should know what the scriptures say and you know I could show it to you and you know. Yeah.

[student : Is there any explanation offered for things like that? Can you look it up on the computer maybe or?]

I've I've had people ask me, you know. They've asked me this on the basis that it doesn't harm anyone, then then isn't it okay and the people are consenting and everything like that. There's a long...I I know the scriptural references that, I mean I can show you the ones where it's not, it is {ngo gyam}. Are there references where it explicitly say why it's harmful? I can show you some oblique references. I I haven't come across anything in my own study which is not very deep that that I could show you why it's why it's harmful but I would say that, you know, just just off...my answer to that would be there is a lot of fine points of morality that as I said at the beginning be aware of them and the Buddha taught them, the Buddha knows. The Buddha can see that if you hurt someone what's exactly gonna come to you and certain points you have to you have, you know, trust that what he says, you know. Can I show you scriptural references of exactly what bad deed would come if you commit that, I'd have to work on it. It's probably in the [unclear] it's probably in the [b: Vinaya] and within the next years I'll get through that and, you know, I'll show you. I just tell you as friends, you know, in in the scripture it says those things will cause you suffering. It's

not that Buddha doesn't like you or or he's gonna punish you. The automatic result of those things is that they will harm you so I I'm your teacher I have to tell you that. I I can't, you know, can I give you compelling arguments for it I I really, some of them I can't. I could find some scriptural references for you but but it's reported in the scriptures and and, you know, try and avoid it you know, you don't really have to do it, you know [laughter]. I'm just saying, you know, try not as a as a friend I believe it would I believe in the scriptures, I believe it would hurt you. I I can't, you know, give you...some of them I can't say. I've seen the Dalai Lama been asked the same questions and in some cases he has to sort of, what I would say as {trunden} which is interpretive answer, you know. He has to say well maybe it wouldn't be so bad or something like that because the whole audience would freak out if he said well look you can't do that but I I I know you well. I can tell you're looking at me like that [laughter] but I I I'm not such a great expert of [b: Vinaya]. I I hope to be, I'm working on it and we'll, I'll try to show you. I'm just...you should know what the scriptures say that's what they say. I can show you that, you know. And try, you know, it's not such a big deal. It's not such a great loss. Okay, four [laughter]. [unclear] a lot of people freak out cause they can't change their habits and I and I know that, you know, and don't make yourself crazy, you know. Get the intention to to to change and and think about and keep it in your mind to the point where it doesn't make you crazy and you don't quit buddhism class cause you don't agree with that. I mean put it away in that thing okay I don't agree with it right now, I'll I'll try to see what I can do about it, you know, but don't let it be the thing that makes you give up buddhism or stuff like that. It's not worth it.

[student: If if explained and clarified, it could be very helpful to a lot of people, I mean, you know]

That's right. That's right. [unclear] okay. {dunma} (repeat) {dunma} means "to lie", okay. {dunma} means to lie. It's kind of defined as giving a false impression which is kind of more delicate right. You know to give the impression other than the one you have is is

[student: I thought that was what was gonna happen with the communicating karma where if you even communicate through body language, inference or anything else, the wrong impression that that's a negative]

Yeah, by the way, they then the scripture says, you know, if someone says to you did you see joe smoe or today and you say, it's not a verbal action but it's a it's {dunma}, you know. It's to, it's to communicate by bodily action or by

words, they lie. So you don't get out of a lie by [laughter].

[student: If if you try and present a situation, you don't lie in the words themselves but the way it comes out, it sounds like a lie. You know, It's it's the person gets a different a complete different impression of it]

I have that problem when I write my resume, you know[laughter]. You know, it's not a lie but I know the person will get a different impression [unclear] what really was and it's and I I like attention and I like, what do you call it, peoples admiration so I will imply something that's not really true but I didn't lie, you know, and no it's a lie, it's a misimpression. To give a misimpression is lying. I'm sorry I wish it wasn't, okay. And it's again it's not like what are you gonna lose if you give them up, suffering. You know, it's it's not that misrepresenting your resume is gonna cause you any happiness, it cannot. It's a bad deed, it must cause you suffering. If you do get the job it's cause something else you do, there's no connection but we do it, you know it's weird, okay. {chumpa} {chumpa} is not in the christian ten but it's it's to or I should say in the judao christian [unclear] but it's to it's to split up other people by saying something. It's to alienate other people. You know, you say to John, you know, you don't know it but that guy that was here last night, he was talking about you and I know you like him but...and by the way, it does not have to be a lie, it could be the truth also but but your intention is that I should I want to alienate these people

[student: Is that gossip?]

It's a that's coming [laughs]. It it well I call it divisive speech. It's it's...and we do it all the time. When I complain about my boss to all my friends which I do constantly, there's this sort of deep subconscious thing where I want other people to understand why I don't like the person and I wouldn't mind if other people also didn't like the person the same way I don't like the person. You know, there's this is very common, it must be in the top ten. You must be doing it all day long, you know, so watch for it. It's it's subtle. It's just like you drop a hint, you know, you say somebody says boy he's a genius and you go yeah well. That's already {chumpa}, you know. Yeah

[student: If you have situation where, for instance, [unclear] it is true but [unclear]]

You can still protect the person. That's a different thing and somebody many

people have asked me that and that's if it's if it's truly without any evil intent. You know, you really want to protect...you know this guy thinks Hitler's a nice guy and you say well look he's killed a couple of people, you know he probably just wants to get you. That's protecting someone that's your it's your duty to do that. It's your bodhisattva vows, you have to tell the person, right. What this refers to is where you 're getting some evil glee about having other people agree that your assessment that this is a bad person and so they don't like the person the same way you don't like the person and then they're on your side and that's that's {chumpa} and it's very common, we do it. And I find myself doing it all the time and there's no need for it, there's no good result from it. Karmically it's a disaster and check it, it's it's one to watch out for. What's that, I didn't catch that?

[student: She's telling you the time]

[laughter] I hate it when Rinpoche keeps me late

[student: It's only nine o nine [laughs]]

I'll feel guilty if I don't teach you these ten. Okay, {siktu} say {siktu} (repeat) {siktu} means "harsh words", oh stupid. I do it all the time as it's supposed to be jokes but it hurts peoples feelings. I do it all the time

[student: What is it again?]

Harsh words and the scripture says it can be a very nice, you know, I always give the example in the grocery store when they say have a nice day and they mean get the hell out of the way let me help...let me work on the next person's groceries, you know. That's {siktu}. It can be a pleasant word, it can be a harsh word but the intent is that it hurts the person

[student: To hurt other people. Not like swearing where you just...]

They say if you bang your foot and say shit, that's {siktu}. [laughter]

[student: Can you do it to yourself?]

Yeah you can, you stupid...I'm not sure, by the way, I'm sorry. I I gave you the wrong example I shouldn't have said that. When you get angry about stubbing your foot, that's a bad you will get bad karma from that. It is a kind of anger, it's

not {siktu}, it's not a [unclear]

[student: How about if you get angry at yourself?]

If it's if it's stupid ignorant anger. You know, [b: Abhidharma], this is interesting, the only negative emotion which is virtuous is regret. You see, to say oh my god I shouldn't have done that, I'm really a dumbhead, you know. I really shouldn't have lied, you know, it wasn't gonna get me what I wanted anyway. It's dysfunctional but that bad feeling about what you did is a great virtue which implies that most other bad feelings are not too hot, okay, alright.

[student: All these are dealing with speech?]

Yeah all these four, which is why I wrote these four together are speech.

[student: Excuse me, [unclear]]

Doesn't change it cause it's first colour so...

[student: [unclear]]

This. It's that flag on the...it's called a {sapat}

[student: {sapat}]

{nakgyal} say {nakgyal} (repeat) {nakgyal} means "meaningless talk". Talk with no important meaning. Now there's a lot of exceptions, you know, if you're at a party and it would be uncomfortable for everyone if you didn't make small talk, it's not {nakgyal}. There's a purpose for it, [laughs] okay

[student: Like gossip?]

It's like gossip but if I say did you gossip today, you'd probably say no I didn't stand on my fence with my neighbour and talk about twenty people but did you have {nakgyal} all day, probably thousands, you know. {nakgyal} means wasting your time talking about nothing important. The worst kind of {nakgyal} is to recite your daily prayers and think about something else. That's it, that's the ultimate {nakgyal}. Seriously, that's in the scriptures, that's very heavy {nakgyal} and that's hard. Is it evil, are you a bad person, should you feel guilty? No no no no

[student: But this creates bad karma, all of these things?]

It will hurt you

[student: So what kind of negative karma do you collect from this? [laughter]]

[unclear] understand rumours people [unclear] the rest of your life, I don't know. You know how that is. People calling you [unclear]

[student: Want to talk about the weather [laughter]]

[unclear] weather, man [unclear]

[student: When you say your prayers like sometimes your mind wanders especially when you're saying Tibetan]

You have to you have to...I'm not saying it's you're a bad person, I'm saying do what you can to stop it. Don't go crazy that's dysfunctional. You'll do more bad deeds, you know. In a comfortable happy way try to move away from it.

[student: Michael what is the what is the [unclear]?]

Guilt is useless. There's no word in Tibetan for guilt. There's no word, there's no such word, there's no word in the buddhist scriptures for guilt.

[student: Regret?]

A healthy intelligent regret. The regret of a buddhist and of an educated buddhist which you will all be by the time you finish these courses is a wisdom. You know, to to think I should I really did something stupid, you know, I really shouldn't have done that. I I now I put that karmic seed in my mind, I have that perception I understand how the perception must go through time and how that perception must come out and how I must perceive myself suffering in the future. I did a stupid thing, you know. I'm a buddhist, I'm an educated buddhist person, it was very stupid thing to do. It was a foolish thing. I lied to get some money. No connection, you know, just..it not like you have to feel guilty I broke your vows blah blah blah, it's just a dumb thing to do

[student: What about talking about something daily like I should do better, I

should try better, I should...you know what I'm saying...]

That's fine. That's like a good intention but

[student: Does that fall into [unclear]?]

But this bad feeling, if the bad feeling doesn't make you better then it's not it's not a virtue, you know. The idea of guilt where you feel bad and you don't and it kind of keeps you down and depressed and you feel bad about you don't have self esteem and then you get worse, this is just useless, you know. You have to in a happy comfortable way to the to the limit of your ability, move away from these things but but then to take on to try to lift a weight that you can't lift, you know. To try to stop saying any meaningless thing at work tomorrow, you'll collapse, you'll you'll break down. It's not a good thing. It's not functional. You have to do what you can, you know. Shantideva says give away vegetables, don't cut off your arm and give it away yet [laughs]. Okay, number eight, these are all what?

[student: Mind]

Mental, okay and I'll try to do it fast. I'm sorry [unclear]

[student: It's okay]

I don't have to work tomorrow [laughter]. Say {nabsem} (repeat) {nabsem} (repeat) {nabsem} is "coveting". Just as a way it's said in the ten commandments exactly.

[student: Coveting?]

Coveting which means to to desire in a bad way the things that other people have. It is the root of jealousy. I have it, you know. If I meet a good buddhist scholar, do I rejoice? Usually not. It's like gee I wonder if he's as smart as I am, you know. That's {nabsem}. {nabsem} is is wanting the good things that other people have and be willing to do something bad to get it, you know.

[student: Does the component of being willing to do something bad to get it have to be there?]

Yeah it does, it has a lot to do with it

[student: So just the...]

You know, if you never acted out is it still a karma? Yes. You know that {yikte le}. It's a movement of the mind. It is a mental karma by in and of itself.

[student: Even if you don't think to do something bad to get it?]

Yeah, even if you don't think

[student: So just thinking I really want that?]

Yeah, yeah. But mainly you will, that's a very rare case where you don't actually have any more thoughts about it. If you really have a stronger {nabsem} you're probably going to do something but it's not a mental desire. Okay, that's enough [unclear] {nusem}. Do you know {nabsem} is not like you want a cadillac or you want a two hundred thousand dollar house. It can be little, it's mostly little things, you know. You're jealous of someone else's good qualities. They're getting more attention than you are. They have a nice pretty handsome boyfriend, you don't, you know. It's the little things.

[student: You must be willing to do something negative]

No

[student: You don't have to?]

Not not necessarily, just a thought that that

[student: But you just said]

[student: That you wanted to do something bad to get it and you emphasised that]

I did say that. Most of the time but no, not necessarily

[student: And perhaps [unclear]]

How about being kind of willing, how's that? I don't think...it does not have to get strong enough that you actually do anything for it to be a bad deed, you

know

[student: But what happens if you see somebody else who has nice things and you would like the same things? I wish I had the same things, you know. Not necessarily that you don't want the person to have it, you know what I mean?]

No, that's true. Yeah [unclear] {nabsem} yeah

[student: That's also {nabsem}?]

Yeah

[student: Gee [laughter]]

[student: [unclear] a lot of dharma knowledge and say gee I wish I had that kinda knowledge]

So I could help people. That's that's a different thing. Obviously that's...

[student: It depends on the object, the motivation and all that]

Yeah, a lot of different things. {nusem} {nusem} means harm harmful mind or harmful intent or, you know, I asked a lama. It wasn't very clear to me and I remember I was I remember where I was. It was twenty years ago, he was in a jeep, I was sitting next to him and said what's {nusem}. He says it's being happy when other people fail and you know, I don't have this evil intent where I wanna go out and shoot people on the street but I do have this subtle pleasure when people around me fail sometimes. And that's very bad and so if it's in the top ten you must have it. It must be something that goes on in your heart during the day. Watch out watch out. You don't even know you have these ten, you know. Hopefully, a week from now you'll think you're a much worse person because you'll notice them, you know. That's a normal reaction to a class like this but don't worry about it. You're just the same as you were when [unclear] [laughter]

[student: [unclear] also include being happy when someone else something bad happens to someone else?]

Yeah, yeah and it's weird, you know, we have this destructive glee [laughter] in us that even people, you know, like if my boss fails I sometimes feel kind of I

don't feel so bad but it's gonna hurt me too. Hurts her, hurts the company, hurts me and still you kinda don't feel too bad about it, you know. You don't take as much sadness out of other people's misfortune as you do about your own. That's a bad sign, that's {nusem}.

[student: [unclear] when Hitler fails we should be unhappy about it?]

Obviously, no

[student: When Charlie Chaplin falls down and you laugh]

No, that's that's humour. I don't, I know, you know he's not, faking the act really

[student: But what happens, it's just a movie, what happens if somebody, something bad happens or something]

By the way, when people bring to me these these these these moral quandries, you know. They said to the Dalai Lama in Los Angeles if if a guy was pushing an atomic bomb over New York city and you were twenty feet away and you had a gun and he's about to press it down, do you shoot or not and he says I'll tell you when it happens [laughter]. What it means is, don't worry too much about the extraordinary special cases. I'm talking about every minute of your office day and you know it and i know it, you know. Ninety nine point nine nine nine you know damn well when you're being bad and you're not happy about it. Doesn't make you feel good even now. Even before you understand the emptiness of it. Just stop it, okay

[student: What happens if you you say it, you see something that happens to someone where you say thank god it didn't happen to me but you don't rejoice [laughter]]

A bodhisattva would say I wish it had happened to me instead of them. Of course that's what the whole thing [unclear]

[student: You know, Michael, the idea of like going to a movie and seeing people killing each other, Charlie Chaplin the example used, it seems to me that sitting and there thinking it's normal it's okay, is planting the mental seeds]

Yeah it is. It's it's a it's a dangerous thing to to to, you know, they do affect you

subconsciously. You have to be very careful, right. I think it's one of the diseases of our culture, you know, and I'm not gonna go prevent kids from seeing movies but I I do think it doesn't help. Okay {lokta} (repeat) {lokta} means "wrong views" . In this case it's the worst of the ten. Why? Because the classic {lokta} is to think that you can ever do the slightest wrong deed and and it won't and nothing will happen to you and we think that all day long or we wouldn't do what we do. We have {lokta} implicitly throughout the whole day. We really don't believe that if we tell a small lie, you know, people won't believe us for twenty years in a future life, you know. We just don't believe that. We really don't believe that if we if we hurt someone's feelings that, you know, somehow will affect us greatly for a long time in the future. We really don't believe that and so you gotta work on that. {lokta} is the root of obviously of all the other nine. If you have {lokta} you can you will do the other nine so you have to work on it. {lokta} is like the main enemy. Enemy number one. It's not really believing in karma and hopefully, my goal is to give you a convincing argument when we reach the mind only section and the [b: Madhyamika] section, that you will believe in karma and that I will start acting on it too, okay. Alright, mister [unclear]. Sorry to keep you late

[prayer: Short mandala]

[prayer: Dedication]

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**ACI Course V: HOW KARMA WORKS**

**Class Four: Divisions of Karma; Karmic Results**

**October 27, 1994**

**transcribed by: Mira Prabha**

...the mind, and then we talked about bodily and verbal karma, and then last class we gave the three types of karma, virtuous, non-virtuous, neutral, explained why, what they do. So the natural thing to talk about this week is what happens when you do them, right? You know, like what are the karmic results, what kind of consequences do you get from different kinds of karma. And there are many many different presentations in the Abidharma. I gave you 20 something pages, that's only a small group of them, there's many more, but here are the most basic three, according to when it's going to ripen, when are you going to experience it. This is the division by when you are going to experience the karma. First one is {tongyo kyi lay}. Say {tongyo kyi} [repeat] {lay} [repeat], {tongyo kyi} [repeat] {lay} [repeat]. What's {tong} mean? You know {tong la} right? {Lay} means karma, and {tongyo} means "which you are going to see," "karma which you are going to see," and that refers to karma that you see the result in this same life. So the first division of karma by when you experience the result is the karma which you see, and that means karma where you see the results in this life, before you die. And we mentioned before, that's the basis of the secret teachings and it's also... it would have to be some kind of powerful karma. I'll explain that more later tonight, what kind of karma is so powerful that you are going to see the result before you take your next birth. The second one is {ken ye}, say {ken ye}[repeat] {yong yo kyi}[repeat] {le gyu} [repeat]. I was up really late last night so tonight I'm a little buzzed out, okay? {ken ye} means after born, after you were born. {yong yo kyi lay} means experienced after you were born.

[student: And {gyu} means what?]

Which will be. {Yong} means experience and {lay} means karma. You don't have to worry about it because you're not in the Tibetan class. If you're interested, it's karma which will be experienced after you are born. That doesn't just mean after you are born. It means in your next life. And it means technically your second next life. Why? You have to take a bardo birth between that. A bardo is a separate birth. But it means in your next rebirth.

[student: are you saying bardo in the form of rebirth?]

Yeah, the next birth you take after the bardo connected to this life. Actually a bardo is a kind of birth also. Don't get confused about it. So the second kind of karma is karma you experience in the very next life after this one. Say {lengang} [repeat] {shen la} [repeat] {nom gyur} [repeat] {kyi lay} [repeat]. {lengang} [repeat] {shen la} [repeat] {nom gyur} [repeat] {kyi lay} [repeat]. {Lengang} means time, like in two times, three times, four times. {shen} means other, {la} means in, in another. {nom gyur kyi lay} means karma which will be experienced. {nom} means experience, {gyur} means will be, {kyi} here means which will, and {lay} means karma. So that's karma that will be experienced at another time, which means, what?

[student: Any time after this lifetime]

Any time after the immediate next life. So could be the second life on to a million later. That's {lengang shen la nom gyur kyi lay}. What determines when it takes place is a couple of things. We'll talk about it later today and also you have to study the Abidharma presentation on the Wheel of Life, that's another story. They discuss how many births it takes to work out a whole wheel of life, one wheel. It's more than one birth taking place in that wheel.

[student: So if you were to achieve Buddhahood in the very next life, does the karma get wiped out?]

Well, it can't be activated. It will never do anything. They say it's like a seed that's rotten, it will never produce a result. Whether you actually get rid of it or it disappears is a moot point because it will never... it has no function.

[student: Michael, so the point is that when you achieve Buddhahood, it's not because you've eliminated all your bad karmic seeds altogether, it's just that there are so many of them that what's left become inert?]

I'm not sure what the... I believe that's true. They don't emphasize that in the scriptures. I guess logically it would have to be that way, or maybe you have some... the word "karma" in Buddhism almost always means "dirty karma". There is a thing called "pure karma" but it refers to the "dirty karma" of higher beings. So the things that Buddhas experience, when Buddhas experience a pure field, when Buddhas experience a paradise as a result of their actions in this life, they don't often call it "karma". It's not given the word "karma", it's not presented in the presentations of karma... karma almost always has to do with

samsara. When a Buddha does good deeds for trillions of years and as a result of that he achieves a Buddha field, they don't really call that karma, though, they just call it the result of his deeds. So that's just...you only know that by reading a lot of scriptures. You notice that after a while they're not talking about the Buddhas in terms of karma. So karma has this connotation of ignorant karma. That good or bad it's going to reach into all this kind of fluctuating results, where even the good things you get wear off. So those are the three basic conditions of the first wave. Vasubandhu's going to define it in many many different ways.

[student: What is the "it" you are referring to?]

Excuse me?

[student: What is the "it" you're referring to?]

Oh, karma. Millions of ways. I mean, all four chapters of the Abidharma. It's long. And I'm not going to give you all of them. It's too many. We'll touch on the most important. Abidharma gives another division.... there are four kinds of karma which will definitely ripen, and I thought that would be useful for you.

[silence]

[student: Won't they all ripen?]

No, not according to the Abidharma.

[student: I thought that was one of the rules of karma, that it had to ripen.]

There's a very famous... the Abidharma is sort of [unclear] on this point, I mean the Vinaya is very clear about it, the Buddha over and over again repeats this verse and it's later repeated by Chandrakirti, Nagarjuna, [unclear], Avalokiteswara, Bharatha, many different... the one especially that the Buddha .. is a famous {unclear} is karma can never go away, karma can never just disappear, impossible. Now whether a karma will definitely produce its results or not, how certain is it that it will be activated, or that it's fixed... the Abidharma talks about karmas which are certain and karmas which are not certain. Sometime they say that... Abidharma is a little bit different. So any way, you can take these as karmas... things that make karma very certain to give you a result. Like if you kill someone unintentionally or something, that's a little bit weaker. But these are four that must ripen into future experience, that must be

experienced as one of those three we were just talking about. They say that if these four elements are present, the likelihood that the karma is going to come back to you is very certain. Generally, any karma you do is going to come back to you. But these are like more ...you'll see.

[student: Oh, so these are the four...]

Well, we'll go through them. {chud drakpo} means... {chud} means powerful force, {drakpo} means fierce, like those tantric deities who are fierce are called {drakpo}. And {chud drakpo} means that the emotion is very strong, like if you commit a karma with fierce anger, or if you commit a virtue with fierce faith, feelings of faith, you know, you've had them in your life, like when you almost cry because of some very fierce emotion that you have. That's the first element that would make a karma very certain to produce a future result.

[student: Powerful emotion?]

Yeah, if its related with a powerful emotion, a fierce emotion, either good or bad. It can be love for a lama, it can be fierce anger or fierce jealousy... the last two are negative karmas.

[student: I've lost the reference. Is it a deed accompanied by a powerful emotion, or...]

Yeah, which is related, not the emotion itself. Which is related to that.

[student: So what we would refer to as a crime of passion would...]

Be even worse.

[student: It's worse than a cold, calculated....]

I don't know. Greed can be pretty passionate and be cold and calculating too.

[student: I mean, like a Nazi crime, which is totally, a very clinical state of mind, as opposed to someone in a jealous rage who kills someone close to them.]

I think you could almost say that except that the Nazi would probably be in fierce ignorance. To be able to do that over and over again with cold calculation is like a fierce kind of ignorance. To be cold and detached about it is a very

strong emotion of ignorance. Know what I mean? Mental dysfunction, you could say? That person doesn't have any shame, he's not embarrassed, he thinks it's a normal thing to do, to kill people... I'd say that was an overwhelming ignorance, which would also be included in here.

[silence]

[student: So you're saying emotion in the form of a thought also?]

Yeah. The two examples given in the scripture are anger and faith. So they have to be emotions, but...they do later... they describe... the Abidharma is very dry. [laughs] You may have got some feeling of it by now, but a lot of people can't stand reading Abidharma. But if you really appreciate it... I mean, it gives you the information you need... it's an encyclopedia of the brain and the spirit. It's very good. So they discuss the possibilities between like... can you commit adultery or hatred? You want to hurt the spouse, so you go with this person's spouse, because you hate the person. You don't have any desire for the spouse, you just want to hurt the person.

[student: That always come back to an emotion, I mean, I'm thinking for example....]

Then they say ignorance, you know, the way animals kill animals.

[student: For example, if someone says, I know I'm right and I'm sure I'm right, and they do something. Would that be called [unclear]]

Yeah, that would be a strong feeling. If a Nazi says it's right we have to kill these people, it's morally right, we have to clean up the country, that's just a ... they talk about {unclear}, they talk about {marikpa chichewa}. {marikpa chichewa} means that person's mind as he commits that bad karma is controlled by ignorance, and that's as bad as anger. It's worse. So it would qualify as number one. Ignorance, just pure stupidity.

[student: Any angry thought then would qualify as...any harsh or impure thought...]

It's a long story. I mean, there's this thing about identification of the object. If you think it's your enemy in a dark alley and you shoot him, and then it turns out not to be your enemy, it's a little bit less. That's another story. Say {yende ni

shi] [repeat]. {yende} means what? {yende} means good quality, good personal quality. And {shi} means basis, or object. And here it refers to the three {ratnas}, the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. You guys know what they are technically. Buddha is easy, an Enlightened Being. Dharma is not the teachings. The teachings are called Dharma, but they're not the real Dharma. Real Dharma is cessation and those paths, and the real Sangha is people who have seen Emptiness directly, whether they wear robes or not. In this school, selflessness is described in the second chapter what makes you an Arya? what makes you a Sangha? And when they go for refuge, it's a little bit different from the higher schools. So {yende ni shi} means some extraordinary virtuous object and it means the three {ratnas}, if you do something against them or something for them. Like there were people in India who tried to harm the Buddha, and that kind of extraordinary karma is certain to produce a result.

[student: How does that work? I've never understood how that works. It makes no logical sense to me that just by virtue of walking around a [unclear] object you get karma...]

All right, we'll get to it, we'll discuss it tonight. We'll get there. Basically it's this, and that's why it's so bad to commit suicide. The human body... anything that's close to producing Enlightenment is so rare. The word "Three Gems" means {koinchock} means "rare"... and it's so rare that someone gets close to understanding everything they need to know to get out of suffering that anything you do... it's like destroying the last AIDS medicine in the world or something. It's like a horrible crime against humanity to commit suicide if you already know some Dharma.

[student: I understand that. What I don't understand is how that equates with walking by a being [unclear]]

[laughs] It's just being in the environs of a very holy object.

[student: There's no motivation, there's no intention, there's none of the four components.]

There's {mu shi} which is that the thing is actually very holy. There's this famous story of a fly...

[student: That doesn't make sense to me.]

Yeah, it's there, it's a very famous... it's in the Abidharma also. That story is given in the Abidharma, or a similar story.

[student: [unclear] not such a high being, I mean, being around...]

Yeah, right, there's this order, there's this pecking order. Buddha, and then there's Arhats, and then they say Aryas, and then they say [unclear], and then they say lamas [unclear]. {yende ki shi}.

[student: What kind of things do you have to do against these people? Anything? Or...]

Yeah, you can do anything physical.

[student: So it could be physical or verbal?]

Yeah. And mental too.

[student: Mental too?]

Like, ah, that's all just a bunch of malarkey. [laughs]

[student: How is that different than being skeptical?]

Being skeptical is required of a good Buddhist. Buddha said: "Take my words like gold. File them, cut them, burn them." It's a famous quotation. And it's the way you should be to anyone who seems to be bad in the world. Say: "I don't really know, they could be a Bodhisattva trying to teach us something. But I have to resist what this person appears to be to me and also I don't believe in this person right now, I mean, it looks like a bad deed to me." But you don't hate them or you don't... know what I mean?

[student: You don't judge, is that what you mean?]

You don't judge, but you do judge insofar as you do what you know to be right. You just don't decide in your mind that this is a bad person, because you can't read their mind.

[student: You're saying discriminate, but don't make a moral judgement?]

I don't know... you don't hate them. Hatred will cause you problems. You say this is wrong, this has to be resisted, but you don't hate the person and you don't decide... in Tibetan it's called {tak chep pa}, you don't finalize in your mind that this person is evil. You can't be sure. What he's doing is evil, you must resist it. What are his real motivations? Maybe he's setting things up, maybe he can see the future, he has to be in this place to shoot Hitler or something... you don't know, you just don't know. He could be pretending to be bad, you don't know. You release judgement on him, but on his actions you say this is a bad action, I have to resist it, insofar as my knowledge, insofar as my vows, I have to resist this person. You must check the Dharma, you must check things. The Buddha requires it. Otherwise you won't be a good Buddhist, because when the next thing that sounds good comes along, you'll follow it, you'll change easily.

[student: So why are you saying that this is malarkey?]

Malarkey is like... you say it sounds like malarkey to me, let me investigate it further. That's okay. To say "it is malarkey", that's different. We've said before in these classes, ultimately, according to Tsongkapa, you will see that every single line in Buddhist scripture makes sense, that it all ties together, and that's there are no contradictions in all those tens of thousands of books, maybe 300,000 books. There's no contradiction at all. But that takes a long time. It takes a deep understanding before you reach that level. And in the meantime you have to suspend judgment. It's better, it's healthier to say, it doesn't make sense to me, that argument sounds a little silly, it's in the scripture, I'll leave it for now. That's much better.

[student: But don't you have to judge? Like when you're looking for a teacher and there's different steps, judging a good teacher, bad teacher, and following a good teacher who follows the.... you have to judge...]

We talked about the ten qualities in the first class, the very first class. The ten qualities of a good teacher. Yes, you must judge that. You can't decide... you take that list of ten things which the Buddhists wrote, which actually Maitreya stole, and then you apply them to the best of your ability at that point. You have to do that.

[student: Don't you think that this is a contradiction? Because you just said you shouldn't judge, but now you're saying you have to judge...]

Judge his actions... let's take Buddhist teachers who drink alcohol. You could say

definitely this guy is an alcoholic, he's definitely a bad person, he definitely wants to drink alcohol for the effect, or is he doing it for some other reason? We don't know, we can't know, just leave it alone, leave it alone.

[student: So what do we do?]

You don't follow a teacher who drinks, but you don't judge the teacher. See what I mean? Like any other person, you can't judge.... But if you're going to follow the scriptures, you can't follow a teacher who drinks. That's all.

[student: So the Buddha... when he killed all those people... if somebody saw him, would not have followed him?]

No, not at all, and he wasn't a Buddha at that time. He was a Bodhisattva. That's a difficult question... but basically, follow those ten rules. Look for a teacher who has the ten qualities. They're plain old normal [unclear]. Maybe some day we'll get up to the level where a teacher can be wild and we'll be able to learn from that. But in the meantime... everybody wants to be the special half-percent. But that's not necessary. Dalai Lama's very good. Nice, normal, holy person... [laughter] Okay, anyway, {gin chak sa}. {gin chak sa} means over and over again, we say on a continual basis. This means any bad deed that you are addicted to and that you keep doing over and over again, the power of that would be... it'll get stronger and then that will be certain to produce a result. I mean, technically, which you will learn later, anything you do produces a result, but there's a lot of special cases. And in Mahayana, of course, there's the purification methods by which you can remove the effects, if, if it's done properly. And done properly implies that you don't do it again. That's not easy. Or that you control yourself very well in the future. This is like if you can't stop looking at girls your whole life. You know you're not supposed to and you do.

[student: Even if you're not a monk?]

Yeah, even if you're not a monk. I do that, I was brought up that way. My father said "check this one out", you know. I'd say, "yeah!" And it's been hard for me to break my whole life. So that's {gin chak sa}. If I keep doing it over and over again, the effect will be more powerful and more certain to produce results. Or some people are compulsive liars, some people... anybody who's in this plain, which is called the desire realm. If you got here and you're not a tantric deity of something, you have one, at least one. It's different, each person's is different. But whatever we have, it took us all to the same level. We're all on the same

level. You're just a normal person, then you have something to overcome, you have some {gin chak sa} problem or you wouldn't be here. You just... when you see Emptiness directly you'll realize about the other realms, realize that everyone in this realm has some common denominator that put us in this realm, and you still have that problem. And everyone has their own. All right. Say {ama} [repeat] {sapa} [repeat], {ama} [repeat] {sapa} [repeat]. Now you took my first week of Tibetan, in Dharamsala, twenty years ago. And I wanted to get into the dance course, and {unclear} Rinpoche, this great lama, wanted me to be in the course, but I had to pass an oral examination, so he said, what's the Tibetan word for this, and for this, and I had no idea. He says, how do you say "papa and mama"? [laughter] I said "ma ma". And he said, right, you're in the class. {sapa} means to kill. And the line in the Abidharma Kosha says, even if its with a virtuous intent, even if you think you're putting them out of their misery or something, like euthanasia, it is murder of your father and mother. And I was close to that. My mother was dying and there were big discussions in the family. Should she undergo these treatments that would keep her alive for another week, or should we just forego it. According to Abidharma, according to Buddhism generally, you must keep them alive as long as you can.

[student: You're saying that if the motivation is to benefit them, still it's bad karma?]

That's what the Abidharma specifically says in this line. And you can read it in your reading. Vasubandhu takes the time to say, even if you think you're putting them out of pain or something like that, it's one of the worst deeds you can do. So you have to be very careful.

[student: Would that hold in a situation... like where modern technology enables us to continue life beyond the point where...?]

Rinpoche said yes. He has said that. And he's also said he never wants to be connected up....[laughter] I just wouldn't fool around with this. It's karmically too dangerous. I wouldn't even ...my argument is always something quite different, which is that if they are going to go to hell after this life, you're not helping them. I mean, to think that you're taking them out of pain is... why do you think that? Do you think they're going to disappear? Do you think their mind is going to stop? Don't you think they're going to go somewhere the next minute afterwards, and are you sure that place is better than the pain they're in now? I mean, the odds, according to all Buddhist scriptures are infinitely against it. So it's a kind of ignorance to me. You're not putting them out of any pain.

They're probably going to experience much worse pain shortly afterwards.

[student: But sometimes longing for survival subjects them to more suffering.]

Tiny suffering compared to where most of us will go afterward. I mean, the suffering of all the other realms is infinitely worse than the worst suffering in this world. According to scripture.

[student: So according to this here, if you have the means to sustain a person...]

You should not.

[student: So if a person decides not to, like say, my wishes are that I don't want to be connected to the machine, then we have to sort of abide by those wishes. Is that person considered to be committing suicide, in a way?]

[laughs] I guess by extension you could say that. I haven't heard anyone discuss that.

[student: Well, there's people who do living wills...]

I know that people do that. No, I've had people.... My stepmother told me she wouldn't want to be... she asked me to sign a document which said that she be disconnected when the time came. I said I just couldn't do that. It's just too dangerous. So I don't see... I'm not sure... I guess technically it would be like that. But it's a misconception. You're not going to be in a better place five minutes after you die. Probably.

[student: But you've got to go there anyway! Might as well.... [laughter] Yeah, might as well get it over with, you know. It's not like it's going to shorten that period, is it?] [laughter]

[laughs] I don't know.

[student: If its suicide, it doubles it.]

I don't know. I said before, I'm your friend, I have to tell you what I know. This is what I know. I studied for a long time. I haven't seen anything in the scriptures to contradict that. And I really worked hard [unclear] 20 years ago. I can't see anything in the scriptures that says anything else. As far as morality

goes, as I said before, it's not right or wrong. How do you define virtue in Buddhism?

[student: That which will cause you pleasure.]

Yeah, that which will cause you pleasure. And non-virtue is that which will cause you pain. And who decides that? Who decided what is going to cause pain and what's not going to cause pain?

[student: It's physics.]

Yes, but I mean who... [laughs]. It is physics, in other words, a natural law. I can't change it. Nobody can change it. I can't even recognize it, which means I can't tell you what deed will lead to pleasure and what deed will lead to suffering. I don't have that ability. Nobody does. I mean you have to take it on the Buddha's {tsokya, shinta tsokya}. It's totally hidden to a normal human being. You cannot know. Therefore you must study. That's all you can do. You can extend... by extension you can say, well, it looks like it's bad to hurt people, I understand the rules now pretty clearly, and at the end of the Vinaya scriptures it says, by the way, apply this to all the other cases. He gave you like 200 rules and then he says there are going to be thousands of other cases, use your judgement. But I mean that... on some of these calls, you have to... it's not good or bad, it's what will produce pleasure or pain for you. And we can't see that clearly. Only the Buddha can. You have to think of it like that. You have an omniscient being who's saying, look, if you do this, it's going to cause you pain. [laughs] We know from the other class why to take the [unclear]. We studied that the whole class.

[student: Is there anything you can elaborate on as to how that natural law works, or why it's natural law? That causes you to...]

Yeah, some people have said, well, isn't that self-existence? Know what I mean? That this should cause you pain. No, it's not, it's not that... well, then are you saying could it never change, so that when you did a harmful action to someone you would get a good feeling about it? No, it would never change. Is it self-existent? No. And then we'll talk more about that. Is it just because something's always working that way, that it's self-existent? Why, we're going to study in the 7th and 8th classes. It's totally connected to perception and Emptiness. If you don't get that part, I don't think you can buy all this. You want to know how karma works. I thought it was so important that I called the course "How

Karma Works." We didn't get to that yet. [laughs]

[student: I'm confused about... we speak in terms of acts of body and speech. And yet here, with the first type here, somebody asked whether the feeling alone, fierce emotion, was in effect a bad deed...]

It is a bad deed. It is a bad karma. But what I meant was that normally this first one is explained as having great anger while you kill someone. See what I mean? It's normally explained that way.]

[student: So it's two actions really, is it not?]

They say it's two karmas. It's the {sem pe le} and the {sam pe le}. What's that? It's the motivating anger and it's the deed which is motivated by it. It is two deeds. We covered that in the first...last week... that the anger that you have that causes you to move your body to kill the person is itself a karma. We're going to get to that in the Friday classes actually. Tom asked me some questions about that. And I went and dug up some scriptures and we're actually covering that on Friday nights, if you want to come. If you'd like to have another two hours... but there's some monastic text books that go into all the problems, they go into all the questions. And that's how you learn the normal stuff, by discussing the questions. You discuss the problem, you know, the things that are unclear. That's the method in the monastery.

[silence]

A few things that will make karma ripen in this life. That would be interesting to know, right? Now I'm going to get into trouble with some of you again, but anyway. [laughs] This is a different thing, okay? If someone wants to know what makes a karma so powerful that it's going to give a result before you die, what will make it microwave cooking, of the karma. And there's two things that can do it, and the first one's called {shing gyi kepa}, you'll love the example in the reading. {unclear} interprets it, the First Dalai Lama, and he says the Buddha himself took birth as a monk...the Buddha was a real bad boy in his former lives, just like us, which is comforting. And he was a monk, he was living in a monastery, there was another monk, they were both very learned monks, both great scholars, up with the scriptures, and there was a falling out within the monks, the monks had a -- what do you call it? A schism. So this other monk patches it up. He worked very hard, he talked to each person separately, he used reasoning, he brought the whole Sangha back together, and the other

monk got jealous, the Buddha got jealous, and he said, "a woman has brought the women back together," and he meant it as an insult. At the time in India, a woman's place, it's still... you can see in Dharamsala, a guy walks ahead, the ladies are not even allowed to walk with him, she walks behind, yells at her like that [laughs]. They say because of that deed, the {shing gyi kepa}, {shing} means object, the object for which he did the deed, which is was that in essence the whole Sangha and that very good monk who brought the whole Sangha back together which is traditionally the work of the two greatest disciples of the Buddha, they're called the "great bringers-back together"... {shing gyi kepa}... {kepa} means distinction, distinctive object. So the object there was so powerful, it was a monk who had just managed to bring back... it's a great good deed to heal a schism of religious people, and so the other monk was jealous. He collected a lot of bad karma. He was born, he took a bad birth for 48(?) lives or something....

[student: It says in the reading that he turned into a woman in that life...]

[laughs] [laughter] No, he did, that's a {tongyo ki le}.

[student: In that very life?]

Well, in India, in those days... you know, this is the thing that feminists use to say that Buddhism is down on women and things like that. They never quote the other part which says that in the higher teachings it's the opposite case, I cannot tell you about it, but in the higher teachings, the secret teachings, the whole thing is turned around. So I think the men should write books about how Buddhism is sexist, but, anyway. It's nothing to do with that. It's just that in Abidharma, in this system, it was not, and in India it was not a great birth to take. You wouldn't have opportunities to study, you wouldn't be able to... even in Tibet, I think, the study of the women was not great. I think you are the first women really to go through the Geshe courses in an organized way, that I'm aware of. I know that they're trying to do it in Dharamsala. Even the nuns. They had teachings, and in the Vinaya, a monk has to come and teach them. But I think that you're the first women really to get the first philosophical parts directly.

[student: How is this different than behaving towards a moving object? Same idea?]

Same idea.

[student: Less than a holy object or something?]

The things that make an object distinctive are discussed later, and they are your parents because they helped you so much, your lama because he can get you out of suffering, things like that.

[student: What is the essence of this? I'm not getting it...]

The essence of it is that if you want to know what makes a karma so powerful that it's going to give its result in this very life, it's the object towards which you are doing it. The first thing...you can say a very important object. I give my money to the monastery because I know it's a {shing ke bo che}. I mean that's not my motivation... but you have to decide where to give money. There's a whole list. You give money to feed dogs, you give money to feed poor people, you give money to feed monks, you give money to feed your root lama, and each one of those is a {shing ke bo che}, that's an object which is karmically very powerful, potent. Why? Because that lama can prevent poverty among a couple of trillion people [laughs] if he works good. The causes of poverty are not knowing how to give. So that's... it's just a very powerful... the object towards whom you did the deed is very powerful.

[student: Can you basically determine whether it's powerful by it's ability to do more than the others? Is that the [unclear] definition of karma?]

Yeah, really, the power to benefit many people. Rinpoches just dump(?) countless people, same as the Dalai Lama did. Obviously he's made a decision there, he knows what's an important object. It doesn't mean that if you meet a poor person you shouldn't help them. You must help them, you must do all you can to help everybody. But these are going to be karmically much more powerful.

[student: In view of the fact that the society in which the Buddha lived was very limited, in many ways, isn't it possible to interpret the sexual morality in the same light? That... I mean, we had those four ways of interpreting the Buddha's intent through the capacity of the listener, so isn't it possible that when he made those very rigorous rules, it was to fit in with the Hindu society because otherwise they wouldn't listen to anything else he said?]

It's possible, I don't think it's likely. And I think you could study it. You could go through those four rules of interpretation and see was there a compelling need,

and did he have to talk about it in the [unclear], and Asanga talked about it, and then Je Rinpoche talks about it 1900 years later. Personally I don't think so. But if you say is it possible, I say it's possible. I don't think so. I've heard people say that they think that. I don't think so. I think you could make a case for it just being harmful to you. But that's my opinion as a person who's read a lot and studied a lot and been around a lot of Geshe, I think that the additional desire required to want to do those things is what harms you. And that's all, that's would be the main argument. We're going to get to that at the end of tonight.

[student: What [unclear] lama [unclear]]

Well, there's like a {zen e chu way gewa}, well if you want to know a whole list, it's a long list. But you could say temples, holy places, a dharma center is a.... {zen e chu way gewa} means there's certain virtues you get from physical stuff which is rare, normally it's a person. But any good done to fix a stupa or to spend money on a temple, that's all {zen e chu way gewa}. That place is so important for the ultimate well-being of people, not the temporary well-being, that it's a very important place. Anything you do for that place is karmically very powerful. And we're going to get into another list tonight. You'll get more lists than you want from the Abidharma.

[student: So what are you saying, Michael, that if you spend a lot of money for a temple to make it beautiful that's great?]

Not beautiful, but functional.

[student: Yeah, but if you look at, I'm sorry, I don't mean to disrespect the Dalai Lamas' Potala, but it's more than comfortable.] [laughs] [laughter] You see what I mean?]

That I don't know. The Fifth Dalai Lama, you have to get into his motivation and he was an incredible man, if you read his book. He sat in the Potala and said "I own two things in the Potala. I own my {dorje} and my bell. The rest is I don't know whose. I don't need it, it's not mine. I don't have any claim to it. All I want to own is these two things.

[student: So for example a powerful object is an organization which feeds the whole....]

That's a good object, a pretty good object. It's not on the realm of getting out of

suffering. It's the realm of helping suffering people who will suffer more. There's no ultimate solution. But it's a great thing, you have to do those things. I don't trust people who say, "Well I'm working on ultimate good. I don't have to do any good things today, for normal people." It's suspicious. [laughs] yeah....

[student: I was just going to say that it's an example, the scriptural example you brought up. That's not necessarily physical, but the bringing together of the Sangha after a split, that's a virtuous...]

It's a great act of truth, it's a big truth, it's a big virtue.

[student: But it's not a physical temple or it's not a Buddha or...]

Oh no, they asked me for other examples, and there's a special category of physical places that's not as virtuous as helping spread the teachings. But it's related to that. She asked me for other examples other than temples... We're going to get a list.

[student: The last class we talked about, about when we do a good deed that needs to be done with the right reason, with that idea of selflessness, is that intellectually or...]

No self-nature or selflessness? Do you mean without the feeling of egotism?

[student: Without the idea of... [unclear]]

I like that. Call it no-self-nature so that people don't think it means for non-selfish reasons.

[student: So is that an intellectual understanding of emptiness or [unclear]]

Intellectually, at our level. If you are who you seem to be, I don't know for sure. But at our level, definitely intellectual. You start with the intellectual level.

[student: So even if you have to force it...]

By definition you have to force it because you're not used to thinking that way. And that's been helping me a lot. I was on the bus and I was getting pissed off with the driver and... [laughter] if you get angry, you just going to get into more busses like that. And that's wisdom. That's why wisdom is such a big deal in

Buddhism. Wisdom means intelligence that's going to overcome your natural instincts. There's a big war between what you know and what you learn, and then what you want to do. It's a big war, that's the classic war, that's the war between what you've learnt is right to do, beneficial to you, smart to do, and then what you want to do, that's the big fight, it will be your whole life that you'll be fighting. Some people just give up. [laughter] Okay...

[silence]

{sape} [repeat] {kepa} [repeat], {sape} [repeat] {kepa} [repeat]. {sape} means thought, a thought that you have. {kepa} means extraordinary. And the example in the reading is... don't forget, why are we discussing this?

[student: These are the ones that can give you results in this life.]

Yeah, they can give you a result in this life, they can make the karma so powerful that you'll see the result in this life. And again I think that tantra is based on this. You must know about tantra. It's not the tantra in Abidharma. Abidharma is this little Hinayana thing, not this big Mahayana thing. Ultimately they're totally in sync with each other. You have to learn how. {Sampa}.. So the example in the scripture is of a person who was the eunuch of a king and he saw 500... I forget, cows, bulls being led to be castrated. And he had pity on them and he, this is very common in scripture, he bought them and then he released them, or he paid the guy not to do that, and as a result of that, his organ was restored in his life. [laughter] That's the story. It's true. [laughter]

[student: [unclear]]

That's great, did I have a {unclear} in this class. I love that. That's great. That means you're a real Buddhist. Did I really know it? No. I can't say I do.

[student: Michael, how can you say that the fact [unclear] can make a difference, I mean...]

He didn't want them to go through the pain.

[student: Ah, the pain, okay.]

He had this great feeling of empathy, compassion, and that was so powerful in his own life, his sex change, that he got his organ back. So that's the example, the

two examples are parallel. And then sex changes are all over ancient Buddhist scriptures. Like in the monks' vows there's.. you know, what happens if you change your sex and things like that. It is common in ancient times. There would be things that would happen. It's all over the scriptures.

[student: Of course in those days they could fly and dematerialize...] [laughter]  
[and a few other things, right?]

Yeah, but it's not such an extraordinary thing. In scripture it's mentioned a lot. You change your sex so many times in one life, can you still be a monk?  
[laughter] No, really.

[student: Did they have sex changes then?]

Obviously they did because they discuss it a lot.

[student: But not in the way we think of it today?]

[unclear]

I don't know. I think it was some sort of natural experience. Okay, so those two are hard, but you can think up your own examples. I think that as you get older, as you get to my age, you can see... if you study karma a lot, you can start to see some correlation between what you did as a young person and what you're getting now. You start to see some correlation.

[student: Can you give us another example of [unclear]]

[student: Michael, would the story of [unclear] and Maitreya be an example  
[unclear]]

Yeah. That's pretty much the whole hope that we have for getting out of suffering in this life through the secret teachings. Exactly that.

[cut]

The roots are there. It tells you how it works. That's cool. [laughs]

[student: So what you're really talking about is Boddhichitta?]

No, it could be any... again, it could be negative, too. It could be an extraordinary fury... In this case...]

[student: Does that mean emotion?]

Yeah, yeah.

[student: So it's really the same thing as the...]

Yeah, they're not contradictory, they don't contradict each other. That emotion, any strong emotion would make it sure to give a future result. A really strong emotion, a really evil or pure emotion, would give it results in this life.

[student: By the way, it's only discernible by an omniscient being, right? I mean, someone could have had a very strong emotion, something very unusual could have happened and it may or may not have been through an act that they did in this life. We don't have to be omniscient to know that?]

Well, you can't reap a seed... Can we perceive the laws of karma? Not in a direct way. But hopefully, by the end of the course you'll have some intellectual understanding of a good psychological argument, conceptual argument, of why it should be true. And then you can use some reason, you can use logic.

[student: But is it still possible to do something very powerful and to get a result that you thought was from that powerful deed?]

[And it's not exactly from that deed? That's true, sure, because we're limited....]

[student: And the only one who can know that for sure is an omniscient being?]

That's true.

[student: But it does seem, I mean, when you observe life, that you do see that happening with people or in peoples' lives, you see that they did something and you see years later...]

You see it over and over throughout... My father, I don't know, was it the result of that. He was a great hunter his whole life. We grew up... he took us out when we were 4 years old, by 12 we were shooting rifles and then later in his life he had to have these horrible surgeries, they cut just like a fish, starting down

here and working up... [laughs] Even in that time, I mean, something's going on [laughs]. That's the way he used to cut the fish all his life. Do I know? No.

[student: I know from observing my mother, I could see how she treated people when she was young and healthy, and then later, when she was old and weak, these people got back at her. And you could really... they certainly think of her.... Certainly looks that way.]

You know yourself things that you've done karmically, and I think you start to see results as you grow older, it takes some time. {Chan ge [unclear] Dorje} in his tantric commentary describes it very well. If we ever get to that point... Okay, I'm going to give you four objects that are special...

[student: So those are just those two, those are the only two...]

Yeah, either the object or the thought. It's got to be powerful enough that you're going to see a result in this life. And Fran asked me for some special objects. Your reading gives them, I'll go over them with you. There's 4 that they mention in the reading. What if somebody who just came out of the Abidharma School calls cessation meditation, it's a meditation which is very close to Nirvana, it resembles Nirvana closely.

[student: Is this a distinctive object?]

Yeah. I'm discussing 4 distinctive objects. Giving you examples. These are the Abidharma's own examples. A person who just came out of that deep meditation where he was almost, very similar to... now anything that you do to help or harm that person is an extraordinary karma that you will see the results of in this life.

[student: You reach Nirvana, or the experience is like Nirvana?]

The experience is very close to Nirvana. And according to the Abidharma School, and that's a long story, what goes on in a cessation meditation, it's a long story.

[student: Right after they came out of it, or for the rest of their lives.]

Right after they came out of it. According to this section of the Abidharma, the first few moments are crucial, because they are new, they are fresh, and it's more

potent than later on. So what they're talking about, and they explain why in the reading, it's that the first few moments are karmically more powerful.

[student: What if you don't recognize them?]

[laughs] This is the old argument that you'd better not back talk with anyone, they might be a Boddhisattva.

[student: So this is a distinctive object in this case?]

Yeah, that's the first example given in the Abidharma. The second example is called "immeasurable love." They have a {sem ye shi} in the Abidharma. They have the four immeasurables. They are not the same as the Mahayana in their definitions. They have the same name, they're a little bit different. And they don't define them the same. That's a long story.

[student: [unclear]]

In Mahayana it means the objects are immeasurable, having love towards all sentient beings. That's the main meaning of immeasurable. Someone who just came out of that deep meditation has that feeling. Someone who just went through that meditation or actually achieved that feeling... and then you yell at him. [laughter] [laughs] Something like that. That's supposed to be potent, very potent. They also give the example...this is another example of number 2... is a person who's in that deep meditation that we call "No Mind", right? It's not that they have no mind, it's that their mind is almost shut down. Why are these two karmas so powerful? Because those people are almost free of what? I mean, a person who's totally obsessed with love is a person whose mind is almost shut down, cannot have normal mental afflictions. These people are almost free. When they come out, for 10 minutes or so, they are among the few beings in the world who don't have anger, jealousy, hatred, desire. And then you do something good or bad to them, it's very powerful karma. Example number 3. Someone who just came out of the path of seeing, someone who has just seen selflessness directly, just came out of that meditation. [laughs] Now he can read your mind at that point. For a while, he can read your mind.

[student: Michael, if you know someone who can read peoples' minds, then are they....]

You should ask them to meet the lottery director. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: Michael, are you saying only for the first time or any time that someone has these experiences?]

These all refer to right after they came out. They say "newly", which normally means for the first time. You only go through the direct reception once.

[student: I thought you go back into the experience of direct emptiness...]

Then you're already on {gom la}.

[student: So it's "newly" for all three?]

Yeah, so far. Fresh, fresh out of... they're still like... they don't have anything to do with jealousy, haven't asserted themselves again. And for that person, he's gotten rid of those two main afflictions, remember what they are? A person who's just seen emptiness directly, or selflessness, and has come out, now he's totally abandoned two kinds of bad thoughts, can never have two things again.

[student: [unclear]]

That's a little bit different. But he can never doubt Buddhism again. He will never doubt Buddhism again. He saw the Buddha directly.

[student: He saw the Aryan truths?]

He saw. You can shoot him, you can beat him on the head, you can give him any argument in the world, he doesn't care, he knows what he saw. That's just... so he can never have it again. So he can never have doubts about Buddhism. That's called {tetsum}, that kind of doubt, that Buddhism is correct and that it's true, you can't have it again. And that's a very nice feeling.

[student: In this life or in any other subsequent life?]

As a young child in a future life he may not be assertive, but as soon as he's old enough to think clearly, that will reassert itself. So he's... it's a very comforting feeling that the scriptures are correct, totally correct. Just do what they say and you'll be all right. That's just knowledge, knowledge. So that's the first one. The second one is the intellectual belief in self-existence. You know, what you said about believing what he sees? He'll never believe it again. He knows that his

perceptions are mistaken. And he'll never believe them again.

[student: So someone who's just had a direct experience of emptiness for the first time, or anytime?]

Yeah, yeah, they're talking for the first time. He's just special, very special, he's a new stream-enterer. Then the last example is {unclear}, which is what? An Arhat, a person who's just reached the level of an Arhat. And obviously he's special. He's gotten rid of his mental afflictions permanently. Would we know these people? Would we recognize them? I don't know. But those are the four examples from the Abidharma.

[student: You might run into one of them on the subway.]

You never know! You've got to be careful. You've got to be very careful.  
[laughter]

[student: Are you saying that these objects are more powerful than say, Arhats  
[unclear]]

Yeah, yeah.

[student: What's [unclear]]

I don't know. Read the reading. It's not a totally clear example. I could look it up in some commentaries. I think the main thing is that they are fresh, and it's just that it's a new member of a group, and it's like yelling at the latest person to win a special award, just while they're fresh.]

[student: In a way they are vulnerable, or something.]

It's not that they're vulnerable. It's that they are very special now, they're new members of an exclusive class and I think it's just how special... you know, they've just reached a threshold after billions of lives, countless lives. Just reached this threshold, just once, they've just become special, they're very special. Okay, have a break and then I'll try to finish...[unclear] At the end of your reading I couldn't resist putting in, counted up to three I think, {namen chenmo}, Tsongkapa, on the karmic results, because it's fantastic. And I'm going to give you the three karmic results according to Jetsun Kampa. Jetsun Kampa has culled this not just from the Abidharma but from... his knowledge of

scripture is unmatched, and he was a master of everything, so he's written on commentaries on every major subject. So {namen}... you know already. I just want you to get a feel for... it's three different karmic results. So we say that karmic result is not enough to translate these things. And I'll show you the differences and you'll see, they're all karmic results. The first one is called {namen}. That means a "ripening". And then Jetsun Kampa goes through the ripenings for the ten bad deeds and he says that it depends on your motivation at the time, you know, how strong was your desire, how strong was your anger, how strong was your emotion and how bad was the deed. He says if you do a great killing, a very serious killing, then the {namen} is a birth in the house. So that gives you a feeling of what {namen} does. If you do a bad deed with like a medium level, medium emotion, medium object, medium kind of killing, the result is....

[student: What do you mean "medium killing?]

"Medium" means...[laughter] it wasn't totally premeditated with pure anger, it was partly premeditated with a kind of anger, all of those factors were sort of medium strength. And then when you do a very light one, like involuntary manslaughter, the {namen} would be an animal. So that's a {namen}. These are three kinds of karmic results.

[student: This applies to insects, any kind of being?]

Yeah, yeah. But not as serious, an insect is not as serious as a human. I mean, to kill an insect is not as serious as to kill a human.

[student: But I thought it expanded the 7 days to be the equivalent of becoming human...]

Well, it's a long story. But I... basically you have to think of the separation between realms. It depends on how close that person is to getting out of suffering. And bugs will never, in this life, understand enough to get out of this life.

[student: Are you saying that {namen} is one of the three kinds of karma, or are you saying that strong, medium and light are...]

Yeah, they're all kinds of {namens}. So a {namen} from a very heavy bad deed is hell. A {namen} from a medium bad deed is to be born as an insatiable spirit.

And then the {namen} of a lighter bad deed is to be born in an animal realm. And Jetsun Kampa says, one sutra reverses the last two. But you don't have to worry about that.

[student: What?]

That's the kind of person he was. He wants you to know that one sutrist says a medium deed leads you to an animal, and a light one leads you to an insatiable spirit. So that's the {namen}, all right? Second one is called {gyu ten}. {gyu ten} itself has two kinds.

[student: What does it mean?]

{gyu ten} means "corresponding." "Corresponding" means there's a similarity between what you did and what you got back. And the clue to remember here is the word "personal" and I'll get back to that. It's a personal corresponding result. For some reason it's very personal. I'm going to talk about it.

[student: You mean between the deed and it's result?]

Yeah. There's a corresponding quality, there's a similarity between...what do you call that?

[student: Correspondence?]

Like a correspondence.

[student: Concordance?]

Yeah, concordance. {gno wa} means experience and it means you get some kind of similar experience to what you did. So in the case of killing, in your next life the connection between {namen} and {gyu ten} is... it's always this phrase... listen... If by chance you were born a human, finally, then you would have a {gyu ten}, one of these {gyu tens} would happen to you. So what a normal {namen} is that you have to go down into one of the three lower realms? That's what {namen} means, that's the ripening result. But if by good luck you got out of there, if by some chance you got out of them finally, then you would have a {gyu ten} problem. [laughs] That kind of karmic result would come to you. So what do you guess it is by killing?

[student: You get killed?]

Your life is very short. Or you get sick easily, things like that.

[student: That's not a corresponding result.]

It's similar to killing, no? That your life is shortened and you don't live very long, you're always sick, things like that.

[student: What are you calling this first one?]

I'll call this the corresponding result of a personal experience, how's that? It has to do with your own life. From stealing, you never have enough things, you're always short, you're always broke. [laughs] That's stealing. From sexual misconduct, people are always after your wife or husband, you have trouble keeping your wife.

[student: You mean like adultery?]

Loyalty.

[student: Not necessarily adultery?]

Well, they say it that way. General result is that your partner...there's a lot of competition for your partner and sometimes you lose them. You have problems with your relationships.

[student: Michael, does {yong wa} refer to the experience of killing, or to a shortened life?]

The experience of you having a short life. It's the resulting experience. And I really urge you to read Jetsun Kampa's... the ten that he lists. He didn't make them up himself. They're in the sutras. And they're very interesting because now you can work backwards. I mean, it explains why some people are healthy and some people aren't and why some people have good marriages and some people don't have good marriages. I mean, it explains practically everything about your personal life on the basis of those ten non-virtues. If you have a problem with desire in this life... my problem is desire more than anger. I'm not angry. I do have desire. And a lot of people are the opposite. So that's because in your last life you did 8 or 9. You coveted other people's things, or you wanted

to hurt other people. To have that kind of personality is a karmic result, that's a {nyo wan ge tu}. Your personality is determined by that karma. That's very interesting. The other one is {jepa}.

[silence]

{jepa gyu ten} means similar activities, similar actions, and what it refers to is that...you know, you meet people... I remember a kid when I was growing up. His big thrill was to take a BB gun and we would go out and he'd look for nests and kill little birds. He had this love for it. In Tibetan they call it {ying ying}. He had this kind of pleasure about it. And that's a {jepa gyu ten}, from having killed in his past life. In other words it's the habit of doing that thing, it's the attraction to doing that deed.

[student: Can it be positive also?]

All these can be good, sure. You know, some people just by nature like to give away money, things... that's a {jepa gyu ten}. There's no part of your personality which is not a {gyu ten}. It's very interesting. You can identify all the parts of your personality.

[student: Are you saying that from your past karma, you will have both similar experiences and similar habits as results of past lives?]

Right. Similar things personally will happen to you, and also you will enjoy... it also puts another kind of karmic result...it gives you a propensity for that kind of activity. You are attracted by that kind of activity, you tend towards that kind of activity, what do you call it?

[student: Gravitate towards...]

Yeah, gravitate is great. You gravitate towards that kind of activity. And the last one, and I think that's your last thing tonight...

[silence]

Say {dang de} [repeat] {dang de} [repeat]. {dang de} means an environmental karmic result, in your environment, in the place that you live, in the world that you live in. And they're very beautiful. Tsongkapa takes them out of the sutras, you can read them, they're in the reading. The first half of the reading is very

difficult Abidharma stuff. Skip to the second half. Jetsun Kampa had a gift, and he describes it very nicely. He says if you live in a world where there are a lot of wars going on, if you live in a world where there's a lot of chaos, a lot of violence going on in your world, it's because you, personally, killed things in your past life. So now it's referring to your environment. Your environment is dangerous. The muggers in New York are the fault of your harming he even mentions muggers [laughs] are the results of bad deed number 9. Yeah.

[student: Theoretically, most of the world is full of war and there's a great deal of violence going on. Does that mean that most people did harm?]

Yeah, most people who are sharing that perception together have killed people in the past, or they enjoyed seeing other people get in trouble. And that's the karmic result. You read the New York Times... that should have been the meditation actually... every single headline there, every single header is a result of your personal karma, for you. If taxes went up, it's because you stole. If a bridge is closed, it's because you spoke harsh words. And then there's a whole list like that. And they all make sense when you study the Mind-Only School, okay? When you get to that.

[student: But wouldn't you have to say that there were other contributing causes... like everybody else's karma?]

If they have to experience that bridge, if they have to get stuck in traffic because of that bridge, yeah, absolutely.

[student: All the other people who got stuck in traffic contribute, I mean...]

Would it have happened if one of them hadn't been there? It still would have happened for the other people.

[student: So Michael, is that the way you experience it, or is it the way it is?]

We're going to see later that there's no [unclear]. So that's, you know, it sounds wild. You read the correspondences. I think from sexual misconduct you live in a world where there is a lot of stink... if you go to India, you know, piss and poop smells, everywhere, everywhere you go, you can't get away from it. The whole country has got this problem. The reason why it rains... how come the rains fall okay in Thailand and then on the same latitude, a couple hundred miles over, everyone's starving all the time? Why do people in San Diego live in

luxury and people in Tijuana, you know, a couple of miles away, live in filth? What causes this? Where does it come from? And it's very interesting. If you get into it, you realize what made New York the way it is, and [laughs] why do I live on 39th and 9th? And then when we get to the Mind-Only part you'll understand why it's plausible, and that it's not just... you know, a lot of Western history books up until recently would say, "Oh the Buddhists are trying to explain the world, so they made up this idea of karma to explain why the world is the way it is. When you get into the psychology of it, and the conceptual theory of it, you'll be able to accept it. And then every part of your world is a result of this. It also means that you can purify your world. It's on the basis of that that you can attain paradise. Because this world is empty. We'll get into that... because of Emptiness, something nice can happen. But what's going to fill it in? What's going to paint in the empty canvas? It has to be what?

[student: Your good deeds.]

Your good deeds. People just don't want to hear that. They want to get to a level of understanding Emptiness, and then they want all the morality scriptures to go away. [laughs] We did Nagarjuna's letter twenty years ago and sent it to a famous publisher. He actually wrote us back and said if you cut out the morality part and submit the Emptiness part... [laughs] they go together. Why would the Buddha spend 60-70% of the scriptures discussing morality and good deeds if it wasn't something that related to the Emptiness side?

[prayer]

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

**Class Five: How Karma is Carried**

**October 31, 1994**

Last class we talked about what karma. We talked about the 3 divisions of karma, what makes a good karma, what makes a bad karma. By the way, what makes a good karma according to Buddhism? Anything that brings you a good result. That's the reason to be good and the reason not to be bad. I think that's very acceptable. And then we got into the different kinds of good karma and bad karma and then we got into all the karmic results, and we had all these different kinds of karmic results that come from one deed. Mainly 3 different results that Jetsun Kampa pointed out. I don't think the course would be complete....all right, this is very important...one thing that always bothered me about karma is that I studied Abidharma for 16 years and didn't see anything to explain how karma gets carried, how the karma stays in my mind. Where does it stay? What kind of proof can you give me that I can accept that Karma really operates like that? It was years later, maybe 15 years later, and in this book... say {uma} [repeat] {gombarabso} [repeat], {uma} [repeat] {kombarabsa} [repeat]. {uma} is what Jetsun Kampa named his daughter. [laughter]. No joke, because it means Madhyamika, Middle Way, and that's exactly why he named her that. He's in love with that subject. So {uma} means Middle Way. {gomba} means the real intent of somebody. What did he really have in mind? There's not really one good word in English for that, for the real thought behind something, the real reason why he said something, what he really had in mind. And an {abso} means "total clarification". So this is the name of a book by Jetsun Kampa, can't call him Tsongkhapa, it's impolite, like saying "hey, you!" When was he born?

[student: [unclear]]

[student: This book is about what?]

This book is about the Middle Way from the point of view of the highest school of Buddhism. What's that?

[student: Madhyamika]

It's called Madhyamika. This is the highest of the four schools. Madhyamika has

two parts and this is the higher part, called Prasangika.

[silence]

First thing I want to say is that we're out of the Abidharma School tonight. Forget Abidharma, all right? I'm speaking tonight from the Mahayana viewpoint, from the Madhyamika Prasangika viewpoint, the highest school. All of the highest teachings are based on Madhyamika Prasangika. The Madhyamika Prasangikas' had a fight with Jetsun Kampa.

[silence]

{sem} means "mind". {tsam}? {tsampa} is that stuff they eat, no not really. [laughs] [laughter] {tsam} means "only", "just". {Sempa}, just mind, Mind-Only School. So that's the Tibetan name for the Mind-Only School and it's on the subject of where karma stays that you really find out why the Mind-Only School is called the Mind-Only School, very important, very sexy. People like the Mind-Only School and talk a lot about it, but a lot of people have no idea what it means. So you're going to get a dose of Mind-Only School. Some day we'll do real Mind-Only School. In their discussion of how karma stays in your mind and how it works in your mind that you really see why they're called Mind-Only. What I want to say from the beginning, and I want everyone to hear it, is that their presentation of how karma works is basically accepted by everybody, by the higher schools, by Madhyamika Prasangika. Some details are not accepted, but most of what I'm going to say tonight—and I'll tell you what the details are that aren't accepted—is the way it is, it's the way karma really works according to even the highest schools. Very very important. And when I got to this subject, and when my teacher went through this subject, this was that famous occasion, the only occasion when I interrupted him blatantly, when I broke into the class and said: "This sounds great to me. I don't see anything wrong with it. Is it correct or not?" And he said "It is correct. We can accept this. The highest schools accept it." Then I could accept karma, then I believed karma, because it sounded so rational to me. So here we go, this is a very important class.

[student: So Michael, what you're saying is that this is a Prasangika commentary on the Mind-Only explanation?]

It's where Prasangika takes on the Mind-Only School on some points and then states the truth, purifies their viewpoint. {Gombarabso} is this huge word, very difficult, and you'll see from the reading [laughter]. I mean, the guy must have

had a huge headache when he went home. [laughter] It's very deep. Tsongkhapa is a genius, a total genius. According to us, he was taking dictation from a Buddha. You'll see if you read it. If you sit with a few sentences for a few days, you'll figure it out. That's the way he is.

[student: What did you say was the name of his book?]

The name of his work translated is [bk: Illumination of the True Thought of the Middle-Way]. Total illumination of the real intent of who? Ah, could be Chandrakirti, probably Chandrakirti. Don't mix him up with Dharmakirti. Dharmakirti is the magician, Chandrakirti is the Middle-Way philosopher. Okay, what happened? You did a karma, let's say you did a bad karma, you killed somebody. No, let's say you yelled at somebody, like I just did before class. I apologized. When the result comes back to you, what supposedly happens to you?

[student: You get yelled at.]

You get yelled at, not once but many times. Okay? Basically, if someone is yelling at you, what is going on at the moment that someone is yelling at you? It's very important to understand how karma ripens. There are three elements going on.

[silence]

The first element is the mind, his consciousness. We don't say it's the mind... does that look like a brain? That's called {namche} {miki}, not {mikey}, {miki namche}. {Miki namche} means "consciousness of the eye". You're having consciousness of the eye right now as you look at me. You're aware of your eye. You're aware of the colors, you're aware of the shape. That's consciousness of the eye. While the person's yelling at them...let's say the person's got a red face, concentrating on the visual aspects. He's {miki namba shepa} is talking. He's having a...you know, you're at work, you're at the office, the guy comes up to your desk and asks: "Why aren't those daisy pinning pieces here yet?" Which is what they said to me yesterday [laughter] at 12:30 at night. And he's looking at you and his face is red. When I'm aware of his red face, my consciousness, my awareness of his red face is {miki namche}. What's the faculty that allowed me to see his red face?

[student: The eye?]

Remember the eye faculty? The eye power? Where is that?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, according to Buddhism and also according to Western medicine it's a patch of cells at the back of the eyeball that sense the colors and shape and transmit it to the mind. There's a thing called.... [silence] I'm not a very good artist....there's all these spots, receptors at the back of the eye. Here's the eyes, right? And there's the {miki wambo}.

[student: Pretty bad drawing.] [laughter]

[laughs] {miki wambo}, that's right there.

[student: That's eye consciousness?]

No, this is the eye faculty, the eye power, what you call the eye... what do you call it? Physical matter, receptors, the nerve, the end of the nerve, you have them all over your skin for touch. You have them in the middle of your ear or somewhere for hearing. And then what's it looking at? This guy's red face, right? This is the boss and he's yelling. That's what we call the {unclear}.

[student: Those are the three things?]

Yeah, well, now we've got three. You're looking at the red face. That's color and shape. They are sensed by your eye faculty. Based on that, a consciousness grows.

[student: When you say consciousness grows, you mean the mind apprehends it?]

You're aware of his red face, awareness of his red face. This is like the physical sense of it, the physical sensation of redness and shape. Then the mind is doing all this stuff, like he doesn't like me. But don't forget that this is not really interpretation at this point, this is just eye consciousness, awareness of a red face.

[student: So it's not interpretation yet?]

No. Particularly if your brain was not functioning. Your eye could be transmitting, your eye power could be working but your brain may not be

doing anything. It's actually true of the first instant of the instant of the perception. The eyeball has already sensed that color, but there's a time lag for it to create eye contact. And theoretically, the last moment of looking at his ugly face, this is still operating but is finished—you're still aware of red, but this has already finished. The last moment of his red face has already passed down the pipeline. So that's what's going on, there's three things going on. Now what does the Mind-Only School think? How does this event take place? They say something very interesting. They say there's a thing down here...first time I'm drawing this...this is your bad luck [unclear]. [laughter] This is called {kunshi}, the [unclear], in Sanskrit very famous. You'll hear people throwing it around so you may as well know it. People love this word. Say {alaya} [repeat] {vignana}, {alaya} [repeat] {vignana}. You have people in universities who love this word. {alaya} or {kunshi} means "basis consciousness". I translate it as "foundation consciousness". You might hear it translated as "storehouse consciousness." It means foundation consciousness. And they say that all those karmic seeds are sitting in this consciousness, they're resting in this consciousness, and when the time comes, they produce a mental seed... it's a cute word, like "pierogi", American people always remember it....

[student: {bakchak}]

Right, {bakchak}. This little seed here, this little guy here, this karmic seed, the seed of your karma, {bakchak}, is sitting in where? Sitting in the foundation consciousness, and then it starts to grow, it starts to give a result. What happens? It creates a bigger {namen}, it creates that awareness of the red color of my face, that grows out of that face consciousness, my personal consciousness pool. It suddenly produces the awareness of a red face.

[student: Can you explain that? Is that a separate and distinct raw awareness? Sight awareness? Or does it go on top of it?]

No, it is the raw awareness. It is creating... oh yeah, this is a totally different consciousness, it's like a big pool of all your karmic seeds, it's in you, it's not connected to any of the other consciousnesses, it's not connected to your eye, ear, nose, it's totally separate, totally different consciousness that you have. It's sitting in your mind and it's the storehouse, it's the pool where all your karmic seeds are sitting. And when the time comes, they produce an eye consciousness. When you say eye consciousness, it's not like you're thinking: "Oh I like this color, I don't like this color." It's just the awareness of the color.

[student: I have two questions. First of all, is {bakchak} a seed?]

Mental seed. I'm using the translation "mental seed" for {bakchak}. People call it propensity, a karmic energy, whatever you want. {Bakchak} means this, I'll give you an example, a very famous example in my mind. I remember when I first met Rinpoche he didn't have a green card. Someone had messed up his papers. It took like 5 years to get his green card straight. We used to go out everyday and watch for the yellow station wagon, out of the temple window, looking for the postman, and when he came we used to run outside and he'd say "Not yet." Then one day it came and we were jumping up and down thinking that now he could stay in the United States. Next morning we're out at the window again, waiting for this yellow car. [laughter] We have a {bakchak} for a yellow car. That's a karmic {bakchak}. That means a mental habit, a mental seed. Synonyms are given in your reading.

[student: It's not further along in the ripening process that the actual seed is stored in the reservoir?]

We're going to talk about when the seed gets planted, how it stays and how it grows. I'm not there yet. It's a mental seed. Not a word for a physical seed. Physical seeds are not called {bakchak}.

[student: The other question I had was—if this {bakchak} ripens and becomes the eye consciousness of the red face [unclear]]

Well, you can say it's an awareness of the redness of the face.

[student: Does that same seed, that same {bakchak}, does it produce the auditory awareness? Is it producing more than one consciousness?]

It could, that's a long story, yeah, it could. That's a long story. Yeah, it could.

[student: Is consciousness part of the [unclear]]

We'll get into it. According to all Buddhist schools, there are 6 consciousnesses. Which are what?

[students: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.]

Yes, and mind, consciousness of your thought, that's where you hear yourself

thinking. Those are accepted by everybody. The Mind-Only School says there are two more. Only the Mind-Only School says there are two more. The big one is {kunshi}. Does the Madhyamika Prasangika accept this {kunshi}? No. Why do you think they have to have a thing called {kunshi}? Why do you think they think they need a thing like {kunshi}? Why did the Mind-Only School come up with this thing called {kunshi}? Because you've got to have a place for the seeds to stay. And the Madhyamika Prasangikas' say, look, your theory about having a place for the seeds to stay is fine except that you don't have to have a separate consciousness called {kunshi} for it to stay in. I'll get to that later.

[student: I'm not sure I was following your jargon or your terminology of where the seed comes from. You know, you've talked about eye consciousness. When you say eye consciousness, are you referring to {miki wango} or to something different?

I refer to it as the faculty or the power of the eye. The physical matter which senses the red. This is what I call eye consciousness, the brain part, the eye part, the consciousness of what you see. I've seen something. It's even more basic than that, it's even more raw than that, just the awareness of the color. Even prior to the interpretation. Mental, it's a mental awareness of the color.

[student: So if you didn't have it, you wouldn't see it at all? I mean, you wouldn't see your boss yelling at you?]

We're getting there. We'll get there.

[student: So when you say that {bakchak}, the seed arises, you say it only arises in the eye consciousness.]

[unclear] No. A good lesson is supposed to flow like that. He's asking whether the {bakchak} is creating everything else.

[student: Yes.]

It's creating...

[student: {miki wango}]

We'll get there... [laughs] [laughter] I'm cranky tonight, okay? I warned you. Okay. The {bakchak}, {kunshi}, produces a mental event and it looks like your

eye. It looks like the faculty of your eye. It looks like you interpreted it to be the physical faculty of your eye. It's an emanation of {kunshi}. {Kunshi} is producing this vector, this image which you think is your eye, but it's not, it's all coming from {kunshi}. {Kunshi} looking like a what?

[student: [unclear] Are you still talking about the guy yelling at you?]

Yeah.

[student: So this guy yelling at you is making your eye?]

No, karma is. The karmic seed is producing consciousness which looks like a eye.

[student: A physical eyeball?]

Yeah, like the cells back of the eye. But you take it to be your eye, the faculty of your eye. That's the thing that if I poke it out, you can't see any more. And you are aware of your eye. You're aware that you're seeing, right?

[student: So they say there's no such thing as an eye?]

We're getting there. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: So you're saying that the karmic seed produces the consciousness that looks like the eye?]

Yeah. The karmic seed causes an influence of {kunshi} which looks to you like your eye power, which is actually just a part of consciousness.

[student: Is {kunshi} the collection of {bakchak} or now you're saying the {bakchak} produces the {kunshi}?

It's both. The place where the {bakchak} could stay and it's what starts to look to you like your eye.

[student: So it's the place where the {bakchaks} stay, and then when they become activated, it's the place where they perform, where they mimic what would otherwise be an uninterfered-with eye sensation?]

Yeah.

[student: Are you saying it all comes from the same {bakchak}?]

Right.

[student: And that it's all consciousness?]

So they have to say there's no...

[student: Eye consciousness?]

No, worse than that.

[student: [unclear]]

They say there are no outer objects at all. So they're not mental.

[student: So what about the.... are we alternating then? Between unobstructed {wong pos} and {wong pos} that are being... that look like {bakchaks}, or we're always having {bakchaks} and we never get to the...]

Any {wong po} you ever have is the result is the result of a {bakchak}. Any time you think you see something outside, it's just you seeing your own mind looking like that.

[student: So our retina's really just sitting here doing nothing all the time?]

There is no physical retina.

[student: You just do it on the [unclear]?]

No, this is {kunshi} looking like a retina.

[student: No, no, no, no, I'm not talking about the would-be retinas, I'm talking about the actual retinas.]

There is no such thing. There is no such thing. All cases of retina are {kunshi} looking to you like a retina because of your karma.

[student: So we might not even exist as physical bodies then?]

You don't exist at outside physical points, no. They would say that. That's why they're called {sempa}.

[student: So {miki wampo} is the display of {bakchaks}, got nothing to do with [unclear], according to this school?]

There's something there.. it's mind, and it looks to you like John Kiley, who's sitting there talking to you.

[student: So when you say it's mind...]

My own consciousness in the form of something not out there, it's right here and I'm just all the time seeing this thing, right, it's stuck.... it's not even there, it's just in my mind.

[student: It's not an eye, we think it's an eye.]

[student: But Michael, when you say "mind" you mean eye consciousness, right?]

Yeah, but it's the same for all the other consciousnesses.

[student: Right. But we're not going any deeper than eye consciousness?]

Well, we're trying to pick an example which is concrete. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: Great for Halloween...]

No, I told you... this is very, very profound, this is very close to what's actually happening. Doesn't it make sense? That if bad karma creates some kind of suffering, that it's actually creating all these {nen pa [unclear]}. It's creating the object that you see, it's creating your eye that sees it, and it's creating your consciousness of it. And didn't we just get through a whole course saying that mind has to produce mind?

[student: So what's the basis in this picture?]

What do you mean? The basis of consciousness?

[student: No, the empty basis upon which the attributes are.... like...]

We'll get to that. That's {unclear}. Right now for the first confusing 45 minutes, we're going to be in the Mind Only School. Then I'll confuse you more.

[student: So what you're really talking about is how [unclear]]

Well, is there something about [unclear] that if I put this pen and stuck it in that the world would blank out for you? It's what you call your eye. It's the doorway to all these colors and shapes. You close your eyes, it doesn't work and all you see is darkness. And, by extension, the very thing that you are seeing, me, for you, is just another part of your brain, you're just seeing another part of your brain looking like Michael Roach. That explains why everybody has a different perception of me, that's why some people come to class bored to death and that's why some people like it, I mean, that explains everything very well. That's Mind Only School. That's how karma works. There is no outer thing.

[student: That doesn't explain your own self-perception, of yourself, as opposed to me perceiving you.]

Oh, absolutely.

[student: Because if it's Mind Only School, then I can say you don't even exist.]

Yeah, I love to hear that, it's very interesting to me, yeah, sure, that explains everything.

[student: No, but I'm saying then you don't even exist, except in my mind, but you feel like you exist, but you think you exist....]

That's true, I think I exist outside my mind, but they say that's a mistake, that you don't. You don't exist outside your mind.

[student: So there's no proving that you exist, or I exist, right?]

There's no proving that I exist for you. I don't know if I exist for you.

[student: No, there's no proving that you exist. I know you exist for me.]

{unclear} You see me, so I exist.

[student: I don't understand. [laughs]]

You perceive me. And you're not crazy, you're not drunk, you're not insane. I'm just explaining how things exist. Well, we'll get there. Oh, so what is emptiness to the Mind Only School? I don't want you to write it down, but just for now, because your mind's on the point right now. Emptiness in this school is the lack of any separate seed for the object in the mind itself.

[student: Say that again.]

The perceiver and the perceived thing are empty of being caused by any separate seed. And that's emptiness in one school. What they're trying to say is look, the mind that sees the angry boss and the angry boss itself come from the same mental seed.

[student: In the Mind Only School?]

Yes, in the Mind Only School. The same karmic seed in your mind is producing that boss's red face, producing the eye that sees that boss's red face and producing your awareness of the boss. Everything's your fault. [laughs] That's karma ripening in your foundation consciousness. It's great. What do you exist of but just your mind?

[student: But if four people [unclear]...]

They all have the same...that's where we get into collective karma. Collective karma means because we're all having this class together we're all going to enjoy some results in the future, if we have the right attitude.

[student: [unclear]]

Sure, if people get together and do something together, then as a karmic result they all experience the same thing together. Everybody in New York has the same karma to enjoy the same result. Someone who died last night, [unclear]'s father, he lost his ability to enjoy that result. So that explains everything. It's quite nice. Yeah?

[student: So another way to say this would be that the functioning of our mind

imputes a label on to everything that exists and nothing exists outside of the imputation of the mind?]

We're getting there. That really is going a step higher. We didn't get to that yet. You could say impute in the sense that you think that it's an outer object. John Stillwell, I swear to God he looks like he's out there! But it's really just my own mind, seeing my own mind looking like John Stillwell. If he's pleasant to me, that's the result of my virtuous mind.

[student: So in this school, then, what is the raw material that the mind is seeing? It's seeing itself, but what is the mind seeing?]

Consciousness. Consciousness.

[student: Consciousness perceives consciousness?]

You're seeing some kind of an emanation of {kunshi}.

[student: So there is no body [unclear]] [laughs] [laughter]

[student: Then how can there be other beings? There can't be other beings.]

Why not?

[student: Because it only appears that there are other beings. What appears to me to be an eye, and what appears to me to be my brain.]

Well, you can say that they are long spaghetti noodles that never touch each other.

[student: Pardon?]

Yeah, the Tom Kiley I see is not the... maybe there is a Tom Kiley experiencing himself and a Michael Roach...]

[student: So would you say then that the mind is everything ... see, this is what's mixing me up...inner-outer is what's mixing me up, because the mind for me is in here, you know.]

They say no outer objects. Outer objects don't exist.

[student: So there's nothing outside, no globe over our shoulders?] [laughter]

It's just the flowering of a karmic seed.

[student: A projection.]

Not a projection, we didn't get there yet. That's Madhyamika.

[student: No, but you're saying there's nothing, there's nothing there.]

[student: Why do you think there's karma with your body, and speech?]

An apparently outer object does a thing to another apparent object. It's all in the mind.

[student: So you're saying... none of you exist!] [laughs] [laughter]

[student: You're saying that if there are outer objects, how do you know if there's ....] [laughter]

Wait, wait, wait... [unclear] go ahead.

[student: Two things. One, I've asked two, what I consider to be high Buddhists, one was a [unclear] and the other was a Chan master.... what influence do mindstreams have, what connection do mindstreams have on each other? And both of them said that they thought they could influence each other. And the other thing is that you said the perceiver and the perceived object are both produced from the same seed. How would you dramatically demonstrate that... I lost that...]

{jai shingi {unclear}} The perceiver and the perceived thing are empty of having any separate substance. That's why there's a lot of emptiness and you've got to get it straight. By the way, it's not a crazy thing at all. It's very logical.

[student: They're empty of what? The perceiver and the perceived...]

Empty of any separate substance. They are the same stuff.

[student: Empty of anything separate.]

They're empty of any separate substance. You don't have to know that, it's not on your homework. Somebody asked me was it going to be included in the homework...

[student: So {shin mai} is the scope of existence. If my mind occupies this finite amount of space, does that mean that nothing exists outside of this finite amount of space?]

Right.

[student: Then why practice dharma?] [laughter]

I did not say that beings did not exist.

[student: You said it was a result of the {bakchaks}.]

I said it was {kunshi} because of {bakchaks} influence, appearing as a "you". And you want all those appearances to be happy. That's fine.

[student: So you practice dharma to fool yourself into thinking that you're helping beings and everyone's happy.] [laughs] [laughter]

[student: But that's what you said!]

You're not fooling yourself.

[student: Yeah, yeah, but you can produce seeds that make you believe that there are happy beings that are being transformed.] [laughter]

Yeah, that's exactly what you're going to be doing.

[student: According to this school.]

Because if you don't, and this is very close to Madhyamika Prasangika, what's the alternative?

[student: So all references to helping beings is really an illusion?]

Only an illusion if you think that those beings are somehow separate.

[student: They do exist as separate...]

They have no existence outside of your mind. They absolutely exist. They're absolutely valid, they absolutely suffer, they absolutely have a {bakchak}.

[student: Are you saying they're findable or unfindable?]

In this school they're findable. In this school.

[student: Outside there?]

Not outside.

[student: Okay, that's what I'm asking. So they're out there, but they're unfindable out there.]

Oh no, did you say "out there"?

[student: Yeah. But you said there might be... there are other beings out there.]

Out there, no. No. Outside of your consciousness, no physical outside points.

[student: I'm talking about beings.]

Beings are, you know, minds that are in bodies.

[student: So how do they distinguish this from when somebody's dreaming?]

That's an excellent question. Prasangka says that then dreams would have the same reality as this. And they get into that. It's a big debate. It's a tremendous question.

[student: So that's what happens to the dream.]

I even started to translate it and then it got to be like 3 o'clock and then I said no, cut it out.... it's a big question.

[student: [unclear].... what is a mindstream...]

We're going to talk about it, that very question. Tonight we're going to talk about it. All right, so that's the basic process. Now, it's not crazy, when you think about it, I mean, it's very attractive, you can never get to Madhyamika and [unclear] effective. The other Mahayana schools say this, not some crazy dude. This is what the other big Mahayana branches say goes on. The Prasangika viewpoint is more radical. Reality is more radical than that. But in the meantime, that explains events happening to you. It has to be that way. Where did you think karma stays? What's the alternative? Karma stays on Mars and comes back to Earth every five years or something? No, it stays in your mindstream. And then it emanates to these things and you think you're suffering.

[student: What kind of literal [unclear]]

What's that?

[student: What kind of literal mind... I assume it takes up space [unclear]]

[unclear]... space?

[student: No, but the {kunshis}, there's a place for it, right?]

Well, we'll talk about it. So basically...no, you can't digest and process everything in one night. Tsongkhapa went into retreat for years. He was very confused about all these things. [laughter] Okay. So if on your homework it says [laughter] what are the things that the Mind Only School say are produced by a karmic seed? First, it's consciousness. Right here.

[student: [unclear]] [laughter]

What do you think is being produced by that karmic seed? First thing is your awareness. John Stillwell's mind. What's the second thing being produced? John Stillwell's eyes, and by extension, what he sees. So you can divide it into two things—John Stillwell as the perceiver, as the mind that perceives, is being created by a karmic seed. And then Michael Roach and his vision of Michael Roach are being produced by that same seed. So two things are being produced by the same seed—the seer and the thing that he sees, which includes the ability to see, are being produced by that one karmic seed.

[student: Why is [unclear] an extension of a third thing?]

Because that's the way they present it. And I'm not going to change it. [laughs]

[student: So your perception of yourself is also that?]

Oh, absolutely. That's why you get enlightened. You plant all the right {bakchaks} in the {kunshi} and then you see {unclear}, an immortal deity in paradise.

[student: Just by reprogramming your perception?]

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. What's the only way to change things?

[student: Your reaction to your perception.]

Yeah. Put some new {bakchaks} in that. I repeat, and I will repeat this till I die, so that you might not die. [laughs] [laughter]. You can't change... once the {bakchak} is growing, forget it, it's too late. You know, think of all these great masters who say: "Just have a good attitude while the guy's yelling at you." Forget it! It's unpleasant! You're having a good attitude about an unpleasant object. What's the big deal? It's an unpleasant thing. No kind of attitude change is going to make it pleasant. It's not pleasant to get yelled at, I swear to God, doesn't matter who you are. [laughter] It's too late to change. You must... let that {bakchak}... what happens to all seeds when they produce their result?

[student: They die.]

They die, they disappear. Acorns disappear when the trees come out. For god's sake don't put in a new {bakchak} by getting mad!

[student: No, no, wait a minute, you have to put a new {bakchak} in there. One has got to produce the other, right? Or else you go blank while you're looking at your red boss, right?]

There could be a neutral {bakchak}.

[student: I didn't say whether they were neutral or not, but...]

We're saying replace it with a good {bakchak}.

[student: Michael, is self-awareness part of mental awareness?]

Yeah, sure. Different schools have different...

[student: But it's coupled with...]

You know, the thing called {rang rig}.

[student: Yes, self-awareness.]

There's a word for it. Apperception. In the higher schools. The ability of the mind to see itself as it sees is not acceptable in the higher schools. It is accepted in the Mind Only School.

[student: In the Mind Only School...what is the scope of the mind? The space it occupies? Like the mind is equivalent to a universe? I would say a take on what the mind is...]

Yes, if you think of it that way, I mean you just, apparently you just visualize it correctly. When you look up and see the stars in the sky, you're looking at your own mind. You're looking at {kunshi} emanating as stars.

[student: Your mind has been formed....]

That's the way it is now. I mean, it's very close to that now. You just don't know about it. Why did we get into all this? I'm trying to explain how bad things happen to you, because you did good karma or bad karma. Where did you think the bad thoughts came from? Did karma go to Jupiter and create your mom, and then you were born? What did you think when we used to talk about it all these months? About collecting bad karma, and that creating a bad feeling, and a bad sensation? Where did you think it came from?

[student: Because you interpret the way you behave as being bad...]

[student: There's a difference between how you perceive the boss and that you perceive the boss, I mean, in a sense...]

They're talking more radical. Both are tied together.

[student: No, they're saying the boss... that you perceive a boss of any kind is

produced by the {bakchak} rather than that there is a being, an empty being out there, which forms the basis upon which your {bakchaks}...]

But I'll tell you something. Even in the highest school, those parts which you interpret as being the boss, are also the results of these {bakchaks}. That part [unclear]. That's very very profound, that's very important. Otherwise how could karma work? That's the name of the course, right? Now you know how karma works. That's how karma works.

[student: I always thought that there was perception, you know, our inner process of interpretation of our minds, as well as the arising of events upon which we....]

I understand. You thought that there was some kind of self-existing...]

[student: No, I didn't say self-existing.]

I know, I know you didn't. But you've got to be very careful about fooling yourself in this. In the back of your mind you're fooling yourself.

[student: It's the idea that there are components floating around...]

Right, there are atoms. They are out there, and I'm here, and because of my karmas I'm interpreting them in certain formation.

[student: Yeah, I can accept that for now.]

We'll talk about it. It's coming. So that's what's happening according to the Mind Only School. Now, I want to go on to one more thing. So if on the homework they ask... [laughter] what are you really looking at when you look at the book? And what is it that you are really aware of when you're aware of your eye feelings? What are you looking at? Mind Only School. What are you really looking at?

[student: There is no book. There is no eye. There's a [bakchak} functioning in the {kunshi}.]

You are looking at {kunshi} itself. {Kunshi} is emanating as... because of the {bakchak} influence, {kunshi} is emanating as your boss, it's emanating as your own eye. It's also producing your consciousness of it.

[student: Seems the whole idea of emanating is [unclear] outside.]

Well, emanating means that that clear stuff called mind is taking on that form for you because of a previous {bakchak}.

[student: In your mind.]

In your mind.

[student: Why did you say not projecting?]

Well, he likes... he wants it to be projected on to something. Anything. I don't know.... you could think of it like a horseshoe, right? And it's all that {kunshi} stuff. And here's your eye and your mind and you're just looking over there at your boss, but it's all your mind that you're looking at. It's all your own mind that's emanating as your boss, and your own mind that's emanating as your own mind. And that's how karma produces its results.

[student: When you say that it's going to take another form, you don't mean... there's no separate...]

No, they don't accept outside physical forms.

[student: And how does the deed become the seed?]

Oh. [unclear]

[student: Wait, wait, wait, Michael, one second. You just said that the {kunshi} emanates. Before that you said the {bakchak} is the one that...]

Well, the {bakchak} triggers the {kunshi} to emanate in a certain way.

[student: And the {bakchak} lives in the {kunshi} and it's also a....]

[student: So the whole reservoir starts.... I don't understand.]

Yeah, yeah. The reservoir starts taking on different appearances.

[student: So it's like a mirror?]

Yeah, yeah, you could say that.

[student: Little {bakchaks} explode and one of them turns into a little boss's face and one of them turns into Michael Roach's eye and one of them turns into Michael Roach's mind seeing the boss. Now how does that happen? Let me make sure I cover it. [laughter]. So what are you really looking at when you look at your eye or the outside forms?

[student: {kunshi}]

You're looking at that foundation consciousness. You're looking at that big horseshoe of silly putty that's clear and takes on whatever form it wants to according to your {bakchaks}.

[silence]

How is the karma planted? How are the mental seeds planted? Where do they stay and how do they go on? That's our next subject. I think somebody asked that. [silence] Let's put back the {kunshi} here. The way a karmic seed is planted, forget that aura, okay? That's lower school stuff. You do a deed. Let's say that you start yelling at someone. And as that deed comes to its conclusion, as that deed comes to its end, the energy of that deed... you can think of the deed as this, okay? You're yelling, yelling, yelling, you get tired of yelling and it starts to fade out, your bad deed starts to come to a conclusion. At the very next instant, it transfers its energy to the {kunshi} in the form of a {bakchak}.

[student: We talk about energy. Whose is this energy?]

It doesn't make sense in science, right? What it means is that the awareness of yelling, your awareness of you yelling, which is a kind of consciousness, you know, you see yourself yell, yell, yell, yell. As that awareness starts to conclude, and as you start to close your mouth, that stains the {kunshi} with a {bakchak}. It plants a mental seed in your storehouse consciousness, in your foundation consciousness. As you finish your deed, when the last energy is concluded, then that energy is transferred as a {bakchak} into the {kunshi}, starts in the {kunshi}.

[student: So it's like an energy that stains the {kunshi}?]

Yeah, yeah, a {bakchak} is a very difficult idea, it's true. The highest school

believes it also. {Bakchak} is not mental and it's not physical. It's a kind of energy that stays in your mind.

[student: As we think of energy, like an energetic particle?]

Yeah, it's a mental seed. It's some kind of existing thing which is changing, and it's like a potential that remains in the mind.

[student: You're talking about a self-existent thing?]

No, and we'll talk about that. We'll talk about why it's not.

[student: Michael, with your example about yelling, let's say that in the middle of yelling you realize what you're doing and you regret it and apologize to the person. Is it stored differently than if you'd just scream your head off...]

Yeah, yeah. Because your awareness of the event is different by the time it's over.

[student: So what's the arbitrary factor that chops it off at this point? I mean, why couldn't it be bad karma from yelling, and right after that good karma from being sad about it? Why does it have to... where's the [unclear]...]

I'll tell you. At the point at which that deed would no longer cause you suffering in the future, it's no longer a bad deed. Nice answer?

[student: So what you're saying is that...]

At the point where it changes its nature, and is no longer going to cause you suffering in the future, it's no longer a bad deed.

[student: That's the same thing... that's a circle.]

It is a circle and I want it to be that. That's what I want bad deeds to be for you. It's not guilt, it's not what anybody says, it's not anything else. It's whatever will cause you suffering in the future.

[student: This is true for good deeds too, right?]

Absolutely.

[student: So the {bakchaks} are created by the three types of deeds, neutral, bad or good, and as long as there's a steady contiguous block of bad, it's building a {bakchak}, and the moment it switches from being bad to a neutral, the chop-off goes and then that becomes.. and then the next input is going to be neutral until it changes to being good or bad, then it chops off like that. And it's constantly....]

We're going to get to that in this course. It's called black and white karma and mixed black and white karma. Okay?

[silence]

Where does this karma stay? How does it stay? The Mind-Only School says right after the deed reaches its conclusion, that energy is planted where?

[student: In the {kunshi}.]

So if anybody ever asks you, where does the Mind-Only School say a mental seed stays until they start to produce the result, until they start to look like the results? And that's in the {kunshi}. That's why they say {kunshi} has to exist.

[student: When they start to look like the results? Do they undergo a transformation that takes place before...]

No, they don't say anything like that. Some very important... the last question, and then we'll take a break. Yeah. There's a big question as to what you just said. How does this little circle, how does this little {bakchak}, how does this little mental seed stay around so long? Is it permanent? No. It continues by... it also goes on moment by moment, right? Like all impermanent things, like all changing things according to Buddhism, it's a stream, it's actually a stream of little replication by itself. So somebody says to you, oh, are {bakchaks} permanent? Because, my God, they stay a million years before they give their result? Say no, they're not permanent. Well, do they change by the instant, like all other changing things? Yes, they go through constant fluctuations. Like they are a chain of similar forms. So it's just replicating, replicating, replicating, replicating... that's, by the way, what John Stillwell is throughout his life. I mean, he is being destroyed by the instant, he is just this series of ... you know, when the film goes fast enough all those separate pictures start to look like a flow and it's the same thing.

[student: Michael, what determines the nature of the changes?]

We already talked about that. How powerful your motivation was, what was the kind of object you did the deed towards, things like that.

[student: But that particular {bakchak} can only be affected by the original deed that...]

Except that in Mahayana a good confession can affect it.

[student: Does this have anything to do with... when you say if you killed [unclear], then your ribs will be crushed at some point. Does this have to do with....]

Well, the time lag is from here to... by the way, if you yelled at somebody else, right, and then it stayed there and produces its result as somebody...what?

[student: Somebody yelling at you.]

Somebody yelling at you, okay. Is it a person yelling at you? No. How could mind create a person? Mind creates a mind. The awareness of yourself yelling creates an awareness of yourself being yelled at. I love it. It makes a lot of sense to me. Therefore the content is similar. Nasty content going in, nasty content coming out.

[student: Not only that, it grows, though. It's not something...]

Yeah, it's a lot of little guys yelling at you.

[student: If {bakchaks} exist as a stream of individual discrete elements.....]

No, it's a little {bakchak} getting ripe, then another {bakchak} getting ripe, then another... this is an explanation of why a {bakchak} is not a permanent, unchanging thing which we all know cannot create anything.

[student: Is it an absolute continuum, or is it one 64th of the second frame?]

It's being destroyed {kenchipa [unclear] chu daki chimi}. The definition of impermanence is that object which is growing and being destroyed by the [unclear].

[student: Is it touching? For example, is a Buddha...]

Well, you're getting... if you follow this reasoning, you'll reach emptiness. You can't put your mind on it. Are they touching? I don't know. Are they not touching? No.

[student: Is a Buddha continuous or is a Buddha a sage who just reached a stage of ...]

Think of it as a film. Think of it as the frames in a film. And to you they're happening so fast that to you it looks like it's one film.

[student: But the [unclear] is the same?]

Absolutely, yeah. It's called the {santani} in the....

[student: So the entire empty universe is a series of discrete events?]

All impermanent events.

[student: So the Buddha is....]

The Buddha is impermanent. Actually, long story. [laughs]

[student: Michael....]

By the way, I don't like the word, you know I don't like the word permanent and impermanent. Changing and unchanging. His visible form is changing. His emptiness is unchanging. His Dharmakaya is unchanging.

[student: How does it replicate itself?]

By the force by which this energy was transferred at this point.

[student: That seems to imply that the energy itself has some kind of....]

Some kind of innate identity?

[student: No, but some sort of quality, I don't know.]

Yes, all objects have the ability to... there's a whole school of thought about second chapter Abidharmakosha. There's something about you which keeps you Robin until you die. There's a similarity between you now and you five minutes ago that we call a stream. Now what causes that is the power of a {bakchak}. And one day it will wear out and you'll stop looking like Robin and we'll say Robin died and Robin's not here any more.

[student: But... power, energy, sounds to me like it's without qualities, but a {bakchak} has some qualities.]

Oh absolutely, oh yeah. Because it's going to create a yelling guy.

[student: So those qualities are....]

Yeah, more qualities, the quality of being non-virtuous.

[student: And they're part of what caused this replication, they're part of the mechanism that caused the....]

They triggered the... when they flower, you think you see a guy yelling. You think you see an outside guy yelling. You see your own mind looking like an outside guy yelling. Now does it matter? No, it's still unpleasant, it's still stinks! But the point is if you understand how it works, you can stop it. Is it invalid? Is it less than what you thought it was? Does it not hurt any more just because you know it's your own mind playing tricks on you? It still hurts! It's still bad. It might as well be real. It looks real, it acts real, it does everything else it's supposed to do, it's unpleasant, it still hurts you, it still kills you, still can shoot a gun at you [unclear]. It doesn't make it all invalid. It makes it more valid, because it explains why it's happening. And how you can change it. That's great. It doesn't mean it's not valid. You know, as I often say, go to the dentist, have him drill your teeth. Meditate on how it's your {kunshi} just showing you there's a cavity being drilled. It doesn't help, it still hurts. It's real.

[student: Two questions: if you yell at someone, and then you have this energy that puts the {bakchak} in the {kunshi} and it continues as a series of discrete events up until the time it ripens, why don't you perceive it when it ripens as yourself yelling at someone again? Why is it turned around at you?]

This I haven't quite clarified in my own mind yet. I don't know.

[student: Well, it seems to me if you...]

I know what you mean. If a totally incompatible result is caused, then it should be just yourself yelling. There's something about it... it's the very nature of karma. It creates an unpleasant result... the definition of non-virtue is that it creates an unpleasant result. There's something about it that reverses, I agree.

[student: The second question is that given that you have this energy that plants this {bakchak} which continues until it ripens, it seems that the energy dissipates, you know, it becomes less and less and less, and yet karma grows and expands. Why does karma grow and expand if the {bakchak} is lessening or continuing the same or whatever.

I don't know. We know it's a principle that it does grow, right? Why does a tree need to grow?

[student: Why should it grow?]

Why does a tree get so much bigger than an acorn? The acorn itself that produces the tree doesn't get bigger, right?

[student: In the case of the acorn, yeah, the nutrients going in and the water, the minerals, there are other factors coming into play.]

I think you're feeding it with ignorance actually. That's another story and maybe that's the answer. I don't want to get into it because we're going to run way over the class schedule. They say there's another consciousness called messed-up consciousness, okay? It's called {nin-yi}, {klesha} consciousness. It looks at its ignorance, and it looks at {kunshi} and misinterprets everything about {kunshi} and that's probably what makes the karma grow bigger. It's the ignorance about it, and that attitude about it. I don't even want to go into it. There's another consciousness, it's called {klesha} consciousness, bad-thought consciousness, that looks at {kunshi}, misinterprets it and probably makes the karma worse. Okay, one more thing. What does the Madhyamika Prasangika... the {sem sampas}, the Mind Only School. Chandrakirti criticizes them, Tsongkhapa criticizes them, Nagarjuna criticizes them. And they say: What do you want? Where do you think the karma stays? If there's no big pool in my mind for it to stay in, well, Mr. Chandrakirti, where does it stay? And Chandrakirti says: in the stream of your mind. The stream of your regular

consciousness, the same old consciousness, your basic consciousness stream. Wait, now we need to do a little more. This is going to be confusing. And Tsongkhapa says, and the great scholar of the time says, what he means by stream of mind here is John Stillwell. He doesn't refer to stream of mind per se. He refers to John Stillwell. The flow of John Stillwell. The flow of Robin Brentano. That's where the karma stays. Not even in their mind.

[student: You mean in the flow of you experiencing yourself at the moment as John Stillwell.]

Madhyamika Prasangika. The simple unexamined me. They call it "the simple me". Tsongkhapa says, don't worry about... don't get into his emptiness, don't get into blah blah blah... don't look too deep... you know, the John Stillwell—remember we said simple self awareness in the last class? Buddhas have it. You know, Buddha says I'm Buddha. I'm Shakyamuni. He took seven steps and then on the eighth step he said: "I'm the greatest being in the world". Cassius Clay or whatever. He said that when he was born, okay? He came out of his mother's womb and said "I'm the greatest..." you know. He has an awareness of himself. That simple awareness of me, I, Michael, that's where the karma stays.

[student: Well, then when you die, it would all go away.]

That simple "I"... no, Tom Kiley goes on! What are you talking about? Tom Kiley goes on...

[student: No, no, no, no, Tom Kiley does not go on because in his next life I'm going to be... Jane Kiley or something... [laughter] all right, so if what you say is true, when Tom Kiley disappears, all that karma will disappear also.]

You're right. [unclear] the simple me. Me. Me won't disappear.

[student: The "me" that I'm currently experiencing myself as John Kiley.]

Me, me, it's planted in me, okay? Just me. And they say, "just me", {nat sak}, if you want to see the word, it's {nat sak}. Where does the karma stay? You Madhyamikas, you big Buddhist scholars, you don't accept our idea of this {kunshi}. So where does the karma stay? Well, just in you. In you. And that you, according to the highest school of Buddhism, is you looking at your mind and your other parts saying "me". Interpreting that as "me". That's where the karma stays.

[student: But you said it's stream of mind, you didn't say "me" before.]

And then I said what stream of mind means here is you thinking "me" about your stream of mind.

[student: So either way it's fine.]

You can say either way. If you're one of those people in the class, like Ariel who wants to fly high, technically, it's not your stream of mind. It's you, a label put on your stream of mind and your arms and your legs and everything else. If you put "stream of mind" on the homework I don't mind. If you put "simple me", I'd like it better. You won't know what that means for a long time. [laughs]. But think about it. Let it cook. Let it cook. That's very deep. That's where the karma stays. It's a lot more comfortable to think that it stays in some big pool that you carry along with you and that's why the Buddha taught {kunshi}, right? It's one of the four schools, Buddha taught it, it's valid, it works, it has a use, it's a good way of thinking about it, it can help you.

[student: Are you saying then that the idea of the "me" is more accurate than {kunshi}??]

It is more accurate.

[student: So the {bakchaks} that you're carrying in your regular mindstream...?]

There is no mindstream.

[student: Would another way to say it be that all of the thoughts you have, all of the actions that you've done, all of the deeds, you know, everything has led you to who you are at this discrete moment in time, and therefore the results are the sum of your karmic...]

We're going to talk about that. I know that you are going to have trouble with this idea. So I stuck in the reading that I'm going to go over. What does this big, big, high, high, high school say is "just you"? What do they mean when they say "just me?" I'm going to do that after the break. It's going to be a rough class, hang on to your seats, but it's very important. I think that if you're a thinking person, you can't accept karma unless you get some kind of discussion like this. Where does it stay? How does it stick on...? You know, in the lower schools, the

Abidharma says “oh there’s this invisible saddle-cinch. They love these things, right? They’ve got this {nambo riche my en mi su}, right? They’ve got this aura, right? So they say, ah, well, there’s this big thing that looks like a saddle-cinch and it’s called a {kopa} and all your karmas get stuck in there and they came along with you. They don’t say there’s a physical belt-like thing, but they say that there’s an energy called a belt that keeps those things on you. You know, that’s how they explain it. Take a break and come back in ten minutes. There’s a famous verse that’s in your reading. If you do the memorizations, you’re supposed to memorize it. It’s from a sutra called [bk: The Sutra Requested by Uppali] and it basically says that heaven is made by your mind. And then Shantideva has a quotation that says “hell is made by your mind.” Now don’t think that... Shantideva has a very famous quotation that says, in the [bk: Boddhicheavataara] that says don’t think that hell was made by... what do you think? Some ACME Construction Company went down under the ground and made hell? [laughter] Who made hell? You make hell. You make it with your own mind. Does that mean that if you’re in a bad mood this world looks like hell? No. It means that there really is a place where beings are in millions of years of torment and that’s the hell you created through your karma. When you get there, it exists through your perceptions. And that’s very very famous. So I’m going to tell you how the...I mean, in scripture those quotations are all over the place. So the Mind Only School says... by the way, in those quotations the Buddha often says “the world is only your mind.” You know the universe is only your mind. The universe and all the beings in it are only mind. So the Mind Only School says, “Come on! The Buddha said it! Buddha said it’s only mind! We’re going to name our school after that! We’re the Mind Only School! And we’re the only ones who follow what the Buddha said. The Buddha said it’s all mind only. If you ever get to paradise, your tantric paradise, it’s mind only. If you ever have to go to hell, it’s mind only. So the Mind Only School says we’re the right school. Buddha said mind only. So what does “Mind Only” really mean?

Say {sope thak sang}. [repeat]. {sope thak sang}. [repeat]. If you never learn anything else, learn {sope thak sang}. I say that about everything, right? {sope} means “by your own conceptions,” through your own conceptions.” {thak sang} means “just labeled to your own conceptions.” There’s another spelling of this verb and the Sanskrit root also means “just made up by your own conceptions.”

[student: How do you say it?]

This is the highest school's view point of reality, Madhyamika Prasangika. This is Madhyamika Prasangika. This is what the Madhyamika Prasangika view is: the world is just what you label it. Okay? The world is just what you label it. It sounds close to what? It's Mind Only, but it's a little different, isn't it? They don't say you're looking at your mind acting like your boss. They say you label your boss the angry boss. And I think it's very healthy, very good for you to know the difference between the two schools. People are always mixing them up. The average American Buddhist idea of all this stuff is just a big jumble. Now you know the difference. Mind Only School says what? Your eye consciousness grows from a karmic seed and it's looking at foundation consciousness looking like an object, basically looking at itself. The highest school says "No!". There are indications of an angry boss out there, there are parts that look like an angry boss, there's a redness there, there's the sweat glinting off there, there's a decibel level coming into the ear, and then you label it what?

[students: Angry boss.]

Angry boss. You label those parts "angry boss". [laughs] I'm waiting for the next question. When is this question going to come?

[student: What are those parts?]

What are those parts? Listen very carefully. When you go to the glistening sweat on the brow, or the redness of the face, and you pick that, there's also a label put on to the redness on the left side, and the redness on the right side. And you go to the redness on the left side....

[student: It's like the pen.]

And it's the left part of the left side and the right part of the right side. So where is the red? This way you'll find it's emptiness. If you continue to look... where's the real parts that I'm labeling, you know, parts that are really there that I'm not labeling? You'll never find them. That's a meditation on emptiness. That's one method to reach emptiness. You'll never find them. What does Prasangika say? Leave it alone. {unclear} Leave it alone. There's a redness, there's a glint off the face, there's a decibel level of the voice, don't look deeper than that. That's his reality. He's real. Okay? And I'm interpreting that as "angry boss," it hurts me, it functions, it fires me, it gives me bonuses, it's there. You can't deny it's existence. It's operating. Leave it. Don't go deeper. If you go deeper you won't find anything there. If you're interested in doing an emptiness meditation at

work, which would probably get you fired, [laughs] [laughter]... if you do that, if you keep looking for the boss, he's not there. But, on a relative level, he's an angry boss. And it does hurt, and he can fire you.

[student: Wouldn't the same proof that we did for the parts of the pen apply to this?]

Yeah, absolutely.

[student: The same idea.]

[student: Yeah, but it's all being labeled on to the emptiness of the boss.]

No, it's labels... what is it really? You never see the whole body. You know that. You can't see the bottom of his feet, you can't see his back, he could be one of these Robot Cops, [laughter], you don't know....

[student: And red.]

Yeah, yeah, yeah [unclear] [laughs] [laughter]. You really don't know. You take certain indications, you select indications, and you form a mental image of an angry boss. And then you mistake that image for the boss. That's the highest teaching of Buddhism. Why do you interpret that redness, that sweating, and that voice level as an angry boss? What forces you to do that? A {bakchak}, accept it, believe it, there's a {bakchak}. There's one of those nasty little seeds in your mind making you see him that way. In fact, now, next time you see your angry boss.... I was sick the other day in class. It was very uncomfortable. And so I'm thinking, you know, this is my {bakchak} ripening. I'm seeing Rinpoche and everything seems, you know, I'm kind of dizzy and feel an upset stomach and my head hurts and these are all indications which I'm labeling. Can I get out? I would really like to be out of this right now. I really wanted to be out of this. But it's too late. That is reality, real, that's reality. And it hurts. And that's why you have to... the game is to change the {bakchaks}. The game is to use up the old {bakchaks}, get rid of the old {bakchaks}, get new {bakchaks}, don't react to the old {bakchaks} by making new lousy {bakchaks}, that's the name of the game. Once you start hurting it's too late.

[student: Michael, could you say that the fact that your boss got angry at you to begin with is also part of your...]

Absolutely. Everything about him, a mole on his cheek. [laughter]

[student: Not what you interpret, but whatever.. whatever interdependent arising is going on between you....]

Interdependent arising means, the definition in the highest school of interdependent arising, is that I see indications of an angry boss, and I impute... I label them "angry boss", and it is an angry boss and it hurts me.

[student: But I'm asking... the fact that he got angry at you is also a result of your karma. I'm not talking about the interpretive process, I'm talking about...]

Not only do we define actions by the result, but we define a thing as a "good karma" or a "bad karma" by whether it hurts us or not. If something hurts you, it must have been from a bad karma. It can go both ways.

[student: So if somebody gets angry at you, it may or may not be your bad karma...]

No, it depends on how it makes you feel. If their getting angry at you hurts you, which normally it does, it's unpleasant for you, it must be a ripening of bad karma. What you do from that moment on is total free will. If you want free will, there's your free will. You have a choice at that moment. You can react the way the whole world reacts which is with more {bakchaks}.... We had it Saturday. We walked out of here and this big guy came up to Lee Mason and he knocked her on her ass. [laughs] And there was another guy standing near and he said: "Ain't you going to do nothing about it?" [laughter] No! Do what? We just finished a {bakchak}. Great! If she doesn't get mad, she didn't get mad... it was very admirable. [laughs]. She didn't look grand, but, you know, we should have a {bakchak} party, you know, one more {bakchak} gone. [laughter]. One more {bakchak} gone and no new {bakchak} planted. No violence committed. Very nice.

[student: This aspect of the unfindable parts, the infinitely smaller and smaller parts which all come together to be perceived and interpreted. What causes the arising of those and how does that happen?]

Ultimately... this is the point where the Buddha said "I can't answer you because you're wanting them to be self-existent [unclear]..

[student: I'm not asking them to be self-existent, but...]

I know. I'm asking you to think. {Bakchaks}. Are they mental? Not according to Madhyamika Prasangika. They are outside according to the higher schools.

[student: So how does karma cause physical arising? How does a {bakchak} cause a physical arising?]

Well, when you get down to those physical arisings, they are a perception created, placed upon smaller parts [unclear] and ultimately, yeah, it's all an imputation of [unclear]].

[student: Labeling on to the boss or making your boss appear that way is different from making the boss.]

I understand, that's true. Well, not really. You gotta cook it.

[student: In one case you're saying there's nothing out there but your mind, and in another case you're saying....]

There are indications...

[student: There is something... there seems to be something out there.]

[student: At the same time someone else doesn't see the boss as the angry boss, so what's seeing what?]

I knew this would come up. I knew this moment would come in the class and I want to leave it right there. [laughter] I don't want you to worry about it. We'll talk about it in the next class. We're going to do the Diamond Sutra and it's going to be the... and it's not just out of...I'm not playing. I'm saying that it's the whole crux, and leave it there. You'll see why. [laughs] All right. The last thing, the last question is ... and I'm also going to... I'm actually almost going to end on time. So the Mind Only School comes to these Prasangikas and says: "Well, then what did the Buddha mean when he said everything is mind only? According to you guys, it's not just mind only. There are indications out there and you're labeling them, you're interpreting them in certain ways. Well, if it's not mind only, why does the Buddha say everything was mind only? And the Prasangikas give two answers. The first answer is in a negative way and the second is in a positive way. The negative answer is: the Buddha wanted you to know that

these are creations of karma and not of some...what?

[student: Real thing.]

No. What?

[student: Creator God.]

Yeah. There's no God up there saying "Gee, I think I'll give so-and-so some cancer today." So in a negative way, the Buddha said "hell is made by your mind" so you wouldn't think it was made by some sadistic guy. In a positive way, what do you get? He wanted you to know that the mind is the main thing. Mind as opposed to what? What is it that really causes us? Where did you really come from? We talked about that first moment of you in your mommy's stomach.

[student: Me as a self-existent being came from anger.]

[laughs] Yeah, it came from your mind. Your mind... we're talking about the twelve links of dependent origination, right? What's the first link up there? It's your ignorance. It says the world is mind only in the sense that it's mainly mind, in the sense that it's mainly coming from your own mind's ignorance of the past. That's what the Buddha meant when he said all this stuff is mind only. He did not mean that you are looking at your own consciousness and seeing things appearing on that consciousness. That's what Chandrakirti said to the Mind Only School. That's what the Buddha meant when he said Mind Only. Maybe you want to change the name of your school now or something? Okay? That's all. [laughter].

[student: Can you go over that last part again?]

Yeah. In a negative way, the world is mind only in the sense that it is the creation of your former karma, mainly {yo sempa}, mainly your mind, and not the creation of a God. And that's why we say Mind Only. And in a positive way, you should understand that mind is the main thing. Mind is the main attribute. Main cause. Okay. So I just want to say, you know, what's the whole practical implementation of all this? It makes it very clear. Once you get this explanation.. so you now have a decent argument for how karma is planted in your mind, by you, and how it comes back to you. Then what do you have to do? You cannot, any more, ignore any one of your actions. You have to go down now to a very

fine level of observation of the self. And you have to watch yourself. Now you can't allow any more {bakchaks} to be planted. Even by negligence, or even by compulsion. You are now educated. You know what's happening now. You've got to now... any time you see yourself doing something bad, it's planting a {bakchak}, it absolutely is and must be planting a {bakchak}. Once that {bakchak} is planted, it's very hard to get it out of the mindstream. Extremely difficult. You're going to have to experience it. Now you know how... the whole principle of how you experience it is basically accepted by Madhyamika. So now you've got to be goddamned careful with your {bakchaks}. Now in your whole life, you've got to be very careful with what you do and say and what you think. Because every time you do something, every time you think something, it's planted and it stains your mind. To get it out is almost impossible. To purify that is almost impossible. Now it gives you even more reason to follow those ten. You must follow those ten.

[student: It's almost impossible to [unclear]]

I mean, a very good Mahayana purification can do it, but don't forget that that involves {dompsen}. {Dompsen} means restraining yourself from ever doing it again. Successful purification doesn't mean having a nice ceremony or making your mind pure so the {bakchaks} will stop. It depends a lot on the process of not doing it any more. And most of us who have learned purification ceremonies think that the next day we can throw more {bakchaks} in there. Like, why worry, you know, the day after you can clean them all out. If you're still doing what you did ten years ago, which I am, then all those purification ceremonies are not complete. There's something not there, lacking, it's not going to work. You have to be very careful.

[student: The Mind Only presentation sounds like... you mentioned it at the end of the class yesterday. It sounds like the last class where it makes you the Creator God of everything, and if you're the being that's creating everyone else out there through these {bakchaks} in the {kunshi}, right, then why do you need to create all these other things? Why do you need to have a sequence? Why do you need to create this time frame within which all these things are appearing? Why not get it over with and do what you want?]

When Rinpoche was asked that question in the [unclear] in Brooklyn... were you there then? In 1976? He said, what do you want, all these Buddhas are going to be in [unclear] [laughter].

[student: Well, there are [unclear] So I'm just fooling myself into thinking [unclear] by the {kunshi}]

Anyway, to me that's one of the most important classes you ever had. And now you have to buy karma because you have a good argument for it.

[student: Michael, can I ask you a question about the way the karma is stored in Madhyamika Prasangika?]

[student: Yeah, you were saying that they say it's just carried in "me", right? Would an accurate way to think of that be to say that all of your past karmas have formed your mind to be how it is now, therefore the present state of your mind in the present moment is the result or outcome of all your past karma? It's predisposition to behave any certain way is the sum of all your past karma? Therefore, you [unclear]

You can say that [unclear]

[student: Say that again? Your mind...]

John Stillwell [unclear]

[student: Yeah.]

And also is determined by

**END**

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

Class Six: Karma and Emptiness HOW KARMA WORKS -- 1994

November 7, 1994

...and I think the connection between them is not very often brought out. And I think a lot of people get confused. If someone's teaching emptiness and they are not speaking about karma, or if they're speaking about karma and they're not speaking about emptiness at the same time, then they don't know how they work together. And you'll see why tonight. You're going to get a presentation mainly from Chandrakirti. Do you know him? His Tibetan name is {Je Tsongkapa} and in Sanskrit it's Chandrakirti. And he wrote the most famous, well, the main text on the Middle Way that we study in the monastery, the Middle Way in the highest school, the highest part of the Middle Way, Madhyamika Prasangika. He wrote the root text. The root text is called [bk: Entering the Middle Way]. Getting into the Middle Way, Entering the Middle Way. He lived about 650 A.D. So we're going to study his point of view tonight, and along with his point of view we're going to study Kampa's. What's Kampa mean? Je Tsongkapa? In Sanskrit what? Maitreya. He and Vasubandhu's brother, right. Vasubandhu's who? Wrote the Abidharma... dumb question, right? [laughter]. He and Vasubandhu's brother Asanga collaborated on it. Maitreya's becoming a Buddha and you know the debate about that, whether he's a real Buddha yet or not, if you were in some of the other courses. He lives in a paradise. Asanga went to that paradise. They wrote five great books. Asanga brought back five great books. And one of them is called [bk: Gyur Lama]. The name in Sanskrit is ....

[student: Michael, is this Kampa like the guy who [unclear]] [laughter]

Yeah, yeah, it's a very common Tibetan name. It happened to be the name of the abbot of Sera Me for twelve years and the abbot makes new monks, and the new monks get the Abbot's first name, so half the monks in the monastery are called Kampa.

[student: How do they distinguish themselves?]

By the second name. Kampa [unclear] from this college, and there are probably five who answer, then Kampa [unclear] from this college.

[student: Who did you say went to the paradise?]

Asanga, Vasubandhu's half-brother. Their mother was a nun. {Uttara Tantra}. It's not a tantra, it's called tantra. {Uttara Tantra} means Higher Line, Higher Lineage. That's the name of his book. Higher Line. I'm not quite sure what higher line means.

[student: So he went to a heaven and he met Maitreya...]

And Maitreya dictated to him five great books.

[student: And they are?]

[bk: Wen do Gyen], which is...

[student: I mean anything we're going to study or anything...]

You've already studied parts of the first one. And this one is very popular. It's not one of the great five books that we studied in the monastery but it's a very great text, so actually we're going to talk about that text.

[student: That's by Vasubandhu?]

No, by Asanga. Asanga was the scribe. Maitreya was the author.

[student: Can you go through the whole...] [laughter]

[laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Maitreya was in Paradise and Asanga went to that paradise and Maitreya dictated to him five great books of which this one, called the [bk: The Higher Line, {Gyur Lama}] is one of them.

[student: And Maitreya is the Buddha that's supposed to be coming...]

Maitreya is the Buddha of the future. Whether or not he's a Buddha already is a big debate in the monastery.

[student: Whether he's a Buddha already means is he a living being now?]

According to some points of view he's already a Buddha.

[student: In a regular body, or in another form?]

No, in a paradise. Some people say he's not yet a Buddha. Some people say he's going to be a Buddha, and he'll be the next Buddha.

[student: So he could be one of us.]

[student: Dream a little bit.]

[student: This Chandrakirti translated [bk: Gyur Lama]. Is that what you said?

No, no, no, no. No connection between the two.

[student: So [bk: Gyur Lama] is up there...]

The reason [bk: Gyur Lama] is up here is that I want to give you a little reading from [bk: Gyur Lama] which appears in a commentary of Chandrakirti, but don't worry about it, okay? What you're going to get right now is from [bk: Gyur Lama]. And we'll go back to Chandrakirti later.

[student: So who wrote [bk: Gyur Lama]??]

It's a book about emptiness mainly. And it's written by Maitreya.

[student: So it's the same as [bk: Uttara Tantra]??]

Yeah, Uttara Tantra is the Sanskrit name and it's not a tantric word. The word tantra means many other things. Tantra means live, like the sacred thread that a Brahman wears is a tantra.

[student: How do you spell Asanga?]

[silence]

It means {top me}. {top me}. A is the negative in Sanskrit. Asanga means... if you have very good wisdom, he cuts through knowable things like a hot knife through butter. That's why they called him Asanga. Nothing can stop it. Anyway, like a hot knife through butter. I can't think of any other word in English. That's what his name means. Okay, what did he write? He wrote a

very beautiful description. I'm sorry, Asanga wrote it down, Maitreya spoke it and it appears in the [bk: Uttara Tantra], Higher Line. Asanga went to that paradise and met Maitreya. Western scholars go crazy trying to date all of them because they don't know what's going on. There's two Vasubandhus and three Asangas, a Nagarjuna after seven hundred years... they don't know what's going on. Okay, so he wrote a lot about the relationship between emptiness and karma. So I want to give you a little bit of a... there's a very famous section that's in your reading. It's in the first few pages of the reading. And he described how karma is created by a lack of understanding of emptiness. And I'm going to go through that. He described six steps. He gives it six steps, like sort of a chain reaction. He says if you have this, you have this, if you have this, you have this, if you have this, you have this. The first of them is a {bakchak}.

[silence]

[student: When you say how karma is created, you mean bad karma is created through lack of understanding?]

Both. Six steps of how... well, you'll see how emptiness and karma are related. How they cause trouble. [laughs]. All right? So, {bakchak}. What's a {bakchak}?

[student: A mental seed.]

They can be a couple of kinds. You had a {le ki bakchak}. What's a le?

[student: Karma.]

We were talking about karmic {bakchaks}. There are also ignorance {bakchaks}. Much different, right? A {le ki bakchak} planted in your brain is going to sprout up as what?

[student: A label?]

Well, a good experience or a bad experience, okay? An ignorance {bakchak} if it springs up is going to do what? It's going to create what? Suppose there's been some latent seed in your mind for a kind of ignorance and the {bakchak} grows, then what happens? You take something to be self-existent, you take something to happen to your self. To have a real nature. We'll talk about what that means. So it all starts with a {bakchak}. Where does the {bakchak} come from?

[student: Deed, karma.]

It s not a karmic {bakchak} really. It s more of a...well, ultimately, yeah. But it really comes from your past lives. I mean, you ve been carrying that {bakchak} for many jillions of lives. We saw that in the last course. If you can prove one most previous life, then the lives are endless, beginningless. So you ve had that {bakchak} for time without beginning.

[student: What does this {bakchak} [unclear]]

Is it physical or mental? It s in between. According to Buddhism, there s three kinds of changing objects. Physical objects, mental objects and those changing things which are neither physical nor mental. And that s the name of it, you know, scholars go crazy trying to translate them. But it means, examples are...Fran. Fran is neither Fran s mind nor Fran s body. Fran is a concept. And this is an energy that resides... we talked about it last class... we had a long talk about this last class. But it resides within you and it ripens at a certain time and then you get that either as the result of karma if its a karmic {bakchak}, or you get what? You get manifestations of ignorance in your mind, if it was a {bakchak} of ignorance.

[student: You re saying it s a concept, like Fran?]

No. I m saying that Fran, or John, is one example of a changing thing which is neither physical nor mental, and a {bakchak} is another example, if you want to know how to categorize {bakchaks}. There s a big debate about it. They stay in the mind. We talked about it. So first you have a {bakchak} for that kind of ignorance. There s 2 kinds of ignorance. Those 2 kinds of ignorance come out. That s number 2.

[silence]

[student: Michael, are you just happening to use ignorance as an example, or is this is how it works for all situations?]

[unclear] By the time I get to the text....

[student: That pen is not working.]

Not too good?

[silence]

These are 2 kinds of ignorance and you should know them. You don't have to know them in Tibetan. Say {kanza ki}[repeat] {dak zin} [repeat] and {chu ki dak zin} [repeat]. {dak zin} is a very important word. {dak} means self. {zin} means to grasp. So {dak zin} is the tendency to grasp the self. Is that good enough? Is that a bad thing? That ignorance? If someone steals the Buddha's begging bowl just because they saw it was a [unclear] bowl? Yes. So you have to clarify them a bit, right? It's not wrong to think that you are yourself. Of course you are yourself. That's a [unclear]. You are yourself. {dak zin} holds that self to be truly existing, existing the way it seems to exist.

[student: [unclear]]

Didn't get to that yet. [laughs] {Ganza} means me, person. So the first kind of ignorance translates as a tendency to grasp to some self-nature of a person. The reason we say some self-nature is because there's no such thing. It's grasping something about me which is false.

[student: Self-existent nature? You said self-nature?]

You could say self-existent. I mean, when people say that Buddhists deny the self, that they deny the atman, that they believe in an-atman, it doesn't mean... obviously you're here, you can't deny it, that would be silly, stupid. That's why people rack their brains trying to figure it out. Sounds very mysterious, right? It attracts a lot of people to Buddhism. Of course you're here, of course you're there, of course you are yourself. And the word atman or dak ... you know, the chair is itself, the wall is itself, the building is itself, that's all okay. {dak zin} means to grasp at some self that doesn't exist. Self-nature. Self-nature.

[student: Are you talking about interdependence?]

Later. [laughs] Of me, okay? It grasps to some self-existence of me. It focuses on who? Your {ganza ki dak} focuses on you. Yours focuses on you, yours focuses on you. This is focussing on your self, and interpreting yourself to be self-existent. Self-existent means not being interdependently arising. That word itself has four different interpretations, there are different levels of self, of sophistication. We saw that in the first course. That's a long story. But basically it looks at me and takes me to be self-existent. What does that mean? What

would that be like? In the case of the guy at work?

[student: Best boss you could ever hope for.]

No, I mean, let's say it focuses on you, you don't like something about yourself and...well, we're going to talk about it. Anyway, it focuses on you and it has some kind of wrong idea about you. That's what {ganza ki dak} means. It thinks, it believes that you have some kind of self-existence. We don't know what that is. {chu ki dak zin} means the tendency to grasp to a self-nature of dharmas, and in this case it's very important to understand that dharmas means my, my, me. Dharmas, which generally means all existing phenomena, and also means the teachings of the Buddhas, in this case means something totally different, means things that belong to you.

[student: Your things?]

Your nose, your ear, your mind, your legs. So the first kind of ignorance is focussing on what?

[student: Your self.]

John Stillwell. By John Stillwell. And Helen Kuntzler is focussing on Helen Kuntzler. And John is focussing on John's hand, John's leg, John's own mind, John's eyes, and for other people, it's focussing on the other parts of the... their own parts, in their mind.

[student: So one is the whole and one is the parts?]

You could say that. One is me and the rest is mine. I, me, mine, we have the song...

[student: So my house, too?]

Yeah, normally it's restricted to parts to do with the self.

[student: This happens all the time, I mean like...]

It's defined as {niguro} which means what belongs to you. But then it says, all the examples it gives are personal parts, like your mind, your nose, your ears, your body, your thoughts. It's pretty much focussed on you. This is the one

that gives you the most trouble. When you reach {toma}, when you see emptiness for the first time directly, it is the emptiness of your self. And when you come out of that, you'll say Oh Gee, when I become a Buddha, they won't call me Michael Roach anymore. Some kind of understanding about self that you have. The first time that you perceive emptiness directly it's concerning your self. So what's happening so far? You're carrying a seed for those two kinds of misperceptions from your past life. Then in this life they start to grow, these two kinds of ignorance start to grow. These are the main two kinds of ignorance that even exist in the world. There's other kinds of ignorance like about karma and stuff like that. But when you talk about the ignorance that causes suffering, this is it. It's one of these two.

[student: What about the ignorance that sees other people as self-existent?]

That's not the first link of who we look like. There is such an ignorance, you know, that focusses on Janet's eye, and there are some monastic scriptures that say Well, that's a kind of grasping to self because it's someone else's self. But mainly just think of the main emptiness that you don't understand and the one that's going to get you into trouble is the emptiness of yourself.

[student: What is the source of the original {bakchak} of ignorance?]

The last ignorance you had in your last life.

[student: Self-existent perception?]

Yeah. The idea that things had their own nature. And those came from their own {bakchaks}, and those came from their own {bakchaks} and those {bakchaks} came from something else, and there's no end. There's no beginning, actually. You saw in the last class that we had that if the proofs for future lives are correct and there was a past life, and if there was one past life because what triggers a life is the life before it it has to be beginningless. In Buddhism we don't believe that your mind had any beginning. You can't point to a point in time and say your mind began at that time. You can't. Because as a {unclear}, the material cause, the thing that turns into mind has to be the mind of the moment before.

[student: And these {bakchaks} {unclear}...]

Are you any worse than you were a million years ago? I don't remember seeing that. You know, you can have bad million year spans when you're really

narrow, really thick, no, really, and I think they just go like that. They're always strong enough to keep you in the suffering life. But I think they would...depending on whether you met a teacher or not, whether you had any exposure to good ideas. But I don't see this kind of cosmic thing where they get worse as the eons go on. They seem to go up and down.

[student: Could you give a definition of {chu ki dak zin}??]

{chu ki dak zin}.. I'll give you the technical definition. Ah, I'm so glad somebody asked. {nga yi walla nying me}, focussing on the parts of yourself, or what you call mind, {deba du ba jig me}, the state of mind which believes that things to be self-existent, those objects to be self-existent. What self-existent means is a big story. So anyway, these two are the ones that cause you trouble. These two are the first link of the Wheel of Life.

[student: By saying that it's beginningless, the causes for these, or it came from a previous one, that sounds like it precludes a state that any mind ever had before where it was without ignorance, and then it sort of fell into ignorance...]

Yeah, right, no, we've never not had ignorance. We wouldn't be here.

[student: Either that or [unclear]].

Yeah. True. All right. Number three.... yeah?

[student: Are you saying that all minds have ignorance from the very beginning? So mind came into existence, if you were to say that, through ignorance?]

It never started.

[student: Okay, had no beginning, and it was with ignorance?]

Yeah. The mind has always had ignorance. You've always perceived things the wrong way. When you see emptiness for the first time you'll realize that every perception you've ever had in your life was mistaken, every few minutes, every few seconds, every millisecond of perception you've ever had was ignorance.

[student: Assuming that your mind [unclear]]

[laughs}. They're not.

[student: They re not?]

Not according to Buddhism. Humans are in the best shape. There are pleasure beings above us, physically they have more fun. But because they re having so much fun, they can t think as clearly as we do. The suffering with which our life is spiced keeps us sharp. Supposedly the best form to be born in is human.

[student: But what if you re not ... what if there are beings that are not [unclear].. there s a huge universe...]

Well, there are six realms. Every being in the universe has to fall into one of these six according to Buddhism, according to the Omniscient Ones who see all universes, all planets.

[student: So maybe if there s other life on other planets and there are beings...]

There is. There s whole maps of them in the Abidharma.

[student: Okay, so these people would be considered to be in the human realm?]

If they... actually, we ll talk about that later. It ll be very interesting. Okay.

[silence]

Okay, say {lok chenci lok} [repeat] {lok chenci lok} [repeat]. {lok chenci lok} is... {chenci lok} means backwards . And it focuses on two things it focuses on pleasant experiences and it focusses on unpleasant experiences. Now what is a {chenci lok}? What do you think? Keep some kind of flow between what happened before.

[student: We re attracted to pleasure and... pleasant experiences]

Yeah, it s just misperceiving pleasure and pain. But what s it thinking about the pleasure? What s it thinking about the guy at the office?

[student: If it s good ... [unclear] it s pleasure.]

More profound than that. [laughter]

[student: It s real, it s self-existent.]

Well, it s real or else you wouldn t be experiencing... we re going to go into that later. That s self-existent. What does self-existent mean here? It s that it exists... this is the ultimate meaning of self-existent, and there are many other meanings of self-existent, and you have to learn all of them, in the lower schools. In the higher schools, the highest viewpoint is that a thing is self- existent if it exists without mind conceiving of it and creating it in a way, by my conceptions. If it exists independent of the process of being conceptualized, then it s self-existent. So that s the next step. You have a seed for ignorance and then ignorance grows in your mind and then ignorance focuses on pleasant things and unpleasant things and thinks of them the wrong way. It thinks that if the guy at work yells at me, then what I should do to remove that unpleasantness is to yell back and to somehow overcome him, and then he ll leave and then that s what caused him to get out of my life. That s a {chenchi lok}, to perceive him as being something outside of the product of my own karma and my own conceptions. It s my own problem and it s got nothing to do with yelling at him. It s totally unconnected. The ignorant thing to do is to respond. Totally no relation...if you do something and you get rid of him, or if you do something and it doesn t get rid of him, which you know happens, both of them happen, so it doesn t work, right? You say something, or do something... this is {chenchi lok}. The perception of him is the perception you have of everything in your life. You think it s pleasant or unpleasant by its own nature and not because of your own projections.

[students: Can you give us a small definition for that?]

Yeah, I would say that these are all steps of a long process by which you get screwed up. You have a seed in your mind when you re born for ignorance. Ignorance manifests, grows, it springs up in your mind. You look at pleasant and unpleasant objects and take that the wrong way. That s {chenchi lok}. Very simple. What s happening is perfectly simple. You have it about every object in your life. Especially pleasant and unpleasant objects. You respond to them totally wrong. You have a totally wrong perception of them. If you get something pleasant, my God, give it away to somebody. That s how to keep it. [laughs] [laughter] If you want more, if you like it, give it away. Cause it for other people, serve other people, that s the road to pleasure. The moment you consume it, you ve screwed up.

[student: Michael, I ve had a lot of trouble understanding the Mind-Only School s explanation of karma....]

I think it's kind of cool actually.

[student: But I don't understand... like what do they say about interdependence and how would they define self-existence?]

That's a long story. Yeah, yeah, they define emptiness and this is not to do with tonight's class, but just for you as the absence of a separate seed for the perceiver and the perceived. That's emptiness according to the Mind-Only School. The absence of any separate seed that creates the perceiver and the perceived thing is emptiness and that makes sense, because their big deal is that, you know, I did a good karma, so actually my visual consciousness now has been created by that seed of good karma, and I'm watching you, and if I enjoy it, then they are both created by the same karmic seed, a good karma. And you're not out there. You're part of my own mind and I'm looking at you. That's the Mind-Only School. For me to believe that those two things are not produced by the same {bakchak} growing out of the {laya vignana} is to hold it to be self-existent. And that causes me trouble.

[student: How do they explain interdependence.]

That's a long story. That's the main meaning of interdependence. I'll show you a book about it. There are four great interpretations of interdependence. We did them in the first course. We'll do them again some time. You must know those things. Otherwise you take a lower interpretation of them rather than the ultimate one and you try to base your behavior on that and it doesn't work. People say to you... what was this argument? People say to me, Oh you shouldn't be attracted to girls because they're just atoms. That's their interdependence. Well, it didn't help me, you know, I know they're just atoms but [laughs] I still had this problem. It didn't help me, I didn't understand how that was supposed to... how, okay, I understand that she grew from the food that she ate, and I understand that she's all carbon atoms and I understand that she dyed her hair or she's wearing make-up and wearing clothes, and I understand that they're all artificial and that they're all interdependent, but she still looks attractive to me, you know, that doesn't help me remove my desire. There's something else. That is one [unclear] explanation of interdependence but it doesn't help me. You have to know the higher way. Okay. So {lo chinchi lok} is where you take those pleasant and unpleasant things the wrong way. You think that they're just happening. But actually they're your projections on a blank screen.

[student: So can you explain, when you have someone to deal with, for instance an incompetent cop who writes you a ticket, and you write him up and you get him fired. [laughter] That s not...]

No, I mean, this is your....

[student: [unclear] related?]

If you write... it s a long story. It s a long story. But basically it doesn t mean that you shouldn t do something. You should resist the dumb thing he s going to do. You should fire incompetent people [unclear] and all that. That s all true. It s where did you think they came from? We saw last week where does a world of nincompoops come from? [laughter] No, it s the {dak be}. It s the environmental result of...must be something, I don t know. Not studying wisdom or something. Then you have to be surrounded by incompetent people. This is where it came from. You made it. That s [unclear]. The whole thing of environmental result, if you really weren t blown away by it, you didn t catch it. All the people around you in your office are {dak jes}, environmental results of what you did. You wouldn t have to be with them if you hadn t collected together the karma. They re coming from your karma. You d be surrounded by brilliant, helpful monks who cook you lunches [laughs] [laughter].

[student: So tonight we re back in the highest school, right?]

Yes, we are. I mean, that book, there s a debate about whether it s strict Mind-Only or Prasangika. Don t worry about it. Abidharma s anything but Mind-Only. Abidharma s way down in the first school. We ve been out of Abidharma for two classes. Why? You must know these things or you can t buy karma. If you know these things, you must buy karma. It s actually a question of whether you can behave well or not, based on your knowing. I can t do anything beyond the classroom door, you know, even for myself. Based on that misperception, what do you guess happens next? Because you don t understand the guy s nature at work, and you don t understand the nature of Fran s spouse, what would you do?

[student: You d yell at him.]

[laughs] You d scream at the one guy and you d go after the other one. So {de jak} is desire. We saw before that it s the wish not to lose something desirable, not to lose something pleasant. The next thing that happens in this chain of

events, how you get into trouble, is because you misunderstood the object. She looks pretty, you don't realize that if you touch her or something you'll burn in hell for thousands of years. You're not thinking about it. And he looks bad and you scream at him. And the first one is {del min de}. You don't want to lose a pleasant object. And we said many times, we talked about it before, I mean of course, the reason you're in Buddhism course is to get out of this suffering. You want to lose the unpleasant objects. Did that kind of desire come from this process?

[student: The desire to lose an unpleasant object?]

The wish to get out of samsara. The wish to get out of this suffering life. Did it come about due to this process? Not really. I mean, it's true that your conceptions are messed up all the time, and it's true that your perception of samsara, your own suffering, is messed up. But it's a noble desire. It's not at all a result of this kind of chain of causation. You want to reach a state where you permanently don't have these kinds of suffering.

[student: This relates to one of the things I was thinking about, whether your entire mind is {bakchak} [unclear], or is there a part, you know, like a side that's searching for the truth, you know...]

You have good {bakchaks}. {Bakchaks} don't have to be bad. Your desire to come to class is from a... your attraction to Buddhism was from a {bakchak}.

[student: Actually the process seems very similar, the basic difference being the belief in a self-existent beings or objects or people or what have you, if you take that part out, the desire to achieve Buddhahood is reached the same way, right? It's just that...]

[student: But they sort of believe that Buddhahood is self-existent.]

Oh yeah, right now everything... as I said, you still are under the.. when you think of Buddhahood, or when you think of Nirvana, even when you think of emptiness, even when an Arya thinks of emptiness, after he comes out of the direct perception of emptiness, his mind is screwed up.

[student: He's [unclear] his perceptions.]

He knows he does. Then you get {chang du}. {Chang du} means what? What's

the opposite of desire? We call it hatred...it s called hatred, it s the snake in the middle of the Wheel of Life picture over there.

[student: Is this number five?]

No, we re still on number four. Sorry, [unclear].

[student: So there s two parts to this?]

Yeah, of course there s two parts. You know that. Liking things and disliking things. Ignorantly. [student: Is disliking something hatred? Is that what you were saying?]

What I m saying is... hatred... I don t agree with that translation. I think it s a very poor translation. I haven t hated anybody today, I mean, but I had {shetham} all day long. Forget it. Of course I m collecting karma all day long. It can even be a slight irritation with someone. It s this... if you misunderstand the object. Everything from slight irritation to tremendous fury in your personality is all very bad karma and very ignorant. And you wouldn t have it if you understood the objects that they were focussed on.

[student: But if they were emotions...]

You wouldn t have any of them.

[student: But if you have these emotions, right...]

They are just...then you have to understand that...]

[student: Are they supposedly.. do they come from the mind first? I mean, it seems to me that you re giggling, you re laughing, you know...]

We have it here. I m trying to explain...they re based on a misperception. The misperception came from a wrong way of...from ignorance, and the ignorance came from your past seeds in your mind. This is the process by which you get irritated. And it s also the process by which you murder someone out of fury. I mean, we re talking about different degrees of the same desire to get away from something. {Dang du} is the desire to get away from something. This mental function that they call hatred in the books on Buddhism, desire, come on, I didn t have desire today, I didn t run after some girl on the street and I didn t have

hatred or anger where I blew up at Pelma just because... well, you know, so, it wasn't like that. But I had these two emotions all day long. Very subtly, I wanted things and I didn't things all day long. As long as I misunderstand the objects of those, they will cause me trouble. How will they cause trouble? That's number five.

[student: Would you say attachment and aversion are accurate translations of these?]

That's pretty good, but aversion is like, you know, when's the last time you had aversion?

[student: When you don't want something, you don't want it, you don't like it.]

That's all right. To me, aversion is a little strong. I have an aversion to... I don't know. Aversion is pretty strong. I don't know... you could say aversion, but it's not a word that people use. You don't see it in the New York Post or the Daily News.

[laughter]

[student: Then why would anybody choose to do one thing or another, a Buddha?]

Ah. I tried to clarify it and I'll clarify it again. These are not the simple wanting to get away from something, not to lose something and the simple wanting to get away something. They are wanting not to lose something and wanting to get away from something based on ignorance of the objects. They misunderstand the objects upon which they are focussed. And naturally that will make them number five. And you know what it is.

[silence]

[student: Based on thinking that it's within the object itself, and not in your own mind?]

In the Mind Only School, but not in this school. In this school, based on thinking that it didn't come from your own projections. That was [unclear]. So suppose out of ignorance of the object, suppose you don't understand the asshole at work... [laughter]. Okay, you really don't understand his nature and you want

to get away from him {chang duh}. You want to get away from him, you want to avoid him. So you will what? You ll shut him down. What s it called? Put him down. You know, I mean, you ll try to do some action at the office which will permanently get him out of your way for a .... I mean, you ll try, you really do try, it s not that you go stabbing him with a knife or something, but you know, you try to arrange something so that he gets moved out of your section or, you know, you try to discredit it with your friends, you try to make sure he doesn t have any authority at work, you try to just contain him because you don t like him. That s {le sak}. {Le} means what?

[students: {Karma.}]

Karma. {sak} means to collect. You collect karma. The minute you do something like that, the minute you talk back to him, the minute you answer his violence with violence, {le sak}, you collected karma.

[student: In a practical sense, how do you administer [unclear] and you re trying to avoid...]

I might be...there s a famous quotation, I love it. It s... if a person tries to do you violence, and violence can be a harsh word at work, right?

[student: Turn the other cheek?]

[laughter].

No. But turn it knowingly, turn it out of self-interest. That s another story. It says if your mother came at you with a knife, if your mother went crazy, you know, she just took something and suddenly she freaked out and she came at you with a knife, would you stab her? No, since it s your mother and not one of these guys out here on Ninth Avenue [laughter], since it s your mother, you would watch her carefully, when you got a chance you d grab her and hug her and try to get the knife away from her, you wouldn t think to hurt her. You would even maybe let her give you a little cut if you thought you could grab her the right way and try to restrain her. And that s the idea. It doesn t mean you can t resist evil, but resist evil as if the person doing it was your mother and you really don t want to hurt her. And there maybe a thing when you have to take very strong measures, but I don t think that most of the violence that people do even in an office or even militarily is done with the conception of that Saddam Hussein is my mom, you know. You wouldn t consider assassinating your mom

or dad, you'd just try to catch her and put her in a padded cell somewhere. [laughs]. You know, something like that.

[student: We have the example earlier of the incompetent person. So that's a less drastic example than the jerk at work [unclear].]

Where did it come from?

[student: Wait a minute! Wait! So he's coming... he doesn't really exist as an incompetent person, it's merely ascribing all this incompetence [unclear]]

I never said that. I never said that. Because you ascribe it, he really exists as an incompetent person. That's what I said.

[student: Yes, and if we understand that, then his incompetence doesn't matter to me, but the company still loses money. I mean, am I supposed to explain to my boss, this person appears to me to be an incompetent person?] [laughter]. You do! The person will be going out the door, you know, but really it's just the way it appears to us. We have to act on these appearances. Now acting and knowing [unclear] is what we're talking about tonight? As opposed to acting in a blind fashion. That that person is truly incompetent has nothing to do with the karma that

involves having to see that person and to be interacting with that person under these

circumstances.

I have the same problem. You know, I had an employee that was worse than that. [laughs] [laughter] [unclear] bankrupting me. And I wanted to yell, and I wanted to get rid of the person and I wanted to... there's a difference between taking the proper step within the proper milieu of your culture without hurting the person, and there's a difference between that and ending up getting angry, hating the person, wanting to cut the person out of the company, or wanting to... there's a big difference between those two things. It's what I'm saying about your mother, if your mother came at you with a knife. But ultimately, that ain't the way to get rid of that person.

[student: It's the Jimmy Carter school of diplomacy, what he did with [unclear]].

I don't know, I don't know, that's a great karma. But anyway...

[student: We have to act, I mean, we have to do things and that we understand all this is....]

Well, I'll... I agree, it's true, it's the most radical thing I'm saying to you. And this, I don't want to go this far, you can't do it yet. The way to remove that person is to remove the karma that makes you see that person. It's not to remove the person.

[student: You mean stand there and get bankrupt time and time until there's nothing left to become bankrupt with?]

Maybe.

[student: Well, my boss isn't going to [unclear].] [laughs] [laughter]

That's desire.

[student: How do you survive in the business world? How do you survive in the business world which is nasty enough?]

You know, I've been in business for a long time. You don't have to be nasty.

[laughter]

[student: Okay, well, most of it is, may be you aren't [laughter]].

I don't think so.

[student: Most of what I've found is...]

You could be honorable and I'd say that in the long run you normally get richer.

[student: [unclear] As a matter of fact, you can sit the person down and say, look, you're a great person, you just happen to be incompetent and we're not going to be in business if you stay. It's nothing personal, I think you're great otherwise, you have to leave.]

That's all right. You know, you grab your mother, you stop her. You don't let

her kill you. But the attitude that you have to... ultimately...

[student: Also it has a lot to do with motivation.]

The causation of the bankruptcy of the company has nothing to do with removing that person or not removing that person.

[student: So don't remove him. Just stand there and watch the [unclear] happen.]

Do the kindest thing, do the right thing. I mean, what we are discussing is very fundamental, it's very radical, very... where did the company come from that it could be bankrupted by this person? What caused that?

[student: The philosophical grid that goes a zillion gazillion years... and now we're at this point, right now, you see some document that was signed the wrong way, and if you don't act, that will bankrupt the company. So you're going to stand there and say.... gee, you know, this thing has happened...]

I didn't say that. I said grab your mother and stop her, do it kindly. Without violence. But ultimately, why did that occur? Why is the company such that it can be bankrupted by one person?

[student: Why is the company such at all? Why is any company such at all?]

This is what we're talking about.

[student: Right.]

Ultimately, if you follow my reasoning to the ultimate end, which is what you've just done, and you've tried to do a {teng yu}, that's Prasangika, you tried to show that it would be observed to act that way at a certain point. It's not. But I'm not really... I'm not suggesting...

[student: And what way is that? I mean, you have to act. Even not acting is an act.]

Didn't... leave it like that. Imagine that every detail of your world comes from those karmas. Environmental results. And the way to change those results can only be to accept the karmas.

[student: And we re producing new causes every time we re react, so we react without the ignorance of thinking that this is all happening out there concretely on its own.]

You can say that, yes, we re going to talk about that.

[student: I understand that. To act without that still doesn t mean that you don t act with justice

or with a sense of propriety in that situation, to the person and to everything else.]

Oh no, you re not...ultimately where it came from and how to fix it.. I ll tell you why, it s very radical. Firing the person, or trying to get rid of the person, doesn t always remove the problem. Sometimes they sue you. We met a guy the other day at the restaurant. He sued his boss who d fired him. Sometimes it has repercussions that go way beyond what the potential loss of the person was. If you remove the person with the correct means, preventing [unclear] to the company, should it work some of the time, or all of the time?

[student: Well, the....]

Yes or no, all the time or some of the time?

[student: It should work all of the time, but it doesn t.]

It doesn t, so that s not the true cause. Leave it, leave it.

[student: I just want to get the translation for {shedang drondu}.]

Yes, {shedang} means dislike and it s what most people translate as hatred, and it does mean, there is a meaning that s used colloquially that means to get angry.

[student: And {drondu}??]

{Drondu} means the desire to avoid something. Based on your misperceptions, you take steps to get rid of the thing you don t like. In an ignorant way, in an ignorant manner, and therefore you collect karma.

[student: So is number four that you perceive it and you take steps, or just that you perceive it?]

No. Number three was that you perceived the guy in the wrong way.

[student: Then you have the attachment and the aversion.]

Then you perceive that nice thing or ugly thing in the wrong... you take it the wrong way.

[student: Self-existence.]

You think it's coming from its side and not from your own projections, therefore you can, therefore you're capable of, these wrong emotions towards the object. If there ever came a day... you can twist this around...if there ever came a day in which you truly understood the nature of every object around you, you would be incapable of these two emotions. You would never get angry and you would never get desire. You would never get hatred.

[student: So is the point that you have to act, you don't have to act except for.. it doesn't matter?]

Action comes way out in number 5. Based on not understanding him or her or whatever it is, you want to avoid it in an ignorant way and you act ignorantly, and that's called karma. That's collecting karma.

[student: So this is saying you collect karma based simply upon attachment and aversion?]

Based upon the two emotions.

[student: You don't have to do anything? Just having these two emotions...]

Oh, no, no. Mainly it refers to doing something. It refers to doing... that's why it's a separate step. Because of these two emotions, which run your life, you take actions. And you collect karma.

[student: Even if you didn't take action, you would still collect karma from having....]

Technically, yeah. That s a long story.

[student: In taking action, it s these two things that cause them to be good or bad, or relatively...]

{sembe lay} and {sampe lay}, right? We had it before.

[student: Mind has gotten stuck...]

The karma which is the thinking and the karma which is the thing you think to do.

[student: So if you have a good, you know, say you like the person, you re attracted to the person, and you do something nice for them. So does that bring you karma?]

Yeah, yeah, that s collecting karma. It s good temporary karma. Temporary good result. So then you collect karma, based on this.

[student: So {sam} means to collect karma?]

{Le sak} means to collect karma. Based on karma, what s number 6? What s the last one?

[student: Create a {bakchak}.]

We call it {kor wa kor}. Say {kor wa kor}. Repeat. You circle around in the circle of life. {kor wa kor} means...the word circle is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word samsara . Because you collected karma, you must undergo suffering. This suffering life.

[student: {kor wa kor} translates into...]

{kor wa} means in the circle . {kor} means to circle. To circle around the circle. Spin around in the wheel. And that s the whole process. You know, if you wanted to stop these classes tonight, just go home and do it. That s it. That s all you need to know. That s where it s all coming from. This is a very profound... it s a Buddha saying this, it s a Buddha giving this. That s his outline of his whole way karma is collected. How s it related to emptiness?

[student: You understand emptiness with [unclear]]

Absolutely. And I almost put a number seven because that was his next sentence. He said and the reason why you never understood {deshin ship ene mo}... {deshin ship ene mo} means the heart of, the essence of all Buddhas. And then in the next sentence he says, that means emptiness.

[student: Could you repeat that?]

[laughs] In the next sentence he says, and the reason all this happens is because you haven't understood emptiness, which is the essence of the Buddhas. He calls it the heart of the Buddhas.

[student: And the reason is because you specifically would not have step three?]

Right, right, yeah, that's a good point, that's probably where you break this.

[student: So can you say that the reason why...]

[laughs] So the reason why these things occur is that you didn't understand emptiness. So there's where karma plays a... there's where emptiness plays a role, in the collection of karma. That's very clear, okay? It's a negative role, right? Because you don't understand emptiness, this whole process can take place. And that's where emptiness and karma fit together in this negative sense. We'll take a break now and when you come back, we'll talk about the positive sense. And that's a very very profound [unclear] from Chandrakirti. It's a really... I'll say what it is... it's called the glass of water.

[student: This is?]

The next thing I say, after the break. This is Maitreya. Next you get Chandrakirti talking about the glass of water. You set a glass of water down on a table and you call a hungry...one of those craving... I call them craving spirits... hungry ghosts, and you call a person from the human realm, and you call a person from the... I call them pleasure beings, people call them deities, they're not like tantric deities, they're temporarily up for a while, they come back down later. So you take a pleasure being, a craving spirit and a human and you put them around a table and put a glass of water on the table. What happens? They all see totally different things. A human sees a glass of water, a hungry ghost sees a glass of blood and pus, a pleasure being sees a glass of ambrosia, and then,

what's going on there? What's that say about the emptiness of the glass of water and about the karma of the beings sitting around the table? We'll talk about that when you come back.

[silence]

[student: [unclear]]

It's tempting to say waterfall, but it's not a waterfall, it's a stream of water. It's a famous section in Madhyamika, it's a very very important part of Madhyamika, Middle-Way, and it means when those three beings look at the same glass of liquid, the human sees water, the hungry ghost, the craving spirit sees pus and blood and the pleasure being sees ambrosia. Generally speaking, you have to understand the nature of a hungry ghost. A hungry ghost is a person who was a cheapskate in his past life. Craving things, wanting to collect things, people who couldn't control their appetites in any way. And then they take a rebirth as a person who... you cannot see them. According to Buddhism, you cannot see them. According to Buddhism, they have a very subtle form and if they were around in this room as they probably are, you couldn't see them.

[student: Can they see us?]

I don't think so. What they see is strange. Because any time... generally, the only thing... if they see a nice cool glass of water and they reach out for it and start to drink it, it turns into blood or pus. And then if you spit, or poop, they can only.. they have some special problem that they can only see that, they can only find that, that's all they can ever eat. And they have, there are certain of them that have problems, they have little tiny mouths and they have huge stomachs, and no matter how much... maybe they find some food but they can't stuff it in fast enough to feel good. And this is all... when they do get something and they pour it down their throats, it turns into fire. It's all from being too...it's all from craving too much in this life.

[student: So you mean if you're overweight, like myself, I'm going to go to a...  
[laughter] What are you trying to say, Michael?]

I like [unclear] too. I think you have to be.. I think that watching... there's a very famous line by of all people Nagarjuna that we say as a prayer. He says eat to keep yourself healthy, eat to keep yourself fit, don't eat for other reasons. It's good to be moderate. It's healthy, it tastes better. This is a precious body, you

shouldn't damage it. If you overfed it, you might damage it. You shouldn't... you have to take care of it. If it gave you a heart attack or if it made your life shorter, it would be... dharmically it would be irresponsible. You have to help a lot of people. You can't die quickly, you have to stay around, as long as this body as this body can stay around you have to do the best thing you can to feed it properly.

[student: Why do you leave offerings to a hungry ghost?]

Why to do it? If you do certain prayers, supposedly they can actually see it when they couldn't see it before. And there's all different kinds of offerings. But that's a long story. So that's the three kinds of beings looking at the same thing. So there's all these arguments. I got into it, I translated a whole section. That's why it's 31 pages long. It's too much for you. I mean, there's this whole argument in the Mind-Only School.... you can read it, but don't get lost in it, you know, if you're really into it, spend a couple of, you know, spend four, five days and read it slowly. It's a debate, it's in the very difficult... it's a dialectic, it's two people debating with each other. So you can read the whole thing. But at some point what's nice is that you get all the objections that a person would normally have. So one person comes up and says, well, then you can't say that anything is really anything else. You can't say that anything is one way or another way. Because if someone looks at it, it's going to be good, if someone else looks at it, it's going to be bad. The guy at work... you can't say he's good or bad, you can't say anything in the world is good or bad, and then the debate that goes back to him is... you would think it's kind of parochial, but the Buddhists say, well then are you saying that there's no difference between Buddhism and other beliefs? Are you saying it's all the same? Are you saying it doesn't matter what you believe? And are you saying that the Buddha is the same as every other person who ever lived? Any other teacher around? Is he the same? There's no difference? What he said is not something much better, or pure Buddhism is not something that's very important and much better than less correct beliefs? Are you saying there's no such difference? And the person says, well, I didn't... he flip flops on that. And then they quote, just so you know the quotation that comes in the book, in the reading, where it says, oh, now I understand that the Buddha is a great teacher, I understand that Buddhism is correct. You will see that, by the way, when you see emptiness directly. A few seconds after coming out you realize that every Buddhist book you ever read was correct. And that's something you can't know until that time. And I can't say it and it doesn't matter. You have to see it. But in the meantime, there's this quotation in the reading. Whose quotation is that? They don't say, but you should know, it's in the {ten gyū}, it's

in the canon, and it was written by a Hindu who had criticized the Buddha and then he turned around and changed his mind. That was written by him. So it's not like some Buddhist, you know, it's not like some Buddhist showing off that we're great. It was actually written by a non-Buddhist who became a Buddhist. Yeah?

[student: So what the Buddha has to say is self-existently great?]

I didn't say that.

[student: Ah?]

I didn't say that.

[student: Then it's greatness depends on the person receiving it.]

Maybe. But does that mean that the teachings are neither great or not? Is it great or not?

[student: Well, you seem to be implying that it's self-existently great.]

Well, that's something [unclear] says in the Abidharma. No it's not. It's self-existently great... if you follow it, you get a good result. If you don't follow it, you get a bad result. I don't know, it functions that way. That's what he's saying. So think about it. These debates are very subtle. You can read them for ten years, fifteen years, and you still have some....they're called {tsim sums}. {tsim sums} means where do you draw the line? What's the truth? It's very difficult. But the point of the monastic text books is that they bring up all these difficult things, they don't just avoid them. They dig into the difficult parts, they leave the easy parts out, you won't find them in there. They bring up all the tough questions. So anyway, I'm only telling you what the book says. You've gotta cook it. If someone comes up to you and says, because of your beliefs about emptiness, is it correct to say that nothing is one way or the other? You can say, well, according to the book it says that Buddhism is good, to know Buddhism, it works that way. Does that contradict the idea of emptiness? No. You gotta cook it.

[student: So what is {chim bak }?]

{Chim bak } is a study. {Chim bak } is a whole class that you do in the

monastery. It might take you eight weeks or twelve weeks and it's dedicated to the idea of this glass of water. {Chim

bak } means stream and there's a quotation from the scriptures that talks about a stream of water and when a hungry spirit comes up and looks at it, he sees blood. He doesn't see it as a nice stream.

[student: So what does a Buddha think?]

Paradise.

[student: When he looks at a glass of water?]

Well he understands that it's only emptiness.

[student: Can he choose what he wants to see though? I mean, in a certain sense?]

He can see what we think we see. He knows that. But no, he's forced to have a perception of it as ultimate pleasure. And a glass of water for him gives him the ultimate pleasure that you could ever have.

[student: So he's not free in a certain way?]

No, not at all. He's at the mercy of his own good karma.

[laughter]

[student: So there is no such thing as a free being in that sense?]

No, not free of karma. You're a willing victim of your good karma and you're forced to see yourself as an endless pleasure.

[student: Now since you've gone on to this fascinating subject of the karma of the Buddhas, then the Buddha is producing more good karma all the time as well, right?]

Well, he dedicates everything and he has to have more. And that's, by the way, the trick of staying a Buddha. Okay, so that's the {chim bak }, that was the first debate that comes up in the... and if we had time we could debate it. Are all

those beings having a {pramana}? That s a very difficult question. You know, if you accept the emptiness of that glass of water, what are you going to say to this person who comes up to you and says, well are all three beings having a {pramana}? What s a {pramana}?

[student: Valid perception.]

In Madhyamika Prasangika we say it s a valid perception. Correct is a little tricky. Valid perception. Is it correct? Is it really what they re seeing? Are they seeing it the right way? Are they all having a {pramana}?

[student: Yes.] [student: Yes.]

[student: Yes.] [laughter]

What, what? What do you say?

[student: Well, you said valid too...]

[student: All the time.]

All the time. Well, a Buddha is an ultimately {pramana} person. He always has, he only has {pramanas}. We have {pramanas} all the time. 99% of your perceptions are {pramanas}. The only non-{pramanas} you have are when you are very jealous of some friend of your husband and you think they re after them. They actually don t care at all, but your own jealousy makes you see something. Or someone s competing with you at work and you impute all this stuff on them that s not even true at all. There are extraordinary cases... you re driving a car and a leaf comes across and you think it s a squirrel and you slam on the brake. Those are non- {pramanas}. But most of what you do is {pramana} all the time. So are they {pramanas}?

[student: Yes.]

But there s a principle about {pramanas}. If two... you can t have two {pramanas} for one object which are seemingly different. There s no such thing possible. It s either water or blood. To be water, to be blood, are contradictory causes, it s got to be one or the other.

[student: I thought the idea was that {pramana} was relative to each person.]

[student: Or class, in this case. Class of being.]

No.

[student: So it's not a {pramana} for me which is different than your {pramana} of the same event.]

No. {Pramanas} can't be contradictory. I can't perceive it as water and you perceive it as not water and we are both having a {pramana}. It's impossible. So what's going on? Now this is very interesting. And according to Chandrakirti, you've got to ask these questions. You have to understand what's going on when the three beings look at the water. It's impossible for three beings to look at a glass of liquid and all see something contradictory and all of them be having a {pramana}. It's impossible for me to look at a wall and see it as yellow and you look at it and see it as red and one of us is not mistaken. It's not possible.

[student: [unclear] with its emptiness.]

Now we've got to get to the next phase. This is very complicated. How do we explain what's going on here? It's very difficult. There's this glass of water, this glass of liquid. The way to explain it is this. It's very difficult. We had a {yen ye ki gyü} and we had a {penche ki gyü} when we talked about karma. The cause of mind, the cause of the first moment of your mind in your mommy's stomach. What was the {unclear}? What was that? The stuff that turned into your mind? It had to be ... no, wait, the stuff that went on and it slopped over into your mind was mind itself. And that's called the material cause. So you have to talk about material cause.

[student: In relationship to?]

What's happening with the three beings looking at the glass of liquid? Material cause, you know,

what was the stuff that the water came from?

[student: The rain.]

[laughs] Water. I mean, liquid, water. That was the material. When I say material cause I mean what stuff did it come from. Water.

[student: According to us.]

[laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Actually in all three cases, but we'll talk about it. And then you say...

[student: Michael, you mean water or liquid?]

Well, the person who wrote the commentary kind of uses them... he sort of tends toward liquid towards the end. By the way, he calls liquid wet and flowing, right? Don't worry if you see that in your translations. That's the Tibetan word. Contributing factor. The contributing factor in this case...what do you get? What's this course about?

[student: Karma.]

The karma of each being, the different karma of each being. So let's talk about the human. When the human sees the water, when he sees a glass of water, where does the water come from? What was the water a few minutes ago?

[student: Water.]

Water. And then water provided the stuff that turned into the water that he's now seeing. And his karma gets into the act and causes what we call a contributing factor. It causes him to see the water as water. Causes him to see water.

[student: And is that a valid perception?]

Yes. And what they say is, this is the catch, okay? And it has to be this way. This is just...I'm just saying this because you have to, in your mind, understand karma. You have to understand why the guy looks bad to you and looks good to the other person. At the moment that those three beings look at the liquid, when those three beings from three different backgrounds karmically look at the liquid, there's three parts. At that moment, when the three beings start looking at the liquid, it now has three parts. One part is acting as the material cause for water and the contributing factor is the human being's karma and the result of both of those, the result of those two causes, what? One-third of the water appearing... part of the water.. part of the liquid that appears, and his own karma, get together causally and the result is what? He sees water. And that's

the process. Did the water have three parts ten minutes before the three beings came into the room?

[student: No.]

No.

[student: Why does it have three parts? I don't understand that. It doesn't make any sense.]

Why does it need three parts? I'm going through that. The one part of the three is acting as a material cause. It's what turns into the water that the human sees as he sits around the table. The water has to have three parts. Why? I'll give you two good reasons, all right? Now this is very serious. This is what's going on with the guy at work. It's not a light thing. And if you don't explain it this way, you can't explain it. The water cannot be... one object cannot be water, blood and ambrosia at the same time. Impossible.

[student: Well, one object can't be three different things either.]

It can't. No it cannot. There's even another reason why....]

[student: But you say it has three parts. What do you mean by that?]

He says, in the same way that you have an arm and a leg and a hand. And your arms and your legs and your head can all be performing a different function, and then you say, well that person is performing five different functions.

[student: So there's three different functions that are going on with that water?]

No, there's three different parts.

[student: Parts [unclear]]

[student: So when the Buddha drinks a glass of ambrosia, he just doesn't taste the part that's pus, but it's there.]

If there's no preta, if there's no hungry ghost sitting with him at the table, there is no second part.

[student: And then you're saying that the perception is going to influence what they taste?]

By the way, the other thing they say, Kiley, is that when the hungry ghost reaches out for the glass of liquid, and he touches it to his lips, it no longer has two parts. It's blood.

[student: Well, to them, but if the human's looking at it at the same time...]

Oh, if it's a common object of three different beings, it has three parts. When it ceases to be a common object, and becomes the object of only one of them, it only has one part.

[student: So you have, Michael, you have a...]

So you're talking about whether the object is held, is shared by three beings or not. When the object is shared simultaneously by three beings, it has three parts. As soon as one of those beings starts to partake of it himself, and the other two look away, it's only blood.]

[student: What do you mean by parts? ]

In the same way as your arms and your head are parts of your body.

[student: Yeah, but they're distinct physical separations. There's no distinct physical separation in the water.]

He doesn't say.

[student: No, they're connected by your...]

It gets physical.

[student: You have one {preta}, you have one god and you have ten humans looking at the glass. Are there now twelve parts? Or are there three because of the three different classes of beings?]

Twelve parts and ten of them are looking at water.

[student: [unclear] object depending how many beings are looking at it.]

[student: But does the part exist in the water or does the... where does the part exist?]

It s part of the water. Part of the glass of water.

[student: It exists in the water?]

It exists.... the glass of water has three parts as soon as the three beings focus on it.

[student: I don t understand...]

It ceases to have three parts as soon as three people stop looking at it or if one...

[student: It also has two parts of one being s looking at the top part of it or the bottom part of it.]

Those are different parts. Different kinds of parts.

[student: Michael, you said the first part is the material cause, the second one is the contributing factor, what s the third one?]

[student: Thank you.]

Yeah, right. First one is the fact.. oh, the third one is the fact that it has three parts.

[student: Why do you call that a fact?]

[laughter]

[student: Say that again?]

There are three things contributing to this perception. One is the fact that there s three parts there now. As soon as three different beings are looking at it, there s three parts to the water, to the liquid.

[student: To the liquid itself?]

And as soon as they, as soon as two of them walk out of the room and one of them picks it up, it's not got three parts.

[student: What disappears then? Is it the material cause or the contributing factor?]

The only way to explain the fact is... by the way, all three perceptions are valid.

[student: It's like an accounting [unclear] that they have on those balance sheets, right?]

It really is blood, it really is water, and it really is ambrosia.

[student: But what if it...]

Is it one thing which is three things at once? No. It has three parts.

[student: If there's a glass of water and three people are looking at it, one has blue glasses on, one has red glasses on, and one has green glasses on, do we say that the water has three parts, there's the blue part... or do we just say it's all the same thing, it's just the perspective of the onlooker that makes it look like it's different.]

But what is it?

[student: Why do we have to all of a sudden split the water into three parts, one blue, one green and one red?]

It's not water. What are you splitting?

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Why do we have to go so far as to impute it on to the glass of water and why can't we say it's just a conception that's being labeled upon it by the onlooker?]

He gets into that later. He talks about a {preta} which comes up to a stream and starts to drink and then suddenly all he sees is a dry river bed. Was there a stream there that he doesn't see as a stream? What's going on? And then you'll get a.... you should read the reading, you have to read the reading, there's some

more details about it. But I'm trying to explain to you what the highest schools... this is what they say. And this is what they say is going on when two people...

[student: So where do the...I understood that it was a valid perception. I mean, only in a conventional... you know, I always thought that when you said {pramana}...]

But what is it really?

[student: Nothing, empty. No? Isn't it?]

It's empty, but it's something. [laughs] It's empty of its own nature, it has no nature of its own.

[student: I don't understand how...]

[student: So because it has no nature of its own, you would think that the hungry ghost would see it as blood, and...]

[unclear] And it's genuine blood at that moment. That's [unclear].

[student: I don't understand how having three parts makes it a valid perception.]

Then you don't have one thing being three things at once.

[student: How... so what do you have?]

You have one thing with three parts, and each part is being something different to a different being.

[student: So each person is perceiving a different aspect of that same object? Is that what you're saying?]

No. Yeah. You could say that. A completely different part though. You could see that. They also say it's different. [laughs] [laughter] You have to cook it. I mean, I'm just telling you what Chandrakirti said. And it's true. And you have to raise these questions, or else you can't figure out what emptiness is.

[student: So then you're saying, in this case, a glass of water has the potential to have part of pus, or nectar, water.]

As many as there are karmas...

[student: So to extrapolate that, every existing thing has the potential to be pain, pleasure, pus, blood, nectar...]

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[student: This may be mixing apples and oranges, but last week we learned that the mind is the main cause of the world. And now we're learning that the mind is a contributing factor.]

Yeah, right, and they ask that question too. It comes at the end. They quote Shantideva. Shantideva says the mind... no one made hell. In fact you're supposed to memorize it for your homework. Nobody made hell, nobody made heaven. You made it. Your mind made heaven. Your mind made hell. So they say, well, how could it be... if the mind is the maker... they get into that problem. And then they say, well, Shantideva's trying to say that there's no creator god. He wasn't trying to say that it wasn't, that it doesn't exist, or that it's just an illusion or something.

[student: But I just mean... in what sense is it a contributing factor because it sounds like a secondary...]

Well, you're talking about the cause of the water. Prasangika, the highest school, says, what turned into water was in the past water, liquid. What makes the liquid appear one way or the other is your karma. They're not saying that the water itself comes from a {nye ling ke gyü}, a material cause of mind.

[student: Would the Mind-Only School say that?]

The mind does not turn into physical matter.

[student: But the Mind-Only School would say that, right?]

They'd say there is no physical matter outside the mind. We're talking Madhyamika's view. What they're trying to get out of the problem, and they do, is that mind cannot turn into physical stuff. The physical stuff came from some physical stuff from before. The reason it looks like water to you, and is water to you, and is validly water to you, is your own karma.

[student: But why use such a complicated example? If you just used the example of the boss at work, and how the boss is perceived differently by his friends, and his...]

That s a good question. It s very important and its very difficult. If I see the boss as bad, and you see the boss as good, we both have valid perceptions. He can t be both good and bad. Those are contradictory qualities. And yet what we have to assume is that the {pramana} is correct. Anything established by a {pramana}, what? Exists. That s the definition of existence. If I see it and I m not crazy, it exists.

[student: So the boss has twenty different parts?]

So how can he be a bad boss and a good boss [unclear].

[student: [unclear] is what you re saying then?]

Yes. There s a part of the boss appearing to the...

[student: So up to now we ve been saying that the boss is empty, he can t be both, now we re saying he has to be both.]

He is both. I didn t say he is both. He has a good part and a bad part.

[student: Well, he has to be composed of...]

The liquid is not simultaneously blood, ambrosia and water. One part acts as a material cause. The karma of that person acts as a contributing factor and he sees blood. And it is blood.

[student: So the same thing is true of the boss. One part of the boss is the material cause and your karma is a contributing factor.]

Right. Yes. He s a bad boss. And he really is.

But there has to be some bad-bossness in there to be the material cause.

[laughs] Okay. Let me make sure [unclear]. Words.. it says here, what happens to the three parts when the craving spirit starts to drink that stuff.

[laughter]

[student: We hope the other three will walk out of the room.] [laughter]

No. It no longer has three parts.

[student: Yeah, but which part, which two parts disappear, though?]

The one that the human was... the one that was acting as the cause from the human side. And the one that was acting as the cause for what the god saw, the deity saw, are no longer there.

[student: So what are you left with? The contributing factor?]

You no longer have three parts. It's only one part, it's only one thing.

[student: So suddenly the human and deity see blood?]

They're gone.

[student: No, they're not gone, they're just...]

No, no, we're assuming... when we say walked out, we say they're not looking at it any more.

[student: So what if they are looking at it?]

Then they'd have three parts.

[student: Even when he touches it to drink it.]

As a visual object, three parts. As a drinking object, one part.

[student: Because they're not all drinking at the same time.]

[student: What if they share it?]

They all share it to their tongue.

[student: What if they all had a straw?]

[laughter]

Right.

[student: Yeah, but one straw would be poking down into one side, and then another straw would be in the other side of it...]

[student: This doesn't make sense to me.]

[student: You have to have one straw....]

Well, then how do you explain it?

[student: It doesn't make sense.]

It has to.

[student: Well, I never got to...]

Cook it. Nobody ever got this far with you. That's what's bothering you.

[student: Well, I know, I guess I get the whole idea about karma, that something is a valid perception. I just thought it exists in a conventional way. Not in a...]

Not at all. He has a {pramana}, it's real blood, but...by the way, the last question is: Is it real blood and pus? It is. He has a {pramana} for it. Not only that, it functions as pus and blood, blood and pus. If you have to go, go. You guys.. if you've got to go, go. So, if it's acting as blood and pus, it is really blood and pus and there's two reasons why. There's a {pramana} towards blood. There's a correct valid perception to seeing blood and pus. That's the first one. And the second reason is functioning as blood and pus. How do blood and pus function to a {preta}?

[student: As water to us.]

Yeah, he drinks it. And what happens when he drinks it? It burns him like fire. Even if he finds it, it burns him.

[student: But on the other hand, we find pus and blood to be something unpleasant to drink. So does the {preta}?)

Oh yeah.

[student: So that's in common, that part's not different, right? We would both say ughh. It's just that we wouldn't drink it, and they have no choice.]

We don't see pus.

[student: I understand that, but the concept of blood and pus is equally repulsive to them. When they first see the river, it's pure water. When they run up to it, it's blood and pus. And then they are...]

[student: So as different as the parts might be, we agree on one thing, that they're unpleasant.]

[laughter]

No, the human sees the very pleasant part. Give me another choice, let's do it, let's debate.

[student: How can they be.... can we finish maybe, and then debate after?]

That's all. That's all I have to do. I'll give you homework. But then if you want to debate it, I'm quite happy.

[laughter]

One reason that I did the whole [unclear] is that hopefully among all of us...they give like twenty debate [unclear] and I think if you read all twenty of those you'll get something out of it. That's for sure. You have to explain it. If you don't explain it, then...

[student: I just don't see it as trying to.... three different things...they're not... pus is not the same substance chemically as water.]

No, not at all.

[student: So how can they be valid?]

That's what he's trying to explain. There cannot be one thing which is three different values.

[student: [unclear]]

It cannot be. And by the way, in another argument, since you want to stay, [laughter] water is a {tok che}. {tok che} means... if I had a computer here and I wanted to put this in the same space, the computer has to go out. So if there's blood in the cup and you want water to be in the cup, blood has to leave the cup. It can't coexist in the same space at the same time. That's the nature of it. That's what's going on. It is real blood, it is real water.

[student: How can it be both?]

It isn't both.

[laughter]

And it's not one thing, it's three parts of one thing.

[student: But then it sounds like anything could be anything and it just depends on your perception of it.]

[student: That's right.]

That's the whole point. So wait, let me do the last one and then you can jump in and talk. What's the whole point of {nyu no}? No, I mean, we said before, ignorance is the one that focuses on you. John Stillwell's ignorance focussing on John Stillwell. So the thing you really don't like and the thing that you really do like about yourself... you want to be able to... how do you get rid of the guy at work is not such a big question as how do you get rid of the cancer that's going to come in to you, or the senility, or the loss of your health and your happiness and your good looks. How do you stop that? It's tied up with the question of the glass of water. Ultimately the way you become a Buddha is that you just perceive yourself as a Buddha and then it has to... you are providing the material cause. And your karma is going to provide the contributing factor that makes you see yourself as a Buddha. And that's all. That's the key, that's the clue. And how will other people see you.

[student: What if some people see you as a jerk?]

[laughter]

They might want to nail you up in a coffin. They may hate your guts. Or they might want to shoot a big rock at you or something. The Buddha's brother tried to kill him. Oh yeah.

[student: So you're saying becoming a Buddha is seeing yourself as a Buddha.]

Absolutely. And that's all there ever was to anything else.

[student: And so the idea is that seeing yourself as a Buddha...]

By being forced to see a blank self as a Buddha, by your karma.

[student: So it's different than volunteering to see yourself as a Buddha?]

No, not [unclear]. Boy, if you could volunteer we wouldn't have such [unclear]  
[laughter]

[student: You have to volunteer yourself first, put a hold on it [unclear]]

All right. I'm sorry to keep you in class. I could see it coming when we would spend too much time on this.

End.

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

**Class Seven: Black and White Karma: Karmic Path**

**November 10, 1994**

transcribed by: Mira Prabha

All the Abidharma is coming from where? What are the sources for the Abidharma?

[student: Seven.]

Yeah, right, the seven Abidharma ancients. What are the sources for them? The sutras. I mean, basically Vasubandhu is... it almost seems a little unorganized when you're young and you're studying. He's taking different words from every different sutra to describe karma. And this is one very useful division he makes. {Napur le} is black karma. And black karma is non-virtue. If you divide the world into the three realms, which are what?

[student: Desire, form and formless realms.]

Yeah. Desire, form and formless realms. Okay? What's the desire realm?

[student: Samsara?]

No. Samsara covers all three realms. We're in the desire realm. And the first Dalai Lama says it's because our main interests are food and sex. Okay. And that's why it's called the desire realm. And then we have the form Realm and the formless Realms. How many of the six beings on the Wheel of Life Tanka are in the desire realm?

[student: All six.]

All six, okay? [laughs] [laughter] Desire realm includes everything from hells, hungry ghosts, humans, demi-gods and gods. All those are in the desire realm. And in the last one, what you call the gods—I like to call them pleasure beings—they are also living in the form and formless realms. So you've only got one of the six types of beings existing in the two higher realms. And then in the lowest

of the three divisions you have all six types of beings. And the people in the...the beings in the two higher realms you cannot see. Your mind can go to that realm and it has to go to that realm. For example, to perceive emptiness directly your mind has to be in the form realm. Those beings can't commit bad deeds. They don't commit bad deeds mainly because they're in deep states of meditation. Like the formless realm beings. They too are just in a state of pretty much deep meditation. They don't commit bad deeds per se. They have a lot of bad deeds left over from their last lives and when they die they usually go down to hell because they don't perform any new good deeds in the formless realm.

[student: [unclear]]

Pleasure beings that have no bodies. Out of the five heaps, they have only four. They don't have any physical bodies. They're just [unclear].

[student: Like Buddhas?]

Buddhas are out of all three realms, please. Okay. All those three realms are suffering. One of them has all three kinds of suffering and two of them only have {kep [unclear]}. Anyway, so black karma is really referring to our realm. We're the ones who are good at collecting black karma. And the first Dalai Lama says: why do they call it black karma? He says it's essence is black and its result is black. It's essence is black means it has to do with mental afflictions. It doesn't mean it is a mental affliction, but it's afflicted. It's in that... of the four noble truths it's related to the first two noble truths. It's either causing suffering or it is suffering. And then.... the result is black because of what? By definition it's what?

[student: [unclear]]

No.

[student: Suffering?]

Suffering. Unpleasantly suffering. Okay? So why is it called black karma? Because the result is black and the essence is black. The essence is tied up with samsara and the result is suffering. Unpleasant. {karpu lay}... {karpu} means what?

[student: White.]

White. White karma. And they explain that as virtuous karma in the form realm. Not in our realm. Virtuous karma of the form realm is white karma. Why? Because the essence is...the result is white, obviously. What's the result? Pleasure. But then the essence is what? The essence is this—a person who has done this karma, in his mental continuum, is full of suffering. I'm sorry. Let go of that. He's not suffering—we're talking form realm—he's not suffering outright. He has only the third type of suffering. What's that? We talked about it a lot on Friday night. Yeah, pervasive suffering, which means he has to get old and die. And he doesn't have outright suffering. They don't have any experience of outright suffering. They don't normally go through...they all have {[unclear] ki lay}. So they don't have the kind of gross suffering that we have. And then on the...then there's a third kind of karma. What do you think it is?

[student: Black and white?]

[laughs] We call it {karnak depa}. Say {karnak}. [repeat] {depa} [repeat]. {karnak} [repeat] {depa} [repeat]. {kar} means what? White. {nak} means black and {depa} means mixed together. And that refers to virtue in the desire realm. It's result is white or black?

[student: Mixed.]

[laughs] No, it's white, virtue is always white. It's a good sensation. There's no difference between the result of what virtue you collect in this realm or virtue collected in another one. But the black part is different. Black means in this case, when you're talking about black and white karma mixed together, it refers to the being who's doing it, he's got suffering, he has suffering in his mindstream. So the person... if you look at it as a stream, the person who experiences the whiteness of the result and the person who did the deed and had suffering in him, it's black and white mixed together.

[student: So they talk about...]

Our good karma. We can only do black karma. We can't do white karma in this realm.

[student: Are you saying we can only do mixed karma?]

Yeah. Or black. There's a fourth choice, though. On your homework there

might be only those three. [laughs].

[student: Why is it possible to [unclear] virtue?]

This is only in the form realm because it refers to a person who doesn't have outright suffering in his mental continuum and it's also...he's doing a good deed and he's going to experience a white result.

[student: Is this a....]

So this is how the sutra explains it. It's only one way of dividing it. There are dozens of ways. It's just one that you might hear. Somebody says black karma, white karma. And it might sound like good deeds and bad deeds. It's not that. It refers to not only the result, which is obviously black or white, but to the nature of the person doing the deed. If he has some outright suffering in his being, then it's black and white mixed. It's not referring to the result.

[student: So the blackness refers to the person causing it?]

He's got suffering in his mental continuum.

[student: Blackness and [unclear], do you know?]

Well, he's got virtue by having done a good deed but they're not [unclear]. The whiteness here refers to the result. You did a good deed... we can do a good deed in this realm and it's going to have a good result. That's white. But the fact that the person doing the deed has suffering, his mental continuum is all suffering, outright suffering, he's also black. Does it produce a result which is black and white? In a way, because, as long as you're still in samsara, even those pleasures, as you heard in the Friday night class, are really just different forms of suffering.

[silence]

Say {sag me ki} [repeat] {lay} [repeat]. {sag me ki} [repeat] {lay} [repeat]. {sag me} means "unstained". Not stained. And {lay} means "karma". {ki} is just an adjective. Unstained karma, all right? This is the kind of karma you do, according to Abidharma, which doesn't have a white result or a black result. In fact, it's function is to remove the black karma. So these are, in their school... like the direct perception of selflessness, would be a {sag me ki lay}. Okay? Some

kind of pure karma that wipes out the bad karma.

[student: It's nothing to do with neutral karma?]

No. The fact is that it does not give a black or a white {namen}. What's a {namen}?

[student: Karmic result.]

Karmic result, ripening karmic result. And here I have to make a point, okay? When they talk about the Buddha...I mean, {namen} seems to be like a samsaric thing. Like the karmic result which is experienced in samsara. They don't talk about the Buddha collecting good karma. He collects the good results. He collects wisdom and merit, but they don't talk of.. this whole karma system in general, they don't talk about much about the Buddha in terms of him collecting good karma, white karma or black karma. If anything, he's doing {sag me ki lay}, but I... you just don't see him referred to with the words {namen}. {Namen} is perceived to be describing samsaric karmic results.

[student: Buddha still collects karma?]

Well, it's a long debate and I don't know, what would make him collect karma? I don't know.

[student: [unclear] the whole cycle of...]

Does he have {sempa}? Does he have that movement of the mind?

[student: Yeah.]

According to Abidharma, he must have it. It's one of the omnipresent mental functions. But you get into the higher schools, like we study the [bk: Nirang Kepa] on Friday nights, this book about tantric karma. And they say it has to be motivated by a bad thought. It's {sempa} but it's {sempa} motivated by a bad thought. So that's the difference, that's the [unclear]. We'll talk about it a little bit more. So {sag me ki lay}. And you're going to read in your reading about how to bring all these karmas to an end, white and black. It talks about bringing white karma to an end and bringing black karma to an end. And when I studied that, and when I translated it, I didn't quite catch it, I didn't see why you'd want to bring white karma to an end. I thought maybe it had to do with something like seeing your karma as self-existent and stopping that tendency to see it as

self-existent and then I read a passage recently in a scripture which says, what it means when it says to bring white karma to an end, it means to purify it by seeing its selflessness. So that's pretty close.

[student: So this is [unclear]?]

You purify the desire for it. The impure desire for it. [laughs]

[student: To do white karma to bring about good results?]

Yeah. There may be some desire to do that, which is still related to these three realms. And supposedly they're the last level of the last realm...it's very hard to get over the desire to still want to be there. I still think there must be something [unclear] there, and there's a long story, it's in your reading. You have to go through... the Abidharmas say that the path of seeing and the beginning of the path of meditation, habituation, only takes sixteen seconds or so. The whole thing happens like in a few seconds. And they say that...they say that you would have to go on... that those sixteen seconds or whatever remove the desire to take a birth anywhere in any of the realms. It's some kind of subtle thing where you wouldn't want... you recognize the faults of even a pleasant experience and [unclear]. And that's what they mean when they say to end even your white karma. You lose the desire to do anything that would even give you a good result in this life. What would it be in the [bk: Lam Rim]? There are three levels in the [bk: Lam Rim]. It's called the lesser person, the medium person and the greater person. And the lesser person wants to keep himself where?

[student: He wants to stay out of the...]

He wants to stay out of the three lower realms. He doesn't want to be a hell being, animal or hungry ghost. And the medium person?

[student: Wants to get out of samsara.]

He wants to get his rear end out of samsara. [laughs] [laughter] And then the highest person?

[student: Wants to get all others...]

He wants to get himself and all everyone else out at the same time. So I guess you would say that in the Abidharma system, when you get to the point of the

medium person, you've finished your black and white karma. You're not interested anymore in collecting a karma that's going to give you a nice result in samsara. Yeah?

[student: It seems to me that this is cultural in the sense that... I mean, if you know the difference between samsara and liberation, why would it, if you know it, you believe it, why would anybody want to fool around, flirt with finding some interesting thing in samsara any more?]

It's hard to recognize the difference, you know. It's hard to recognize that... it's very hard to recognize samsara. It's very hard for any of us to recognize samsara.

[student: But I mean, the Western problem is the other way around. They think there's that nothing but that, I mean, so, thinking there's nothing but that and to seek some good form of it is one thing, but to know that there is something beyond that...]

By the way, I often say renunciation and removing desire for this life is not beyond us, you know, it's just intelligent. It's just the normal recognition of a thinking person by the time he's thirty, say, or thirty-five. You're lucky if it's at twenty-five that you see that it's not going to work, nothing works here. You don't want... I often say I enjoy pleasure and I've always enjoyed pleasure, I just want to get better ones. [laughs] And I think you just recognize at some point that these pleasures don't...it's not that they're not pleasant. They have a pleasant quality about them but they don't last. And they always change into something bad. So they're not...it's just a matter of recognizing that and then you don't want to [unclear]. It's just a natural thinking person's desire to get out of pleasures which go sour. That's all. I don't think it takes a genius...if you look at it that way, I think you can get renunciation pretty easily. But you know, during the day...the reason you did most of your actions today, if you're like me, is that you hoped for some temporarily pleasant result. That's why we get up, that's why we go to work, that's why we go home, that's why we come home, that's why...that's basically why we move at all. So, you just have to...at some point... it's not like you have to give up something nice. It's not nice. It's not like you're losing anything. It's hard though. It's hard to recognize it. Okay, so that's {sag me ki lay}.

[student: Michael, does this unstained karma wipe out both? Wipes out black karma and purifies white karma?]

Yeah. No. It mainly purifies black karma. That's how it's described, as purifying black karma. But then I started talking about how it's also... I wasn't meaning to... it is true that there's a relation to that and white karma and it's in your reading. I didn't want you to get to the reading and think to yourself, Abidharma says I shouldn't do good deeds anymore, or that somehow some kind of attachment still.... it's not like that. You don't want to get rid of the white karma until you see that it's still causing you suffering.

[student: Can you give an example?]

Excuse me?

[student: Can you give an example?]

Well, let's say that you really could get to a point where you realize correctly that you could design your future lives. Theoretically people who study Lam Rim and study karma carefully figure out how to design their future lives. They want to be rich, they want to be healthy, they want to be handsome, and you know, you can undertake deeds to set that up. Pabongka says when most people make a prayer to be born into a Buddha's paradise, they're normally mistaking the desire for something like happiness in samsara, what their real intention is some kind of selfish desire and they get what they asked for [laughs] which is some kind of pleasure in this life, which just ends. So there's two ways to get...according to Abidharma and it's a very useful idea...how to remove your desire. While we're on the subject of desire for this life, which really motivates us all day long. It's not until you get old and you kind of give up. You meet people. They get to a certain age and they give up on this life. There's a very distinct point at which they kind of give up. Bush kind of did that. I saw him on TV the other night. He kind of gave up on his political....[laughs]...he doesn't think he's going to be coming back. Or Reagan or people like that, they kind of gave up on it, you know, they say well that's over now. There's two ways according to the Abidharma on how to remove your desire for samsara. One is called {jig de pe lam}. Say {jig de} [repeat] {pe lam} [repeat] {jig de pe lam} [repeat]. You know {jig de}, I think. You had it, no? It's the name of the third chapter in the Abidharmakosha.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, the world, okay? {jig de pe lam}... {lam} means what? Path. So {jig de pe lam} means "the worldly path". "The worldly path". This is a very interesting concept. This is where you get into deep states of meditation and you move up from the desire realm into each of the four levels of the form realm and then you move through each of the levels of the formless realm. So your meditation gets more and more and more subtle.

[student: What do you mean...]

What do I mean by form realm and ...? You know, there's a causal form realm and there's a resulting form realm. You've got to know the difference. There's a form realm you can go to right now. Then there's a form realm you can be born in. And that's a big difference and it's very confusing. It's really confusing. Some Mongolian lama explained it to me many years ago. The point is that you can do meditation now in this life where your body stays in the desire realm and you're in meditation posture, but your mind starts moving up to the form realm and the formless realm levels. They are very much deeper levels of meditation. You go up slowly through four levels of form realm, then you go up through four levels of formless realm. Your mind gets more and more subtle. Your meditation gets more and more subtle. Based on which one of those realms you've practiced in mostly, you take a birth in that realm. So the meditation is a causal form realm. You're visiting the form realm of your mind and then as a result of that you're born into that level of formless realm.

[student: You have to do that on your way to the perception of emptiness, as well, right?]

To see emptiness directly, you must be in {sam dem yo po nendo nich cho me}. It's a special level inside the preliminary level inside the first level of the form level. And it's not like you have to look for that place. You'll get there if you meditate like more than 45 minutes a day. Your mind eventually reaches that point comfortably. You can do that, your mind is at that point. What's happened, do you think, to your attraction to the objects of the desire realm, which are mostly sense objects, by the time you reach the form realm? And then when you're in deep meditation do you feel like ice-cream?

[laughter]

[student: Once you get to deep meditation, you don't [unclear]]

No, they don't. In fact you can't get to the first level of the form realm in your meditation without giving up the attraction to those objects. So it doesn't mean you can never eat ice-cream again. It means that when you reach that level, you don't have any attraction any more... you cannot see anything attractive, you're not hearing, you're not tasting, your mind is withdrawn from the objects of the senses, and that's called {shira ke nam bo chen}. {shira ke nam bo chen} in this school means you're moving from a less subtle level to a more subtle level and if you keep doing that, you get used to the first level of the form realm, then you get a taste of the second level and the first level starts to look bad, so you move up to the second level, then you get a taste of the third level and then the second level doesn't look so... it looks very rough and ...it doesn't seem as deep, so then you try to move up into the third level. And by doing that you slowly give up all the levels. You keep getting tired of the level that you're in and moving up to the next level. It's like pay at work. When I first went to work they gave me \$7 an hour and I was very happy. Then I got \$8 and I thought \$7 looks bad. Then I got \$9 and I thought \$8 looked bad. Then I got \$100,000 a year and then \$60,000 looked bad. Like that. Know what I mean. It's like you move up through these levels. That's the worldly path. That's how to give up desire. Is it permanent? Is it desirable? No. And it's very common for westerners to mistake that for some kind of losing desire. They think that because they don't have the desire to eat so much any more, or they gave up desire for going to movies, they think they are making spiritual progress. It's very dangerous because you don't give up the desires. You move beyond them until such time as your mind slips back down, But it's not a permanent method. It doesn't work permanently. And you'll see that. If you go into retreat, you stay there a month, you come out with some sort of glow and for a while you don't feel like eating, you don't feel like pigging out any more, you don't feel like going to movies any more. In the morning you can study real well and meditate, and slowly you come back into reality and you end up the same as you were before basically. That's {shira ke nam bo chen}. It's called "the worldly path". It's in the [bk: Abidharma Kosha]. It doesn't stay. It doesn't stay.

[student: Does it require subsequently more and more meditation to continue to advance up the realms? Is it just like an hour, two hours, three hours, four hours....?]

Yeah, yeah, no, I think if you made it your goal, you could do it with an hour or two a day.

[student: When you say it doesn't work in the end, does it mean you never

ultimately attain anything except elimination of desire?]

Yeah, it doesn't get you anything... it doesn't get you out of samsara.

[student: So what's your focus when you're doing the meditation?]

You mistake the increasing subtlety of your mental state for some kind of liberation.

[student: But we'd still be doing single-pointed concentration, for example....]

Yeah, by the time you reach the third and fourth... I mean, you're always concentrating. When you sleep, you go into meditation. Your sleep is meditation, and like that. But it doesn't... you and I know that it doesn't remove your {kleshas}. It doesn't remove your bad thoughts. It's kind of a high, it's kind of... your mind is getting more and more subtle and it's attractive and it's nice, and in a way you give up the objects of the senses because now you're attached to the objects of your pleasant meditations, and it gets more and more subtle and it doesn't...ultimately it cannot remove your bad thoughts. Only one thing can remove your bad thoughts.

[student: Only what?]

Only one thing can remove your bad thoughts. Only one state of mind is in total contradiction to your bad thoughts. Only one state of mind is such that when I focus on you, if I think of that state of mind, it's impossible for me to have a bad thought, and that's understanding your selflessness.

[student: And that would happen in this kind of meditation?]

And that's {jig de me lek pe la}. That's number two. {jig de me lek pe la} means the path which is beyond the world. {lek de pa} means beyond. You could call it... there's a Sanskrit word... "transcendental." [laughs] You can say transcend the world, okay? {lek de pa} is the path which transcends the world. That's why you don't give up the desire realm or the form realm just because you're moving up into more subtle levels of meditation. But you give it up because you understand its selflessness. You're able to remove your desire for an object because you understand its emptiness.

[student: But, I mean, in order to get to that level...]

You must have good meditation.

[student: No, what I'm saying is that this thing with subtle, more subtle and more subtle, you're not going to get to...]

No, no, no, not necessarily at all. Not necessarily at all. There are non-Buddhists who have reached the highest levels and stayed there for thousands of years and no benefit.

[student: So it's really the goal that you have in mind when you start the meditation?]

Well, there is a level, especially in the first level of the form realm, where your mind is bright, sharp, clear, focussed, a powerful telescope. Now what you use it for is a different matter. Some people use it for black magic, you know. That's just a tool.

[student: So these are Buddhists and non-Buddhists?]

A non-Buddhist can use this one.

[student: The second one is Buddhist?]

Has to be Buddhist. A non-Buddhist can use this by mistake or by not knowing enough or...it's very common to be attracted to that. But those people always end up dying, unfortunately. [laughs] So it didn't work. [laughs]

[student: Michael, there's this point... when you get to the first level of the formless realm, when you have this window of seeing emptiness directly...]

You have the tool, but now if you have the other knowledge to focus it in the right direction, yeah.

[student: So if someone's doing calm-abiding meditation and they, you know, they by-pass this and keep concentrating on the image of the Buddha or whatever, then they missed their opportunity?]

Yeah, in a way.

[student: So how do you know when to focus on emptiness?]

As soon as you're capable...the reason to meditate on a Buddha image mainly is that it's so virtuous that you can attain the deeper state of consciousness that you need to perceive emptiness.

[student: Is the idea that you have to attain, like, ninth level of calm-abiding, and calm-abiding before shifting over to emptiness?]

There's a thing called...

[student: Alternating?]

Alternating. Basically, to see emptiness directly, you have to have that.

[student: [unclear] part of the school do we talk about emptiness?]

Well, [unclear] selflessness. I started off by saying selflessness, but I want to make sure you understand that. So {jig de me lek pe la}. If you really want to remove desire, you need that one. And when they say... why did this all come up? Because {jig de me lek pe la} refers to the different stages within which path, do you guess? Which of the five paths are {jig de me lek pe la}? Which of the five paths are beyond the world? Which of the five paths can remove your bad thoughts?

[student: The path of seeing.]

The path of seeing. And then the path of habituation. Because that's where you start...that's where you're a stream-enterer. You're on your way out. So this one relates mostly to that, and this one, {sag me ki lay}, this pure karma of the Abidharma school, refers to that also. They're all referring to understandings of selflessness, which is the only way to remove your desire, and even your desire to collect good karma, to have a good result in this life. We don't even have that. None of us goes home and says I'll be nice to my husband or wife because if I do, in my next life, they'll be loyal to me. [laughs] I mean, we haven't even reached that and he's talking about how to remove that. We haven't got that far.

[student: The first one—isn't it possible that [unclear]. Why would it matter whether [unclear]]

They both require deep meditation. They both require at least the first level of the form realm. This one is a process by which you are getting attached to, really, an increasing subtlety of your own meditation. And you mistake that lack of desire that you achieve for a real lack of desire, for a permanent lack of desire. You think you've gone beyond desire for this realm just because now you're attached to the higher sort of meditation, deeper sort of meditation. In other words, you're attached to the feeling of the meditation and not to the purpose of the meditation. You start mistaking the means for the goal. Something like that.

[student: Could you go over causal and resultant? You started...]

Form, right? Yeah. In the form...how do you get to the form realm? How do you get born in the form realm? In this life you spend a lot of your time meditating on one of those form realms, you know, in one of those states of deep meditation. And then because of that, you're born in that realm.

[student: Isn't this one of the examples that's used about what people believe, that you just meditate on nothingness, you know, that you blank your mind out. I know some people who know about dharma, you know, say zen or something, who say that the object is to sit there and to blank your mind out and think about nothingness. This could be the result of that, right?

There's a level of the formless realm called {gian we}. {Gian} means "nothing at all." And it's where your mind is not focussed on anything at all. And it's the rebirth that you take because in this life you did a meditation on trying to just empty your mind, and that's a samsaric rebirth that doesn't have any benefit. And there was a great debate in Tibet, there's still records of it, between Hoshang and Kamalashila, and that viewpoint was eventually... you know, the idea that you should just try to empty your mind was eventually... they were asked to leave Tibet. [laughs] [laughter] But it doesn't mean that you shouldn't calm your mind down for the purposes of breathing meditation which first appears in the Abidharma and you can study it someday. The purpose of that practice which is so popular in Hinayana countries is {unclear} is that you want to put your mind into a neutral state so that then you can focus on a virtuous object, and that putting your mind into a neutral state is the function of breathing meditation and to reach that neutral state is great. That is a worthy goal. That's not the same as trying to think about nothing.

[student: I'm really not clear about, and it feels really important to me, the idea of alternating between single-point concentration and meditation on emptiness.

How do you know when to switch? I thought the idea of calm-abiding was that you stayed with it until you attain calm-abiding, not that you're switching back and forth while you're doing calm-abiding.]

It's not part of Abidharma teachings. Well, there's a thing called {pelgom}, but it's in the sixth chapter.

[student: Well, could you just say, for the sake of understanding, how the meditation works?]

Well, I would say that you're trying to move up your ability to concentrate, and then you're trying to move up the object to which you're concentrating on. And then sometimes you concentrate on understanding the emptiness more, and then sometimes you concentrate on moving your concentration to a deeper level, and then you alternate between those. But when you perceive emptiness there's no question of alternating. They're both happening at the same time.

[student: I thought that the biggest enemy of calm-abiding was changing your options. Switching...]

That's a long story. But yeah, it would be.

[student: So... what do you do?] [laughs]

You concentrate on one till you get tired. Yeah?

[student: I understand that it would not be desirable to be reborn out of the human realm because all those guys keep falling off. Wouldn't it be better to take an enormous, I mean, thousands and thousands of hours to study the [unclear] so we can be reborn as [unclear]]

Well, but if you don't meditate, this won't help you at all. And if you don't apply it to your life, it definitely won't help you at all. You'll think you know more, and you're going to be a worse person, and that's even worse than if you never studied. You know, if you don't actively apply this...if you haven't changed a lot in the last six months, and then you've collected more knowledge, that's a very dangerous situation to be in, I don't envy that. It's very dangerous to think you know more and not to have changed your personal life at all. It's just ruining yourself. I'm worried about that, with myself too. You just... you've got to be real careful about that. Ultimately, you've got to meditate a couple of hours a

day too. You must. Otherwise you cannot move between paths except in the deep state of meditation. You cannot progress as far as your realizations unless you're in a deep state of meditation. If you don't study deeply, you'll never know what to do when you get there, but they both have to come together. And then you've got to be virtuous too. Tsongkhapa ... I'm studying his life stories, all these secret biographies. Great. But he's spending half his life praying for wisdom. A lot of his activity was spent in caves just praying to understand more. It's strange how many hours he spent doing that.

[student: I mean, this is what I just don't get at all. Praying. It doesn't make any sense. What are you praying to? There's no omniscient god that's going to give it to you. The Buddhas can't help you.]

Oh, Manjushri or... I think it's the virtue of asking them to inspire you.

[student: Even though they can't?]

Well, when you ask them, the virtue of asking brings inspiration. Seriously. Seriously. That's how it is possible. It does work. It really does work.

[student: When you talk about your meditation getting more subtle, but if you haven't gone anywhere near seeing emptiness directly, but you do feel there's more subtlety than there was before, are you still in this realm?]

Oh, yeah.

[student: Also there's lots of [unclear]]

Oh, a lot. When you hit the form realm, you'll know it. [laughter] Actually, you'll get some physical sensations, rising into [unclear]...

[student: Ten miles...]

[laughter]

[student: So you're saying that the desire realm [unclear] and get different [unclear]]

[student: What did you say about the physical sensations?]

Some sensation of rising. You come out and there's some sensation of coming out.

[student: Michael, in the last class, you said that Aryas no longer collect karma. Bad karma. And you never explained that. So now that we're in karma, can we talk about it.] [laughter]

Why they don't collect bad karma? Well, I'll tell you...

[student: I know they're not collecting it as long as they're perceiving emptiness directly, but when they come out of meditation...]

Hold on a sec and I'll tell you.

[silence]

I'll answer your question very briefly. You missed the last two classes. The answer is in those classes. Try to get the notes from the last class. Because we went through six steps, the process by which a lack of understanding of emptiness forces you to collect karma. So, ergo, if you could understand emptiness, you wouldn't collect karma. You have to read that. It's involved with misperception. But to put it very simply, if I look at the person... I'm trying to think of... someone bothered me today...] [laughter]

[student: Only today?] [laughter]

It was on the plane. But I was looking at the person and I was thinking...no, in fact it was last night.... I was looking at the person and I was starting to get angry, but then when I looked at the object and I said... see, if you understand it's emptiness, then all you have to remember is that it's empty. Because that makes you think well, what does empty mean? Well empty means that person is a blank screen and I'm seeing this person as bad because of my own karma. Now what shall I do? That's the whole process. And you just grin and bear it.

[student: What do you do? I mean, I can see where that modifies the way you act, physically act, but you have said a number of times over the past few months that, for example, just because you understand the girl across the street is empty doesn't...]

Oh no, I said if you're jealous...

[student: Doesn't get rid of your desire.]

It does. Absolutely, it does. I said all those other series of emptiness that people presented to me didn't satisfy me for many years. Didn't help. And I really tried to use them, you know, tried to see a pretty girl as a pile of atoms, or Shantideva says, you know...

[student: Look at her as a skeleton or...]

Like that, or see her poop, or realize that you're just attracted to the clothes and the hair and the jewelry and the perfume and not to the girl. That doesn't help me much. So I know, if I understand the emptiness of the person, and I understand that if I desire anything, if I do anything to the point of an improper desire, I'll never meet such a person again. That I can buy. And I'll be good.

[student: I guess, what I'm saying is... okay, I can see how you'd be able to modify your typical actions...]

Your response. Your response.

[student: And you'd be able to make some change in your emotional response....]

Oh, absolutely.

[student: But it's the thinking that...]

No, you can't...well, we did the whole thing in the last two classes. Get some tapes. You cannot entertain the thought of desire or hatred if you understand that object's emptiness at the same time. You cannot entertain... it will not stay in the same light...]

[student: But what if you're out of meditation?]

I'm talking out of meditation. I'm talking when someone's in a corner punching your head or something...

[student: But after achieving {tonglang} you come back out of the meditation and that was Ariel's point—those people still see things that way.]

Oh, you still see it as self-existent. I'm talking about...

[student: They have an intellectual understanding, but they're actually seeing, that's like involuntary...]

An intellectual understanding does wonders to prevent you from collecting bad karma. I'm talking about intellectual understanding. I'm not talking about a direct perception of emptiness. Of course, of course, you couldn't look at a pretty girl and understand her emptiness and do anything more than understand her emptiness intellectually. You couldn't perceive her if... [unclear] direct perception of emptiness. Leave it. We'll never finish on time. Okay. Four parts of a karma, of a {lay ke la}.

[silence]

Sometimes called a {lay la}. You know it by now. What's a {lay ke la}?

[student: Path of karma?]

Yeah, karmic path, path of karma. Sometimes it's called a path of action. Sometimes you get confused and call it both. Okay, {lay ke la}. There are ten {lay ke las} and the ten non-virtues are {lay ke las}. Those are karmic paths. Later we'll get into the distinction between karma and karmic paths. A karmic path's going to have these elements to it. What is a {chi}? {Chi} means "the object involved". And these are all important concepts, and I've put them into your reading from the [bk: Lam Rim Chenmo] from Jetsun Kampa, because he explained it so well. I kind of regret that we didn't go through the [bk: Lam Rim Chenmo]. [laughs] I want you to see some Abidharma. I hope you live long enough to study the other [unclear]. [laughs]. So {chi} is the... what do you think the object involved is for the first {Lam Rim}? What's the object involved?

[student: Person? A being?]

A living being. That's all. {chi}. The object involved for the act, for the {lay ki la} of killing is a living being.

[student: I have a question about [unclear]. When they say object, do they mean the actual thing that's out there, or do they mean the perception of emptiness [unclear]?]

Which school?

[student: The object of mind. {Lam Rim}. [unclear]

Oh. The problem is that there's not even a word in English for all the Sanskrit and Tibetan. So we're using object to mean "thing," we're using object to mean "as opposed to subject", see what I mean?

[student: What I'm saying is, is it the object of the mind?]

We're using it here to mean the stuff involved. When you talk about karmic path, you're talking about the stuff involved. Why? Well, what's the {chi} for stealing? It's not the person you're stealing from. It's something which is owned by another person. See what I mean? So that's a tough word to translate. In Tibetan it means "basis". Some people translate it as "basis", but I don't know, it doesn't quite get me. Anyway, what would it be for... like wrong view?

[student: [unclear]]

The laws of karma. The stuff involved that you're going to do the bad deed about are the laws of karma. You're going to deny them. What about for {unclear}?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, other peoples' good qualities, other peoples' wealth or other... you know, their good personal qualities, their intelligence, stuff like that. So that's a {chi}. {Sampa} means the thinking, not thinking, involved. Mainly intention. We're going to talk more about that one shortly. Mainly intention.

[student: Is it motivation?]

You can call it motivation also but we're going to get deeper into that. We're going to discuss number two later on. Okay? {jor wa} is the undertaking of the deed. That's where, for example...lot of people say preparation, but it's not really preparation. It does mean preparation in some cases. But this is where you actually take a knife and go for the person. This is the deed. You're undertaking the deed.

[student: Doing the deed.]

Doing the deed, but you need {tatook}. It needs to be separate. {tatook} means the finalization of the deed, completion of the deed. When is the deed complete in the first {unclear}? When he dies. It could either be at the time that you stabbed him, or it could be as the result of his wounds six months later. So you could have a {jorwa} without a {tatook}. It could go on for six months. You've undertaken the deed to kill the person, but he was in the hospital and finally he dies, six months later. You didn't collect the {tatook} until six months later.

[student: Wouldn't it be something you collected just from the act of stabbing...]

We'll talk about it. In fact it comes up next in the Abidharma. But these are the things that really make the karma a karma. And when you've got these four complete, it's a great karma. And you can see how one could be incomplete. Like you could {jorwa} a person. Attempted murder, right? Attempted murder means the guy didn't manage to {tatook}. {Sampa} means, for example, he wanted to kill somebody, the person was out... I told you about the guys... you see a lump in the bed and you shoot him with a machine gun, the guy died of a heart attack a half-hour earlier already, there's no {jorwa} there, I mean, there's no {sampa}, in the sense of recognition of what he is. And we'll get into that.

[student: In case of the [bk: Lam Rim Chenmo], [unclear]]

They talk about it like that sometimes. They say: "I'm glad I did that". Sometimes they describe it and in the Abidharma it's called {jook} and it's a different... it's not called {tatook} in the Abidharma. It's the finalization and means, oh, I'm glad I did it, or they did a good job. But that's not how Tsongkhapa, in this section, explains it. By the way, these four come from Asanga ultimately, they come from Maitreya. And you're going to see how. It's in your reading. That's where these four basically come from.

[student: Michael, these refer also to good karma?]

Absolutely. But the main point is, and you can see it, when you have all four there, it's powerful.

[student: Why are parents [unclear]]

Parents have... the reason why they're {shing ki jepa che}, the reason why they're extraordinary objects is on the basis of the benefit they have given you, the extreme dedication of the early part of your life at least. Had they left you

for more than a day or so you'd be dead, period. And that dedication of a good parent or a lousy parent or any parent and the process of being pregnant and nine months of suffering and all that, that's a special bond. And they talk about it...you know, if there's two women...if one gave her egg for you, and the other one gestated you, and you shoot them both, which one was the killing the real mother? And there's a big debate about it because the woman who gestated you actually gave more of herself to benefit you. There's a big debate about it in the Abidharma. Okay, so that's {du che}.

[student: So they had artificial insemination?]

Apparently they had something like that because they discuss it. They discuss what if one woman's egg is put into another woman and then which one is the real mother. It's in this....

[silence]

[student: [unclear]]

Who says what's the [unclear]?

[laughter]

Say {yo myo}. [repeat] {yo myo} and {duk sum}. What's {duk sum}? {yo mo} means bad thought. {duk sum} means what? Three poisons. Which are liking, disliking and ignorance. Liking, disliking and ignorance. You will read in your reading that certain of the bad deeds can have all three motivate them, while certain of the bad deeds can have only one. Normally harsh words, for example, are what?

[student: Dislike.]

Because of dislike. I guess they're always dislike. Sexual misconduct, adultery, could be out of a desire for the other person or out of a wish to harm their spouse. So it could be out of desire or out of...

[student: In New York City, harsh words are all around the place and it has nothing to do with dislike, it's just stressed out people with...]

[laughter]

[unclear] It's normal to say...in my college dormitory we all had these nicknames and it was very loving. No, that's not harsh words. To say something sweet when you want the person to go to hell and you know that they'll take it that way, that's a harsh word. Okay. Third one is....

[student: What is {yo myo}??]

Bad thought. So is it disliking or liking or ignorance which is...? And there's a different {yo myo} going into it and a different {yo myo} coming out of it and you'll see that in your reading.

[student: Is that what "kleshas" means?]

Yeah. It's the Tibetan word for "kleshas".

[student: And is it "kleshas" here as well? I mean, you've never used the term "kleshas".]

I don't use the word "klesha" much. Bad thought, I like bad thought. The definition of a {yo myo} that we had in the Friday night class is very beautiful. It says {unclear}. "A bad thought which disturbs the tranquillity of mind." Westerners have a hard time translating "mental affliction", "mental delusion." I don't like "delusion." It implies a misperception. They are based on a misperception but they are not misperceptions necessarily. Say {kung lung}. [repeat] {kung lung} is the motivation or the intention and this is where you get into manslaughter. What's manslaughter? This is where you hit somebody with a car and you didn't drive down the street thinking: "I'd like to hit the first person who jumps out in front of my car". And therefore {kung lung} is not there. You didn't get into your car hoping to kill somebody that day. And in the courts... the courts and karma pretty much reflect each other. You know, common sense tells you that that person is not as guilty as someone who gets into his car and thinks "I'm going to hit the first pedestrian I see." So if any one of these is not present... what's a {yo myo} like if you're trying to benefit... like euthanasia, the {yo myo} is very tricky. The {gurlung} is very tricky. {gurlung} is virtuous. You get a virtue from the motivation. And then the {jorwa} is very mistaken. So like that. Take a break. Please come back in ten minutes and I can finish my duty. We're going okay. We have one more question to do.

[student: Can I ask you a question?]

Yeah.

[student: It goes back to what I was asking before about the calm-abiding meditation...one-pointed versus the alternating with analytical? You know, I have a friend who has been trying to attain calmabiding meditation for some time and I think that her experience has been that she continues to experience more and more subtle levels of pleasure. So I think the training she's received has been strictly single-pointed concentration and nothing else. Not alternating...like the calm-abiding training.]

On what?

[student: Well, the first time she tried it she did it on her breath. Then she tried it again using a Buddha image. Now she's doing it again...this is like her third [unclear]... so I sent her the tapes from the other classes and she's very interested in them and I think it would be really important for her to understand what the subtle aspect of that balance is, or at what point to shift, you know, at what point to start alternating to be aware of getting into that trap of passing up the opportunity to concentrate on emptiness.]

[unclear]

[student: Calm-abiding meditation? But when you taught calm-abiding, you said the biggest enemy to calm-abiding is changing your object.]

There's some tricks about that, you know, the union of the two of them.

[student: Calm-abiding?]

Yeah.

[student: What does he say about the union of the two in calm-abiding?]

Well [unclear]. You know, the union of the two is [unclear]. Know what I mean?

[student: In terms of the technique of doing the calm-abiding meditation, the way of doing analytical meditation on emptiness is single-pointed concentration on the Buddha image?]

No, it's not like that. It's really not like that.

[student: So what is it like?]

It's not like you... I mean, it's not like you concentrate on a Buddha image and try to get {shinay} on that and then skip over to emptiness and try to use it on emptiness. It's not like that.

[student: See the way it was explained...]

No, it's not like that.

[student: The way {[unclear] Rinpoche} explained it to her is that because it's so hard to do calmabiding meditation on emptiness, it's much better to do calm-abiding meditation on virtuous objects, Buddha image. After you attain calm-abiding on the Buddha image, then you switch over to emptiness meditation.]

That sounds correct.

[student: But what you're saying though is...]

But it's not that you would... that's just to get the microscope of power....

[student: But what I was understanding you as saying though was when you get further along with your calm-abiding meditation and this first level of formless realm, you have this opportunity to see emptiness that you didn't ....]

[unclear] if you didn't use the Buddha image.

[student: If you did use the Buddha image?]

If you did not use the Buddha image.

[student: What if you were using the Buddha image?]

To get there, you need that.

[student: That's what I'm saying... if you continue to use a virtuous....]

[unclear] a virtuous object

[student: My point is that if you continue to use a Buddha image, you still skip over the opportunity to be concentrating on emptiness.]

Oh yeah, you could. Theoretically that's possible.

[student: Is it not likely, or what's the deal on this, you know? [unclear]]

[unclear] if you weren't exposed...

[student: If you didn't know what to look for, when to switch, that kind of thing?]

If you weren't exposed to the proofs for emptiness, then it wouldn't happen.

[student: What wouldn't happen?]

You could reach that stage in the way that non-Buddhists reach it. It would be a [unclear] and you wouldn't.. you'd just stay there and you might go farther along in those meditations. Take the meditation as your goal.

[student: You mean the first level of the form realm?]

Yeah.

[student: That's when you're saying you have to make the switch?]

No, I didn't mean that. I mean you should develop the ability to get to that, and then you should keep studying emptiness, and once you've developed the [unclear]...

[student: You don't want to get above that before you've shifted your object?]

[student: To emptiness?]

I don't think you could get above that, yeah, you couldn't get above that, yeah, you could get above that, you could get hung up in that.

[student: So the idea is to be able to identify when you get to the first level of the form realm so that you know you're there, so that you know that it's time to

move to emptiness.]

Exactly.

[student: And when you get to the first level of the form realm in your calm-abiding meditation, you say, okay, I'm here, now I need to shift to emptiness.]

I doubt it would have to be one session like that.

[student: Well, I mean, there are a whole lot of sessions...]

Over a period of months you develop the ability to be there. And you would know it. And then you start studying emptiness, you start studying the scriptures on emptiness. And then every time you go into that meditation, you start...

[student: ...doing the emptiness meditation?]

But I think the time, at the moment that you triggered that, you go into the path of seeing. There's a lot more going on in the few weeks before that than in the moments....in the weeks before that, you are exposed to certain arguments for emptiness and you start to think about them and they work on you subconsciously and then...

[student: You mean in a supervised course....]

Oh, yes.

[student: In terms of doing calm-abiding meditation, does the first level of the form realm come after attaining calm-abiding or before?]

Before.

[student: Oh, so you still have to attain calm-abiding before you can get to the first level of the....oh! I thought it was before you attain calm-abiding. Oh, oh, oh, oh. That's what it is. Okay. That's what it is. I got you.]

[student: So then this idea of a calm-abiding practice, switching back and forth, you wouldn't switch back-and-forth?]

No. You develop the ability to do it, and then you use it to....

[student: After you attain calm-abiding, then you switch? Okay.]

And then maybe a week later you start working on emptiness. You're actually doing both at the same time.

[student: Both what?]

You're doing your {shinay}, {shamatha}, and you're studying emptiness during the day. You can't meditate all day long.

[student: During calm-abiding practice?]

No, I mean, practice meditation on different objects. I mean, whatever it happens to be you're using. And then you reach a stage of {shinay}, {shamatha}.

[student: And after you attain that stage...]

Well, it's not like you stop and then you go back into emptiness meditation. During that time, theoretically, during your breaks, you are reading about emptiness.

[student: I thought during your {shinay} practice you're not supposed to be doing anything including read....]

If it's a retreat, yeah.

That's what I'm talking about. A retreat. A pure retreat.

Ideally you shouldn't read any books.

[student: I'm thinking of the context my friend is doing this.]

Yeah, ideally you wouldn't read any books. Except, personally, I fell into this when I got very bad {lung}. Then a book brought me down and it was useful. Generally you're not supposed to read anything. If you do read anything it can only be {Lam Rim} books. You're not even supposed to read specialized books. Definitely not magazines.

[laughter]

[student: Definitely not magazines.]

They're really bad. They're really destructive.

[student: Or novels, or fiction.]

Very bad. They're very bad for your concentration.

[student: Even specialized Dharma books aren't good, huh?]

Well, if you have to, [Lam Rim] or something. But not like a technical discussion of...

[student: Emptiness.]

[laughs]. Well, you're not supposed to sit down and study Vinaya rules or something, know what I mean? Should be something relevant. But it can be a distraction all the same. Better not to see anybody at all, better not to look outside at all, have your windows closed, better not to see...absolutely better not to speak a word to anyone.

[student: [unclear]]

The Abidharma has some discussions on morality, you know, about moral conundrums. And one of them is... I just thought it was important so I stuck it in there. They discuss...what about war? If you're in a war, there's a war effort...I think we talked about this before. You're not in the front lines, but you are supporting the war effort, and someone on the front lines kills somebody. Do you collect the karma of killing? This has big repercussions. This one question to me has big implications. Because then this whole question of, if I work for Andine(?) International and the company screws up somebody and I'm contributing, am I responsible? Do I collect the karma of stealing?

[student: Like many people voted for Koch?] [laughter]

[laughs] Probably.

[student: Anybody could have capital punishment as part of their platform.]

That's true, that's actually true.

[student: He actually promised us capital punishment.]

So anyway, the conclusion of the Abidharma, I leave it to you to read. It's not my conclusion, I thought it was important to you, but it says he's just as liable as the person who pulled the trigger, he collects the karma all the same. It's not me, it's Vasubandu.

[student: It just seems like a parallel to what you're just suggesting, really.  
[unclear]]

Well, one thing you should know. One principle of this is that for either you to do it yourself or to appoint someone else to do it, is totally the same karma. If you hire someone to go have adultery because you're not handsome enough to hurt the other guy [laughs], you know, if this other guy's wife would be attracted to you so you could hurt her husband, it's exactly the same karma as if you did it yourself. It says {rangi aur rangi korba}. You or someone you put up to do it.

[student: So it's the same karma to you [unclear]]

The argument I've heard about eating meat, and I don't eat meat, is that when you go to the store you're buying meat, you're not killing, you're buying meat. You don't say I'm going to the food market to shoot an arrow.

[student: But you're participating in the system and you know perfectly well how it got there.]

I don't eat meat. [laughs] Besides, I've heard this argument before. I believe there is a distinction between buying meat and going to the slaughter house and killing animals.

[student: Yeah, that's why they get all the Muslims to do it.]

But I have to say...

[student: It's the principle of karma, I mean, it's not the [unclear]]

The Lotus Sutra says don't eat pig meat, don't eat cow meat, don't eat fish meat, don't eat human's meat, don't eat any meat. So I don't know. I leave it to you. But it was not... and I don't want to go against the very high lamas who have said differently. They have other things to say about it. I just leave it like that. I don't eat meat. I can't eat meat. I think you're very lucky if you can stop eating meat and I don't... I think that with morals you kind of have to... you know the rules, you know the principles, I think that then you have to apply it to the best of your knowledge.

[student: [unclear]]

They do what?

[student: They dispense drugs to third world countries and all kinds of [unclear]. Is that also [unclear]]

Well, I don't know. You take your own... you read the reading and see how it applies in your mind. If it's with the intent to harm the other people, and if you're contributing to it, then I guess you'd have to change jobs.

[student: Even if you make a lot of money.]

But that's a little bit less. [laughs] The {kunlung}, the motivation, the intention, is not directly to harm other people. I think that's the distinction between mowing the lawn and killing roaches. I mean, if you mow the lawn you're going to kill insects, but you didn't say I'm going to go out today and kill bugs. You said I'm going out to mow the lawn. There is a distinction. But I'll tell you one thing and I can't help but go back to it in my mind. I remember Tom saying: "What shall we do about the incompetent guy?" It's been bothering me for a few days, you know, at work. Do you fire him or not? I had to do this. Strictly speaking, the only thing that can give you... you have to... it's so obvious that we have missed it our whole lives. The only thing that can give you a good result, absolutely, positively, the only thing that can give you any kind of good result, is a kindness, is a good deed. There's nothing else possible that can give you a good deed. Period. Nothing. It's impossible. Doesn't work that way.

[student: You just gave an example, let's see if I can get this right, of what sounded like lying, when you said that harsh words would include speaking in a kind voice.]

That's not what I called kindness. That's not kind at all. Take your time. All right.

[student: Let me think...okay, but the point is, whatever your feelings are, you're not acting out, you're not acting out in an angry fashion that will harm the other person even though you haven't been able to get past the bad feelings...]

Oh no, that's a mental bad deed and not a verbal bad deed. But I want to go back to this theme before you lose the sense of it. What I'm saying is...]

[student: No, I was going to say, when you talked about the incompetent guy....]

What I'm saying is this: I don't want to get to that level. Come up to a different level. I want to talk about a very deep level. Nothing in the world that's good can come from anything except a good deed. It's impossible. There's no such thing. There's no way to manipulate your world, and achieve anything good in your world except by doing a good deed. And if you happen to take some action and you get some goodness happening subsequent to that, it's just coincidence. It's just factors involved. But what I'm saying is that if anything good comes out of anything you ever do, it's because of something good you did before. It's nothing to do with the actions of the moment. And you have to... if you lived your life like that, your life would be radically different. You would look like a fool or crazy or something. You'd be kind to everyone and as a result, half the time, you'd be getting screwed, and it would look like a bad way of life, and it would look like an unprofitable way of acting. It's not true. It's an illusion. That's all.

[student: There are situations where you have to.. you can't be kind to everyone. If you keep the incompetent person on, you're unkind to the boss who's losing money. If you fire the...]

I want to say something... and I regretted not saying it. If the company's losing money because of this person, and if you remove the person and suddenly the person makes more money, it has nothing to do with removing the incompetent person.

[student: So let's go out and hire all the incompetent people...]

[student: Wait a minute, wait a minute, Michael. Let's take....]

[laughs] I'm not disagreeing with you. I'm just saying... I tell you, try it for a while. Maybe something will happen. Whatever we did in the past didn't work.

[student: Wait a minute, is it kind or honest to keep a person in a job...]

That's a different...

[student: No! But that's a very... that's an issue.]

No. If you can do it with great holy kindness, it's absolutely a good deed. I never said that.

[student: Okay, but I'm just, you know...]

[student: It's five to nine and we've a lot to finish. [laughs] Can we finish and save this for...]

All right, all right, okay. But I just say that, I think it's worth...we will finish on time, okay? But that's the whole guts of it. You have based your life so far on a perception of what worked and didn't work and it didn't work. Life so far was dysfunctional. And it doesn't work that way. It's not causation. It's not...it doesn't follow the laws of causation. Why? It's obvious, because it doesn't work all the time. If you had really followed the laws of causation, then the normal things you do at work to remove a bad guy and get more profit would work all the time, and they don't. So that's not really what's happening. That's all. Okay. Last question. What's the difference between a {lay} and a {lay ki la}?

[silence]

I had it the other day...we were trying to decide whether to send the dogs for a flea bath. Apparently it would remove the fleas. No connection. Absolutely no connection.

[student: I'm sorry? Say that again?]

If the dogs experience some result where they have no more fleas and they felt much better, it's got nothing to do with taking their fleas out, nothing! Sorry. I collected a very bad deed, and the fact that suddenly they didn't have fleas had

nothing to do with the flea-powder. Think about it.

[student: In the conventional world it does. [unclear]]

[student: [unclear] cleaning the center. Because it's been cleaned has nothing to do with our cleaning it, right?]

No, no! That's a goodness. I did an evil. And I must get an evil result. If there's any pleasure that anyone got out of my deed, it had no relation to my deed. I'm trying to say that. That's profound. That has profound implications for your life. It's probably what you're supposed to do to get out of samsara. [laughs] I don't know. Okay, {lay} and {lay ki la}. What's the difference between karma and a karmic path? I used to wonder about it all the time. I saw a very nice quotation and I'll read it to you. {nob sum suk ege sum chu chu} which means "let's consider the three bad deeds of life" which are what?

[student: We've only got two minutes to go!]

Craving. Oh boy, what kind of Buddhists are you if you can't even get the three...

[student: Craving, aversion and ignorance?]

Yeah, craving, ill-will and wrong view. Coveting, ill will and wrong view. Okay? He says let's consider those three. They are a path of karma. They are a path of action. Because they function to move the {sempa}, they motivate the {sempa}, they motivate the movement of the mind to move to its object. How's that? They are paths of action because they motivate the movement of the mind to shift to its object.

[student: [unclear]]

[laughs] Okay, take those three, they are paths of action, paths of karma, because they motivate the movement of the mind to shift to a new object. What I'm trying to say since we started the {unclear} class is that those three things by themselves...well I'm about to point that out...are not karma.

[student: They are not karma?]

No, I take it back, they are karma.

[student: They are the cause of karma, they are the source of karma.]

[student: They result in karma.]

Sorry, they are not the karma. They are the path of karma. They are the example. You've got to think about it. They are the example of something which is the path of karma but they're not karma. They are not a karma.

[student: The movement of the mind is karma.]

They are not the {sempa}. They are not the movement of the mind. They trigger the movement of the mind. And that's very difficult to understand. You have to cook it.

[student: So you're saying the path of karma is what triggers the movement of the mind essentially?]

You can have a ... those three states of mind are not karma.

[student: Right. I understand that. But they are what trigger the movement of the mind.]

Yeah. They motivate the karma.

[student: So you're saying the path of karma is what triggers the movement of the mind?]

That's how he's defining it, yeah. That's his proof for why they are a path of karma.

[student: Because they cause the movement of the mind?]

Yeah. Because they motivate the movement of the mind. Okay. He says the seven of body and speech.

[student: The what?]

The seven of body and speech, three of body and the four of speech, the seven bad deeds, are not only paths of action or paths of karma but also what? Karma.

Because they provide an opportunity for the movement of the mind to act itself out.

[student: [unclear]]

{sambe lay} and {sampe lay}.

[student: [unclear]]

If it's nice. The seven are both.

[student: They include the both?]

Yeah. I'm sorry, no, they are the thought thing you do, they are not the thinking itself. But because they provide an opportunity for the thought to act itself out, we call them karma.

[student: But [unclear]]

No. Because it doesn't provide an opportunity for the movement of the mind to act itself out. You've got to cook it. I didn't understand it until I... what I'm saying is that if somebody asks you whether the last three non-virtues are karma, you'd have to say what?

[student: Yes.]

No. The movement of the mind involved... the movement of the mind which is separate and distinct from them, which goes on with them, is the karma.

[student: [unclear]]

It's not karma. And the movement of the mind which is going on together with it is karma. It itself is not karma. Ignorance itself is not karma. [unclear] It motivates karma.

[student: But karma is movement of the mind.]

Yes, but...

[student: So what if you're in the midst of...]

Movement of the mind is distinct from the anger or distinct from the love or distinct from the attachment or distinct from the [unclear] or distinct from the...what I'm trying to say is that they're two mental functions, separate mental functions. Okay. By the way, he says, there's a big argument about this, a lot of the Abidharma school says it's not true, they say it is karma, there is a heavy argument. Obviously there would be, right? The last example, the last thing... can you give me a taste of something that's karma but is not a path of karma?

[student: Can I just ask a quick question? You said there are two mental functions. Which one is karma and which one is not karma?]

The movement of the mind is the karma. The anger, the attachment, the coveting, the ill-will, those are not karma.

[student: They are a path of karma?]

They are a path of karma.

[student: A direct perception of emptiness...]

Well, I'll give it to you since it's five after. Anything which is karma but not a path of karma. Those movements of the mind... movement of the mind.

[student: Any movement of the mind.]

They say {sempa}. They seem to be... the text seems to be referring to the ten. The {sempa}'s going on and the ten are going on.

[student: So they're not paths, they're the real thing?]

They are karma itself, they are not paths of karma.

[student: I don't understand the terminology in English. What is the concept?]

The thing is that those ten things, those ten bad deeds, are not a list of ten bad karmas. And no Buddhist text says they are. Lots of teachers will go around and tell you these are the ten bad karmas. The last three are not karmas. Well, we just had all the possibilities, right? We found something which is karma but not a path of karma.

[student: [unclear]]

Movement of the mind itself. What's a path of karma but not a karma?

[student: Jealousy.]

Those three. The last three. What's a path of karma and karma?

[student: [unclear]]

[unclear] Bye. You need the reading. You've got to think about it.

[student: So is the idea that the mental functions that follow behind the movement of the mind don't count as movement of the mind? Is that the idea?]

The moving of the mind, which is the shifting of the mind towards its object...

[student: Is only the primary mental function?]

It's a separate mental function.

[student: And the stuff that trails behind that? Does it count?]

Trailing means {unclear}. Those are not karma.

[student: So whatever follows this primary... doesn't count as karma, doesn't count as movement of the mind. So am I understanding this correctly?]

Well, what's cool is... yeah, basically yeah. You could have a serious debate about it all. We had it in the monastery. We said virtuous by...

[student: Association?]

Yeah. [unclear]

End

## HOW KARMA WORKS

### Class Eight: Cutting Root Virtue; Projecting Karma

November 14, 1994

Say {yeshe ke tsog} [repeat] {tsunam ke tsog} [repeat] {yeshe ke tsog} [repeat]. These are the {tsog me}. They're very famous. The two collections. The first one is "collection of merit". {tsunam} means merit. I remember, we had a friend at work named Tsunam. That's what her name means. {tsog} means collection and {ke} means "of", so "collection of merit." It means that basically all the first four perfections that you work on are {tsunam ke tsog}. What are the first four perfections? Yeah, giving, morality, patience and effort. Effort which means to be glad to be doing good things. And generosity...I prefer "giving", because you can give protection and things like that. So that's {tsunam ke tsog}. That's the collection of merit. Basically those four, those first four perfections, which are giving, morality, patience... patience doesn't mean, well it means not to get angry. We don't have a good word in English. It means the ability not to get angry when the time comes to get angry. Patience is like that. We also say patience as in waiting for a bus. It's not the same thing. Patience means when somebody's yelling in your face and you don't react, that's the third perfection. And fourth is effort, which is to take joy in doing something good. And really, effort can go either way. Effort can swing this way or this way, effort is needed for both these. Therefore {yeshe ke tsog} is which of the perfections? We used up the first four, right? [laughs]

[student: The last two.]

[laughs] The last two. We're sharp tonight. [laughs] [laughter] You'll be as sleepy as I am. So {yeshe} means "wisdom" and {tsog} means "collection". "Collection of wisdom". What it means is that you keep piling up these two things as you practice. All right? For the Buddha it was {jun jing mato, jun jing duto, jun jing dutong}, seventy-five thousand kalpas, and seventysix thousand kalpas and then seventy-seven thousand kalpas. He finished these two in those three periods, all right? [laughs] Took him jillions of years, okay? And that's the two collections. Why are they divided like this? Well, you keep piling up good deeds and you keep piling up knowledge, basically that. Here you're piling up good deeds, in the {tsunam ke tsog}, collection of merit. And then here you're piling up knowledge. And they're not contradictory, I mean, there can be a lot

of knowledge in here and there's a lot of merit in here. But generally it's a division.

[student: What about the perfection of meditation?]

That's concentration and it should be called concentration. It goes with {yeshe ke tsog} because of that thing we talked about so much, your mind has to be in the form realm for you to see emptiness directly. You need perfect concentration to see emptiness directly. That's why they come together.

[student: So knowledge in this sense means concentration and wisdom?]

Yeah, the last two perfections together, mainly. If you're in a debate ground and you don't say "mainly" you're in trouble, okay? And {tsundru}, "effort", can swing either way. Obviously to take joy in being good is necessary in both {tsogs}, in both collections. So what does {tsunam ke tsog} cause? What is it's result? You can correlate the two bodies of the Buddha to these two {tsogs}.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah. So the {tsunam ke tsog} mainly causes the form body. What is the form body? It's the physical body that the Buddha has. Either the one that's in his paradise, enjoying himself, or the one that comes to this planet to teach people. Those two. That's all caused by the {tsunam ke tsog}. Right? That's the special cause of the {tsunam ke tsog}, his form body, his physical body.

[student: Did you say it was a cause of {tsunam ke tsog}?]

No, {tsunam ke tsog} causes that. If you pile up good deeds, you're piling them up as you practice, it took the Buddha 210, 5 times 20,221 thousand kalpas. [laughs] Countless kalpas. 60 zeroes on the end of that, okay? And {yeshe ke tsog}, what does that cause? The dharma body, the dharma body of the Buddha. The dharma body of the Buddha has two parts. One is his emptiness, okay? And the other is his mind, his knowledge. And that's....

[student: Is there any difference between those two?]

Oh, big difference. Mind is a positive thing and emptiness is a negative thing. Mind is a living thing, emptiness is not a living thing. Stuff like that. You see the Dharmakaya and you see this... you see the dharma body and you see the form body just after you perceive emptiness directly. Just after you come out of the

{tong long} experience. First part of the {tong long} experience. When you come down, you see these two things directly. You see Buddhas and you see their real nature which until then you've never seen. It's very difficult to conceive of their nature and at that point you can see it. That's why you lose doubt at that time. By the way, then you realize that every single painting you'll ever see takes on a totally different importance for you, because you know that there's a real person like that. I mean, until now they're just kind of nice paintings. After that point you know that it's like a picture of something, a photograph of someone who really exists, and then they become very important for you. Yeah?

[student: You said that the dharma body is emptiness and mind and that the mind is knowledge. Isn't wisdom the emptiness?]

Wisdom is the knowledge that understands emptiness.

[student: Oh, and the other one's the actual...]

One is an object of the wisdom and one is the wisdom itself.

[student: So the dharma body has emptiness?]

Everything has emptiness. But the emptiness of a dharma body is a very special emptiness so it rates a separate kaya.

[student: So how is it different than a...?]

When they say it's {gnana dharma kaya}, when they divide it into wisdom dharma body, then the dharma part is emptiness. And your Buddha nature is the thing that will become that emptiness, and people don't understand that. And we've got to study Buddha nature someday, it's a long subject, I'm not going to get into it tonight. Anyway, to put it simply, these are the good deeds that allow you to look like a Buddha later, and these are the good deeds that allow you to think like a Buddha later. All right? {gesa chepa}, the concept of losing your most basic virtue, {gesa chepa} is a nasty, horrible subject. It's not a pleasant subject tonight. How do you destroy the roots of your virtue? What actions can cause you to destroy the most basic virtues you have? And those virtues that get destroyed are these, {tsunam ke tsog}. So the concept of destroying your most basic virtues is very important in Hinayana and in Mahayana, it comes in both. And in the Abidharma, this comes next. In your course of study, this is what would come next, the discussion in the Abidharma,

which is the first discussion of how you actually wipe out your most basic virtues. [laughs] I think that's important to know, right? What bad deeds can you do to wipe out your most basic virtue? Very important concept. And the virtue that you're wiping out, if someone should ask you on a homework, is this one. This is what basic virtue means. It means your whole piled-up virtue that you've been working on for so long.

[student: Can you not then lose your understanding of selflessness once you have it?]

We'll talk about it. Mainly what they're talking about here, and they talk about the good karma that you've collected, the good karma that you've been piling up, that you hope is going to make you into a Buddha eventually, are there any special kinds of things that can destroy it? Just obliterate it? The sutra says "obliterate, wipe out, destroy." You know there's this whole long list of the original sutra that explains this, this whole long list. Somebody, {unclear}, was doing prostrations at a stupa and in these stories, if you get down on the ground, every particle of dust covered by your body, you get that many huge virtues. So he got up and the Buddha said "Oh, you've got a lot of virtue," because he did some great virtue, you know. Then he went somewhere and he got angry at another Bodhisattva and he wiped all of it out, he just wiped it clean. And the Buddha said, "Oh, you just wiped clean all that virtue you did." [laughs] All right? And we'll talk about how it is. So that's the idea of wiping out your most basic virtues. You have to talk about the person who can do it, and what can do it.

[silence]

[student: You're talking about destroying karma here, right?]

Exactly. We're having a karma class.

[student: Which must be the counterpart to purification?]

Oh, we might get to that tonight. But that should be a big concern to you. It's nice to know all about karma but if you don't know that you could wipe it all out [laughs], then you didn't study the whole subject. {lok tha} Say {lok tha}. [repeat. {lok tha} means wrong view. {lok} means "wrong", {tha} means "view", {lok tha} means wrong view. But the word {lok}, and you should understand the word {lok} implies a diametric opposite. Something exists and

you think it doesn't exist. So {lok tha} is focussed on something which is true, something which really exists, and {lok tha} think... what?

[student: That it doesn't exist.]

Yeah, but not just that. {lok tha} says it doesn't exist, I mean classic {lok tha} Abidharma way. It's looking at things that really exist and says those don't exist. What do you think would be very effective {lok tha} to wipe out karma?

[student: To believe there's no karma.]

Yeah, to believe there's no such thing as the laws of karma. That's the classic {lok tha}. That's the {lok tha} that wipes out your good karma.

[student: Why would it do that?]

Well, as a side, it's not immediate, I mean... it's a long story. But anyway, I think principally because you then wouldn't do any good deeds based on a knowledge of karma.

[student: She could be doing random good deeds.]

You would be doing random good deeds. But apparently it has the power to wipe out even the good deeds you've done before. What's the... how does it work? We'll talk about it. There's a long list of ways of how it works and why it works.]

[student: Michael, let's say you stopped believing that karma is bad, but you still believe that you should be a good human being, that you should behave correctly. Does that mean you're wiping it? I mean, because on the one hand, intellectually it doesn't work, but yet you're acting as though it works, but not... you're doing it....]

We'll talk about it. I think it will come. If it doesn't come, let me know. We're going to talk about it when you read how to reconnect your virtue. Actually the word means more like "disconnect" or "sever" rather than lose your basic virtue. The word {jepa} means "to cut," "to slice." And then when you get it back, there is a way to get it back, and that's called reconnecting.

[student: Like [unclear]]

[laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah. All right? So {lok tha}. {lok tha} is looking at what?

[student: Looking at things opposite....]

Things that exist and thinking that they don't exist. That's the classic {lok tha}. And here it's focussed on the laws of karma, or it's focussed on Buddhahood itself, saying there's no such thing as Buddhahood. Okay? Buddhahood does exist. {lok tha} says Buddhahood doesn't exist. This is classic. The very very classic case in our country among people we know... they practice Buddhism for a while, they try Tibetan Buddhism for a while, it doesn't sit with them or they lose interest or they want to do something that Tibetan Buddhism says they can't do, or something like that, or they just.... something happens in their mind, and then after that they say, ah, that's all garbage. That's {lok tha}. That's classic {geta jeba}, that's a very very dangerous, and very... you know, it would be possible for any of us, I think. It's something that we could do at this point. Once you've learnt, you're kind of in trouble. Once you've learnt a little Buddhism, then if you reject it, if you just say oh, I used to go to those classes, it's all garbage, that's a classic {lok tha}. That's really the one that does the {geta jeba}. Yeah?

[student: Why is it bad [unclear]?]

We'll talk about it. I'm absolutely not saying you shouldn't question, absolutely not saying that. The Buddha was adamant about it. Said you must question. But this has to be a total rejection. We'll talk about why. It's all garbage, you know, it has to be something like that to work as a {geta jeba}. If you want to do a good {geta jeba}, don't just reject part of Buddhism, don't just reject the parts you can't take right now, or don't just doubt this or anything like that. Reject the whole schmiel. Then you've got {geta jeba}. You have to reject it. Actively. Question?

[student: The scriptures talk about certain specific conditions, circumstances that would add up to a classical...]

That's a good point. I'll give you a second one.

[student: Michael, when you said it must be a total rejection, are you saying it must be a total rejection for it to be considered wrong view?]

The {lok tha} which can destroy your {geta}, the wrong view which can destroy your virtue root, has to be a total rejection, Can't be like a doubt or something like that. It can't be skepticism. It's a rejection. It's to say this is all bullshit, I don't accept any of it. I mean, if you have trouble accepting certain parts of Buddhism now, which I know everyone normally does, that's not {lok tha}. And it's very very very very important that you store those in a cabinet called "I'm not sure about those yet." And you don't say: "I don't accept those." When you talk to your friends, and when you even think in your own mind, say I heard Rinpoche say that, I heard Roach say that, I really can't buy it right now, but I'll put it in that cabinet of things that I'm going to check out some day. I don't reject it, and I don't act on it now, and I don't follow it now. I keep it there in a group of stuff that I'm not quite sure about, I want to hear more about it, I'll try to decide later, but don't reject it. Yeah?

[student: For it to be wrong view, is it enough to just reject the idea of karma without having any alternative to embrace and go towards? In a way you have half of a wrong view, you're not thinking of something else to replace it, know what I mean? You don't have a view that's wrong. You just say "I reject this."]

You don't have to have an alternate viewpoint which is contradictory. You just say you don't believe it, you say, "I'm sure that that doesn't exist." Here's the second way to lose your {geta}. This is presented in the Mahayana scriptures, specifically in the Madhyamika scriptures by Shantideva and by Chandrakirti and I thought you might as well know it. It's not mentioned in the Abidharma presentation. Say {kongtro}. [repeat. {kongtro} repeat. {kongtro} means "anger." And if you ever read Shantideva, you know what he's talking about. The structure of the Madhyamika scriptures, the one that we study in the monastery, Chandrakirti's famous work, don't get him mixed up with Dharmakirti, okay? We studied Dharmakirti last course. I used to get them mixed up all the time so I can tell you. Chandrakirti is the great Madhyamika scholar and he designed his book based on the six perfections, his book follows the six perfections. Why? Because he's talking about the ten Boddhisattva Bhumis, the ten levels that a Boddhisattva goes through as he starts to reach enlightenment. And six of those levels, Boddhisattva levels, relate to the six perfections. Because at those particular levels, you are gaining an extraordinary ability to practice that perfection. That's why everybody concentrates on the sixth chapter. Why? I mean, the sixth chapter is ninety percent of his book. That's the one about emptiness, right? But most people don't realize that the Madhyamika scriptures, that the first five perfections are there, they're just little tiny chapters at the beginning. But when he reaches chapter three, perfection

number three, which is what?

[student: Patience.]

Patience, not getting angry. The Boddhisattva level there is called {wa jepa}. {wa jepa} means "make light", "light maker". And you can't reach that level until you perfect the ability not to get angry when the time comes that you should get angry. And you know, when the circumstances are such that, you know, somebody's really pushing your buttons and you reach your limit, and then if you don't get angry then, you've just practiced the third perfection. If you get an extraordinary ability to do that, you've reached the third Boddhisattva level. Yeah?

[student: Is there some distinction in anger? I mean, when you say when somebody...]

We're going to talk about it right now, okay? Classically, this anger should be at a Boddhisattva, the one that can {geta jepa}, the one that can destroy your most basic virtues, should be focussed on a Boddhisattva.

[student: What do you mean by it should be focussed on a Boddhisattva?]

You should be getting pissed off at a Boddhisattva.

[laughter]

[student: What's {kongtro) again?]

That's anger. And these are the two things that can cut your most basic virtues. This is what is presented in the Abidharma reading, this one's concentrated on in the Madhyamika scriptures. But these are the two things which can wipe out your whole storehouse of good deeds that you've been working on all this time. You become a Buddhist, you get serious, you really want to be a good person, you start trying, you build it up, and then you get... one of these comes into your mind and zoom! It's just a big eraser. It's a big pencil eraser that wipes it all out. You go back to square one.

[student: So since you don't know who is a Boddhisattva, you may do this on a regular basis?]

Ah, beautiful, beautiful. That's exactly what they say in the scriptures. Since you

don't know who's a Boddhisattva, everyone in this room could be a Boddhisattva for all I know...]

[student: Wonderful! So all the work you've done all these millions of years, wiped out?]

There's a couple of, what do you call it?

[student: Extenuating circumstances?]

[laughs] [laughter]

There are extenuating circumstances. I mean, they say... the main scripture says it doesn't matter whether you think he is or not. The identification part doesn't play a very big role here. [laughs] And it doesn't matter whether you have a good reason or not. It says those two things. Those two things do not much play a role here.

[student: Does it matter how much you express it? Let's say you're feeling angry but you hold it in?]

It's much better if you don't express it. And it's really bad if you have it. [laughs]

[student: If you have it, but you don't express it, you still get bad karma?]

Yeah....

[student: So you might as well punch him and feel good.]

[laughs] [laughter]

{lok tha}, {lok tha}. [laughs] [laughter]

It's not funny, you know, it's a way to lose [unclear].

[student: You couldn't apply the same reasoning of the four karmic paths?]

They say, by the way, if you want to hear the bad news, {kechigma [unclear]}. The ratio is instant to kalpa. The ratio is instant to kalpa. One instant of this

anger wipes out a kalpa...a hundred kalpas.

[student: When directed at a Bodhisattva or anybody?]

Bodhisattva.

[student: Say something more about it.]

[laughs] I don't want to talk any more about it. It's so depressing.

[student: You said it didn't have to be....]

They say in the scriptures, and I can show you, that the role of identification, in other words, realizing that he is a Bodhisattva first of all, and secondly, of having some justification, are irrelevant, mostly, in this case.

[student: So the four karmic paths don't apply here?]

They do, but what they're saying is that the one about the [sheep?], the one about the object, is so extraordinary, that it outshines the others.

[student: What kind of justification does one have to get angry at a Bodhisattva?]

Well let's say that he... as a method, he punches you in the head, that's a better reason than if he were serving you or something.

[student: See what I mean? What kind of Bodhisattva would punch somebody in the head and force him to go to hell for a long long time?]

I don't know. Maybe he knows something that I don't know. Or maybe you're tired or something. Know what I mean? That's a justification....that's a circumstance, it's kind of a justification. If you're very tired and you get angry at someone, it's a little bit better than if you weren't tired, if you were all fresh and you get angry at somebody. I mean, if you were tired because you were taking care of your kids or something and then you get angry at someone, that's a little bit of a justification. That's what he's saying.

[student: Then it seems like there's a very large responsibility on the part of Bodhisattvas to not get people angry or stir up their emotions?]

Shantideva gets into that a lot. He gets into a lot about the responsibility, your responsibility of not setting up circumstances where people around you can collect bad karma towards you. That's true. Shantideva talks a lot about that. I think my boss also used to say—don't leave the diamonds around on the tables because somebody with a weaker will than yours could pick one up and steal it. To you it's no temptation, but you're not being fair to those other people. You have to put them away nicely because it's not fair to those other people who might want to take some home, you know. Like that. Yeah?

[student: Why aren't we supposed to get angry at a Bodhisattva?]

Oh, we have long stories about that. It's the extraordinary object principle, right? Someone who just came out of a high state, he's closer to being someone... it's like breaking the last vial of AIDS antidote in the world. He's rare, he's going to help a lot of people and here's this last bottle of AIDS medicine in the world, someone just invented it and he died and you got the last bottle and you just throw it away.]

[student: Yeah, but you're assuming that your anger will affect this Bodhisattva, which most likely it won't.]

No, no, no, not that it affects him.

[student: So why would it make a difference to this Bodhisattva? This Bodhisattva is in another world, in a way.]

Not like that, you can help him in his work or you can hurt him in his work. You can bother a Bodhisattva. The Dalai Lama... you can bother him.

[student: But Anita's point is that...]

I know, I know, it's not hurting him.

[student: Exactly.]

[student: So therefore it can't hurt anyone else, so what difference does it make in impact?]

He's such a holy object. If Jesus walked into the room and you spit on him,

that's just different, that's just a different thing... he's just so important.

[student: I don't know, Michael, whether this kind of reverence for this object is coming from a social culture... you know, in the olden times old people were supposed to be respected. How do you know?]

No, no, the point is that he's not special because he's old. He's special because he can help...

[student: Then how do you know that this is not because of that?]

It doesn't make logical sense. This person is special because he can help so many people.

[student: Doesn't it also have to do with the conditions that you're setting up in your own life? For your own good?]

That could be true too. I mean, it's close to a {lok tha} to get angry with a Boddhisattva. It's close to saying I don't believe in Buddhahood, I don't see why this guy's so special, just because he's getting close to Buddhahood, who cares. That would be a kind of {lok tha}.

[student: So when they talk about an instant of anger destroying your collection of merit, they're not talking about just getting angry at normal persons?]

Well, they say by extension you shouldn't get angry. They say that's just normal anger... I mean, if I'm going to be totally honest with you, the scripture says.... shall I tell you or not?

[laughter]

A Boddhisattva to a Boddhisattva.

[student: A Boddhisattva to a Boddhisattva?]

The classic classic classic {kongtro} is a Boddhisattva getting mad at a Boddhisattva. And you can see why that would be really bad. And it's worse for a... and it's worse to get mad at a higher Boddhisattva. When a lesser Boddhisattva gets mad at a higher Boddhisattva.... it's a long story. Anyway, then the scripture goes on to say that it applies to all of us towards anybody.

Strong feelings of anger do have in everybody the function of wiping out... and you know, you put up with somebody for a year and finally you blow up one day, and even in the non-karma world, you've ruined your relationship for maybe years. You've just finally cracked, finally tell him what you feel and then for a year you can't get close to him again. You know that. All that good will that you carefully tended over the months you just screwed up in one minute.

[student: Wasn't anger defined as not like your normal or chomp-you anger, but really hatred?]

[laughter]

No, no. In this case, they're talking about the perfection. The perfection means really just to get angry at somebody else. It also could be anger at an inanimate object. If you stub your toe, or if you curse the traffic or New York or....

[student: You know his Holiness was talking....]

[student: {kongtro} for cursing the traffic?]

Yeah.

[laughter]

Yes! It's ignorant, it's stupid, it's ignorant anger.

[student: I know Michael, but the traffic is not a Boddhisattva.]

I'm saying that it is a kind of {kongtro} to get angry at the traffic.

[student: Remember when His Holiness was talking about this chapter in Arizona, and he said the translation of anger here really means like hatred-type anger? Is that what he was talking about?]

I think he was saying the opposite. It could be things that you call dislike. That's what we're trying to say. You can have {kongtro} all day. It's not that you have to blow up and scream at somebody. It's dysfunctional, there's no function to it. If you understood the emptiness of the traffic, the last thing you'd want to do is get mad about it. It's the same thing as the guy at work. I just didn't want to get

into that. [laughs] Same result.

[student: What gives anger so much more power than virtue?]

We'll talk about it. [laughter] We're going to talk about it today. It doesn't have more power. We'll see there's kinds of... the Buddha cut off 91,000 countless kalpas from his {tsok sak} by... he met this Buddha and he jumped around on one leg for a week and praised him...[laughs]... and he cut off 91,000 countless kalpas. He made his Buddhahood shorter. He cut off like a 100,000 kalpas. Sixty zeroes, whatever that it, by this great act of faith. He circled him and he swore his devotion to him and cut off a lot of.. he shortened the time that it took him to become a Buddha. There are such things. Strong feelings of faith, like when you meet the Dalai Lama and you get this, you know, [laughs], [laughter], no that's a great... that's the opposite. You just collected a lot of merit. When you're happy about what he's doing, when you feel joy about what he's doing.

[student: I was going to ask you that, so if I go, I mean, I'm going to say something really stupid... if I see the Dalai Lama several times I'm going to...]

I think, you know, our culture... see, that was their culture. But I think in our culture if you just worshiped him in an intelligent way, like you said, look, this person, of all the people in the world, this guy is helping so many people. Of all the people in the world, he's being so good, he's so clean, he's so faultless, he's devoted himself to this message that nobody wants to know about anyway. Know what I mean? It's very special that there is such a human being in the world and that people realize... the Nobel Peace Prize and all. Anyway, {lok tha} and {kongtro} can destroy your {gesa}. Now the Abidharma says, what if the... what do they call... you know, they have a thing in immigration where they figured out the characteristics of a person who's going to be doing....

[student: Profile?]

The profile, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. What's the profile of a person who's going to do this {lok tha}? The Abidharma gets into it. They say what's the profile, what are the classic characteristics of a person who's bound to get {lok tha}? Or who can even commit {lok tha}? And they say, first of all, it has to be a human being. Why? In hell, they can't think a straight thought. They can't get {lok tha}. All they can concentrate on... it's just like when you have a really bad headache, you know. You're not going to philosophize when you have a bad backache or bad headache. Hungry spirits, the same thing. They're just running after food.

Deities are too happy. It's really got to be a human being.

[student: Deities are too happy?]

They're enjoying themselves.

[student: Demigods war with the gods all the time?]

[laughter]

Then they're miserable and they can't do wrong view either. So it's gotta be someone who has a firm belief... therefore they say, eunuchs can't get it either. They say when you make a person an eunuch... when a person loses his sexual organ, he loses some kind of... we would call it estrogen or something, I don't know. He loses some kind of thing and this makes his mind very unstable. So anyone whose mind would not be stable, anyone who couldn't hold, for a long time, a clear rejection of a philosophical viewpoint, see what I mean? couldn't collect {lok tha}. So a {lok tha} has to be from someone who can think clearly and hold that thought in a firm way. And therefore they say, if you divide up the people on this planet, there are two types. The Abidharma is very interesting. The kind that are intellectual, intellectually-inclined personalities, and then personalities which are attracted to sensual pleasures. And normally they don't overlap. People are either interested in food or books, know what they mean? There's intellectual types and then there are sensual types. It says it has to be the intellectual type to get {lok tha}, the person has to be an intellectual.

[student: Why? Why can't they just....]

They're the people who will really think it over carefully and firmly get a clearly thought-out rejection of the laws of karma.

[student: So just thinking about it a little bit and casually....]

No, that's not enough. It has to be a sustained rejection of this idea that if you do something good you will get a good result and if you do something bad you will get a bad result. There has to be someone who's capable intellectually of holding a sustained rejection of that in his mind. That's the personality profile. So which one of these two was the main one for the Abidharma? The way to cut your virtue?

[student: {lok tha}]

The first one, wrong view. So we're going to talk about... Abidharma talks about how to get back on the right track. They call it "reconnect your virtue root", that you cut.

[student: Reconnect your battery cable.]

[laughter]

How do you restore it? And they say there are two ways. One is...

[student: Getting back what you lost? Or just getting back on the right path?]

Well, I'll talk about... it's a good question, you know. What happens to the virtue that you have? Is it just wiped out, is it just erased? What is the process? All the books say...

[student: It doesn't ripen.]

It's not that it ripens later than it was supposed to. It's not that it ripens for a shorter duration, like a lesser pleasure than you thought you were going to have. It says it seriously damages its ability to give a karmic result. That's the later viewpoint. Abidharma says when we say cut your virtue root, we mean it's gone, you don't have it any more.

[student: So which one is true?]

We'll say Mahayana. Yeah, it damages the... it forms some sort of damage... so the point is not so much... if you want to know the {sins tam}, what do we finally say at the end? It's not so much that it destroys the knowledge or destroys them. It's that it damages their ability to give their proper result.

[student: Is the opposite true?]

I was just going to get to that. [laughs] Okay? Good question. And this is very, very, very, very important. The opposite is true. Which is what?

[student: If you hold the correct view then it repairs them?]

No, that you could tinker around with your bad karma. See what I mean? Wrong view damages... wrong view throws a monkey wrench into the operation of your good deeds, the good deeds that you've done. And there's something else which throws a monkey wrench into your bad deeds and damages their ability to give you trouble. What's it called?

[student: Purification.]

Purification.

[student: What do you mean when you say purification?]

I mean the four antidotes. And we'll talk about that.... I didn't have it in the syllabus but I'm thinking I'd better. I think everyone's going to be interested by the last class. [laughter] So we'll probably do it in the last class. Maybe even in the review. We'll discuss the four. We'll discuss purification. But the point is that when the Mahayana scriptures present this concept, they say it goes both ways. They say you can short circuit your good karmic seeds, but you could also short circuit your bad karmic seeds. Whatever's true about one is true about the other.

[student: It seems like in no case do you ever completely get rid of them. It just makes them inert.

Well the Abidharma, if you read the reading, would say they just go.

[student: Right. I'm talking Madhyamika.]

But then the Abidharma also says that the way they get short-circuited is that over a period of time they start failing to give their results. So it's almost said that the way it's cut is some sort of gradual process. It's not that one day, just boom, you lose them. Because they start to peter out, they start to short circuit, they start to not give their proper result over a period of time. You can read it in the Abidharma.

[student: It sounds like the key here is that there is something which will cause these seeds to come to fruition at some moment in time or not.]

It's not so much that. They say it's a damage to the seed. They compare it to two things. Mainly they compare it to fire on a seed. At some point the seed gets scorched and then it starts to give its proper sprout. That's the explanation.

Exactly how it works would be interesting. I mean, if we had a longer class, and I'd be curious too, we could use a computer, it's very effective for questions like that. I was using it and just in the few minutes before class I learned a lot. You know, you can skip directly to the references to all these ideas. So, these are the two things... we have to take a break. Two things that can restore...

[student: Wait a minute... you said Abidharma. You meant to say Hinayana, right?]

Same thing.

[student: Yeah, that's what I mean.]

In today's lecture Hinayana means Abidharma.

[student: But if they're gone, how can you restore them?]

Abidharma is a little bit unmerciful. [laughs] You can read it. First of all, {gesa che}, when you cut that, you mean you lose them, they don't exist any more, you don't have them any more. But then he talks about a process of reconnecting with them and getting back to them, and getting them back. And maybe it means you lose them and then you get them back. I don't know. That's what it says.

[student: Is that the same thing as...]

No. Abidharma love to discuss things like that. The Abidharma scriptures are thousands of pages long. You can do it, Kiley. Okay. {tetsum}. {tetsum} means what? Doubt. Doubt. Okay? Doubt. There's a good doubt and there's a bad doubt. What do you think the doubt is here?

[student: The good one.]

Obviously. But what's he thinking to himself? He rejected karma before...

[student: Maybe it wasn't the right thing to do.]

Yeah. [laughs] [laughter] No, he's getting older in his life, this is very common with Buddhism, I've seen it in a lot of students. They start to get older, they start to reach the end of their lives basically. Pleasures are starting to get less and less.

And they start to come back and search again for some answers. And then they're more receptive because they're getting closer to death. Or people who get sick, get serious illnesses, they often get {tetsum}. They start to doubt their own position. They start to think, well maybe there is karma. So this {tetsum} is defined as thinking to yourself, oh, maybe there might be such a thing. And that's enough already to get you back your {gesa}. That's enough to reconnect you with your {gesa}. To go from total rejection to maybe it could be. That's why it's very healthy to keep that... what I mentioned before. Keep that with the stuff that you say that you can't buy, please keep this healthy scepticism. Don't reject it outright.

[student: Does {lok tha} only refer to karma?]

It can refer to Buddhahood. Those are classic ones.

[student: That's pretty much it?]

No, there's a lot of {lok thas}. [laughs] There's no emptiness, emptiness means nothing, that's a {lok tha}.

[student: This is from Abidharma? [unclear]]

Yeah, this is Abidharma way. And it's mainly antidotes to {lok tha}. What would be the second one?

[student: Reversal?]

Something even better than {tetsum}. You know what that would be.

[student: Changing your mind back.]

{nepa} means... it's a very hard to translate. {nepa} means to positively identify something. Oh, it is...I don't know a word in English really. The word means "certainty." It's a mental function of certainty, that there is karma.

[student: Like affirm?]

It's affirm, but affirm in the sense of {[unclear] sema}. There is karma. I'm sure of it now. I know it. {nepa}'s not only the opinion that you're sure, it's the actual perception that there is.

[student: So it's not faith you're talking about?]

Not at all. It's a kind of certainty that comes from knowing.

[student: Either intellectual or by direct perception?]

By the direct perception of karma. [unclear] For us.

[student: The direct perception of emptiness produces such a thing?]

Oh yeah. A kind of certainty, oh there is karma.

[student: You see the noble truths, but you don't necessarily see karma [unclear]?]

That would be enough. That would be enough.

[student: When you say "reconnect", do you mean the account was frozen? The money was [unclear].]

[laughs] It seems to say that. It seems to say that. And I guess the process is not so much that you destroy them, but you inactivated them and now you're reactivating them. I don't want to say that easily because it's not very clear to me, but from what I read and from what I understand, that's how it is.

[student: So what's the difference between Mahayana? It's the same thing, it sounds like. Maybe the words are different, but...]

No, same thing, same concept. That's why I'm presenting them together. Because I figure you might as well know both of the problems and both of the ways to reconnect them. We gotta take a break. Everybody has to come over there because we're having a big birthday party.

[laughter]

[student: Could it be like a hard-disk crash?]

[laughs] I don't know. I never got my data back.

[student: Did you just say that the damaged seeds are now reactivated and [unclear]?]

I would say that, although it's not real clear and I mention that it's not very clear. But the wording of "reconnect" would imply that.

Say {penjay ki lay}. [repeat] {dzog ke chi lay}. [repeat] {penjay ki lay} [repeat] {dzog ke chi lay} [repeat]. This is another division of karma. If I gave you all the divisions of karma, we'd have a two-year class about karma. Again, we're just repeating the divisions from sutra which are reported in the Abidharma. {pen} is a verb which means "to throw", or "project" and it comes in colloquial Tibetan nowadays with what you do to an arrow when you shoot it. That's called {pen}. So I don't know what you would call that. Project. They call it "projecting karma". You could say "shoot" but "projecting" sounds better. {penjay ke lay}. {jay} means "to do", {lay} means "karma". So {penjay ki lay} means "projecting karma." Projecting what? {penjay ki lay} is the karma which projects your next life. Your whole next life. It's the karma that decides whether you're going to be a human or an animal or a hungry ghost or a...

[student: In the next life?]

It's the karma which projects your whole next life.

[student: What does that mean?]

Meaning the whole next life, from the time that you're born into your next life—I'm not talking about the bardo. The bardo, by the way, is considered part of your next life in terms of {penjay ki lay}. So {penjay ki lay}, projecting karma, is the karma which decides which of the six births you're going to take. And then you'll be in that birth, I don't know, if you're human, it will be sixty-seven years, if you're an animal, it might be a few years, if you're in the hells, you'll be in there for a couple of million years, but it projects that whole next life. It decides which kind of being you're going to be, and that's what projecting karma means. Whether you're going to be an animal or a human... that's the function of projecting karma.

[student: Is "throwing karma" accurate?]

Throwing's okay, not bad, sounds a little strange.

[student: We have a whole bunch of these karmas already. One of them gets picked or activated...]

We'll talk about it. Yeah?

[student: I was going to talk about the same thing.]

Well, since you bring it up.

[student: Can it be lightened from one lifetime to another and then become inactive?]

Yeah. The big argument in the Abidharma, in the Abidharma position, is that each karma... only one karma can do a {penjay ki lay}. It doesn't take many karmas to throw one whole life. It's only one karma that throws the whole life, it's only one of your karmas that you commit in this life which projects your whole next life.

[student: So it's not a special karma? It's just any one, random, out of the whole batch?]

Yeah, depending on the strength. There's a prioritization system depending on how strong your anger is, how big the object it, you know, the one which is most powerful is going to get pushed up into the queue and project your next life. So this is Abidharma, {unclear}, Vaibhashika system. They say that the whole next life is {pemba}, projected, by only one karma. Because—and their argument is—by the way, this argument is not accepted by anybody else, okay?—they say, well that one whole life has one consistency to it. You're an animal that whole life, or you're a human that whole life, so therefore you have to be projected by only one karma. It's not that you change... you're not an animal for three weeks, and then a human for four weeks, so it can't be different karmas. It has to be only one karma which throws the whole life. This is Abidharma system.

[student: I thought it was the state of mind that you're in when you're in the bardo state that determines...]

Bardo is already too late. The minute your consciousness has left this body, it's already decided, because bardo is tied to the next birth. In the bardo you already look like that the being you're going to be born as. Bardo beings have some

resemblance... you know, if you're going to go to hell, you look like a charred piece of wood and there's all these... in the Abidharma, what bardo beings look like. If you could see a bardo being, you'd know where he was headed. It's one {penjay ki lay} which throws both the bardo and the next birth. It's the same {penjay}, it's the same projecting...

[student: I was under the impression that if you die with extreme fear or extreme desire that would propel you... let's say you commit this act ten years before you die before you die, it's considered...]

Normally, in the presentations of karma, not in the Vaibhashika school, it's sort of the whole effect of your life. What has your life been? If you've been stingy throughout your whole life. It's not just incident of stinginess, it's a whole lifetime of being stingy and greedy and gluttonous and the effect is that you're born as a preta. Only the Vaibhashikas believe in this one...and their argument is a little bit weak. Their whole argument is based on [unclear] and that doesn't make sense, they say...

[student: [unclear] Mahayana...]

They say it's more or less the effect of your whole life. They say many karmas contribute to what you're {penjay}'ed into.

[student: So really then, according to them...]

Who? Abidharma?

[student: Yes. There's really nothing you can do once you're in the bardo. All the talk about visions and everything else, it's a fatalistic kind of thing...]

Oh no, I would say that most schools agree that... I mean, by the time of the bardo you're pretty much...

[cut]

...but it can help. Normally, in the bardo, you already look like.. you already have a certain color, you walk a certain way, you walk upside down if you're headed a certain way, there's different signs of what you will be, they're already showing themselves at that point.

[student: Did you say that this karma causes you to experience the bardo in a certain way?]

What I'm saying is that the projecting karma, the shooting karma, is not only responsible for you being a certain kind of being for your whole next life, but also for your bardo. It's one {penjay}, even according to the Abidharma, it's one projecting karma which releases its power slowly... a slow release capsule?

[student: Time-release...]

Yeah, yeah, a time-release capsule. From the moment you die to the moment you die in your next life, it's releasing its power all through that whole life. It's one karma which has one consistent quality and therefore in the bardo and also in the next birth, you have this identity, that you are this person. From the moment you die in this life, all the way to the moment you die in the next life.

[student: Is it the idea that the feeling or thought that you're holding at the moment of death is what you carry?]

That's a very powerful influence. Your mind is... this is accepted by, it's mostly described in Mahayana, at the moment of death...they don't talk about it much in the Abidharma, what a crucial role the moment of death plays, although they do say that if you have an extraordinarily strong desire at the moment of death you would {penjay}, you would throw into that life. Okay. So what do you think {dzogche} means? Some people call it "completing karma", I call it "finishing karma". Like finishing school, finishing a piece of furniture, that's like dzogchen, the great completion or whatever. {dzog} means to "complete". {dzogche ki lay} means "finishing karma". And it decides the details. And the Abidharma has a famous line which says: {penjay ki lay} is the master painter who goes to the big canvas and he sketches out the portrait, and then he leaves and goes and does... he's the maestro, you know, and then the students come and fill in the colors. You can have a lot of apprentices who are not master painters who could do the color. So they come in with different colors and paint them. They fill in the colors and the master has already drawn the whole portrait out. So the job of the apprentices is only to fill in the colors, and that's finishing karma. So according to Abidharma, can you have one karma do that or would it take multiple karmas? {dzogche}, the apprentices, who finish the color. Think of each one as being responsible for a different color. Then it would have to be a lot of karmas. So they say the projecting karma is only one because its result is

consistent throughout your whole life, but the {dzogche ki lay}, the finishing karma, many karmas can be contributing to that throughout your whole next life. You're rich or poor, you go through these cycles in your next life. You're handsome in your early years, you get ugly in your later years, the finishing karma is all different. Different finishing karmas take over at different times.

[student: In Mahayana also?]

Yeah, pretty much accepted by Mahayana.

[student: The Mahayanas agree with the {penjay ki lay}?]

They say it's multiple. Except in the case of say, {san me ki lay}, which we'll study, I think it's next week, those extraordinary bad karmas like killing your parents or trying to harm a Buddha. It's one incident because of which you take your whole next life in hell and in that case the Mahayanas would say, yeah, that's one karma that creates the whole next life.

[student: How does Mahayana distinguish between {penjay ki lay} and...]

It's the same, they accept it. It's just a question of—can this be multiple or not. And Mahayana says of course it can be multiple. You see it in all over the scriptures.

[student: No, but if they're both multiple, what distinguishes between throwing and finishing?]

Same distinction. Only the Abidharma School says {penjay ki lay} has to be one single event of your life. Okay?

[student: If they're both multiple, how are they different from each other?]

One is more powerful. {penjay ki lay} is more powerful. That's the {mur gyu}, that's the main cause, that's just more powerful. That's more powerful. It's done with greater anger, it's done towards a more holy object, you know, it's basically a distinction of power, that it's powerful enough to decide which realm you're born into. And then the finishing karma is the smaller incidents of this life which are determined. What kind of money you're going to have, or... we call it {mu shi}.... yeah?

[student: They say if...]

Abidharmas?

My understanding would be that if you recognize emptiness [unclear] and that will become this [unclear] karma.

Well, I'll talk about one... you missed the last course. We did a whole course on this. [laughs]

[student: Sorry.]

You guys know. By the way, I wanted to say, what did that remind me of? Oh, there's a certain stage at which, by the way, you can't cut your virtues. It's impossible. And that's a certain point in the second of the five paths, which kind of relates to your question. Your question reminded me of that. What are the five paths?

[student: Renunciation...]

Which is called preparation, I'm sorry, collection, accumulation.

[student: Preparation, Path of Seeing, Habituation and No More Learning.]

So, you don't have to know them for this course, but basically there's an outline of your spiritual career. The first path is reached when you reach true renunciation and you're really sick of life. Second path is reached when you get intellectual understanding of emptiness. The third path is reached when you see emptiness directly for the first time. The fourth path is the whole process of removing your bad thoughts based on your understanding of emptiness. And then the fifth path is not really a path, it's just a state of having finished them all. And the second path... what're you doing on the second path?

[student: [unclear]]

No, {jolosh}. What's happening on the second path?

[student: Accumulating.]

Yeah. You're getting clearer and clearer intellectual understanding and because

of that, at a certain point, you can no longer do {gesa japa}. Impossible. You will never lose your most basic virtue.

[student: At a certain point in path number two, not at the beginning?]

Yeah. Path number two. Because you understand emptiness.

[student: And then in path number 3, you can't create any more non-virtue, you said.]

You're not collecting any more {duniya demwa}. You're not collecting any more source of suffering. That's nice. If you can reach that point, it's called {tsemo}, it's called "peak". It's not the highest level, but it's called peak anyway. Peak level, second path, once you've reached that, you can no longer destroy your good deeds out of {lok tha} and out of anger also, I'd say.

[student: So a person who just becomes an arya, they don't get angry anymore or they have this different kind of anger where it looks like the old but it doesn't have the same old gusto to it or something....]

I believe you could say... what you're asking me, and now I'll throw the question back to you. If I was in a debate ground, I'd do that. Is anger one of the emotions eliminated permanently by the path of seeing? Is it one of the...

[student: I don't know, but according to you, if there is any bad karma that comes from it, that would be no longer accumulated?]

How many did I give you?

[student: Angers?]

What two bad thoughts do you remove permanently when you see emptiness directly? There's only two. Kind of wimpy.

[student: Self-existence.]

The belief in what you see. You still see it, but you don't believe it any more. And what's the other one?

[student: [unclear]]

No, doubt. You cannot doubt Buddhism ever again because you saw emptiness. I'm not going to brag but at that moment, you realize that Buddhism is the correct religion for the world. Seriously. But I wouldn't say that in a public lecture, okay? But it is totally correct. It works, it's true, if you follow it you can get there, you won't suffer any more, and there is such a thing as a Buddha, you will be that, it will take so many lives, you will live them this way, you see all these things. Period. You see it.

[student: So none of the Christian saints ever saw emptiness because they didn't talk about Buddhism when they came out?]

They didn't call it Buddhism, but I don't know.

[student: Michael, how come it's not number three? Because in number three you really know it, not just intellectually.]

Apparently it's enough to have an intellectual understanding not to ever get this sustained wrong view again. Just want you to know that. It's good to know that. Okay, now... Oh, the Book of the Dead, first of all, according to serious Buddhist scholars, is defective. That book is defective. There are similar books which are not defective. That one happens to be defective according to tradition, according to Buddhist tradition. The details are somewhat incorrect. It's very good if you could perceive emptiness at death, but it's the last thing you'll be able to do as you experience that extraordinary suffering, that final suffering, the worst day of your life, the worst five minutes of the worst day of your life. You're into a situation of hallucinations. It's as if someone injected a bottle of Jack Daniels into you. And you have no more ability to think about emptiness unless you've spent your whole life preparing, which is the whole idea, but only what you've done consistently over your whole life will take over at that moment. You're in terrible pain. And beyond that, because of the physical breakdown of your cells and your nerves, you can't sustain a clear thought, you just... the basis for the clear thought is being removed, it's hard, it's very difficult, it's very unlikely, almost impossible, you can't. It's a great goal and there's a big meaning. We will someday cover that subject someday, if we all live to that long. You can learn all that. You can learn it properly. And there is a proper text for that. We'll do it someday.

[student: So the idea of obtaining enlightenment, the options are this life, the bardo...]

To wait until the last minute is... you know it's bad in any endeavor, right?  
[laughs]

[laughter]

[student: When the going gets tough...]

It's unlikely. It's just a bad time to pick. I mean, if you want to do it, do it tonight. [laughs] Excuse me.

[student: I was just saying, of all the options for attaining enlightenment, the ones that are normally mentioned as the ones to really utilize...]

It is a very important moment. It's an extremely important moment. It is the most opportune moment from the point of view of possibilities.

[student: You said it's very unlikely.]

But it's just too... for the mind to do it at that moment, it's extremely difficult. Much better to do a good retreat here and to just finish it now.

[student: The same with the bardo, the idea of...]

No, as you move into the bardo it's very difficult. Once you're in the bardo, it's even worse. According to the scriptures that we've studied which are ancient, those are the real... and if we ever get to that point we'll do it.

[student: Did you say that according to Abidharma the {penjay ki lay} is...]

Has to be only one.

[student: Resulting from one...]

One incident of your life.

[student: One incident. And Mahayana says its many.]

Yeah, they say, come on, the scriptures... but why did they say that? Because one life is one consistent stream, therefore it can't be a hodgepodge of causes because the result is only one. And the only schools say, come on. Okay. We

can finish on time, can you believe that? Give me the {mu shi}, give me the {mu shi}. {mu shi mu su} means when a kid in the monastery doesn't have anything to debate he says, {mu shi mu su [unclear]}, which means, "you can't show me the four permutations of these two, can you?"

[laughter]

When you're a kid in the monastery, you can't think of anything to say, so you say {mu shi mu su [unclear]} and that buys time, because it takes time to go through the permutations, and in the meantime, you might think of something serious.

[laughter]

Think of... I'll say {[unclear]} and I'm going to ask if you can guess, then I'll tell you the classical...let me give you first one. The first {mu} would be, not a cow, okay? Tell me a {penjay ki lay}, tell me a kind of rebirth which is a good {penjay ki lay} but a bad {dzogche ki lay}.

[student: A human birth is good.]

The {penjay} is good. By the way, anything above human is good. It's three good versus three bad. Human, what they call demi-god and god are good. And then hell, animal and {preta} are bad. The {penjay} to be born into one of those three higher realms and especially as a human, is good. And what if the {dzogche} was bad? That's your job. You've got to give us a good {penjay} and a bad {dzogche}.

[student: He's sick.]

He's always sick, yeah, exactly. He has a lot of suffering in his life. So as far as what realm he got to, the shooting karma was great. He got to be a human. But he's sick all the time. That's a good {penjay} and a lousy {dzogche}. So Wilma, you've got to give me now a bad {penjay} and a good {dzogche}.

[student: A bad would be an animal that lived at the temple?]

Yeah. Rinpoche's always saying that about his dogs, because he makes them sit in class and they get all these seeds in their mind from the... yeah, the {penjay} is lower, it's a birth of misery, it's one of the lower three realms, but the {dzogche}

is good. The classical reference in scripture is {shinje she}. {shinje she} means the Lord of Death, and it's not Yamantaka or something like that. This is a real... remember the guy who stands at the pearly gates and, you know... this is the one who stands at the doors of hell. Supposedly, there is such a being. And he's actually... there's a debate whether he's a hell-being or a {preta}. He's got this terrible rebirth, but he's the master of hell, he's the lord of hell and he decides what happens in hell. He's like the big boss in hell. So it's a lousy {penjay} for him, but he gets to be the number one hell guard. So that's one classical example. The other is the nagas. According to Buddhism, they're this class of beings that we cannot see, that have some kind of snake-like qualities except that they are very intelligent and they have great wealth. So they are reborn as kind of like an animal, but they can think, they can talk, they have great jewels that they have in their lands. You can't see them. Nagarjuna went there. He did negotiations with them and brought back scriptures and stuff like that. That's why he was called Naga-Arjuna.

[student: You mentioned earlier about wanting to be reborn in a Buddha's paradise. Is that the same as a form or formless realm?]

No, not at all. And Pabongka and other lamas are always saying, please don't make the boo-boo. [laughs] One is temporary... form and formless is a temporary nice state from which the flowchart normally goes back to hell. And a Buddhist paradise, {tape shinka}, a Buddha field, is totally different, you're outside of something. The Buddha is out of the realms, he's standing outside, he's up in the right-hand corner.

[student: That's the Buddha, but I thought that unless you're a Buddha, you're in one of those six realms.]

[student: That's right.]

No, no, no, no. Not really. No.

[student: But the only person who could go to a Buddha field is a Mahayana arya?]

Long story. Abidharma describes how you can go visit certain places if you're in the company of another person.

[student: So what are the options? You get the six realms? What are the other

options where you can be born other than the six realms?]

No, there are only six realms.

[student: Plus the Buddha field, plus anything else like that.]

Oh, oh, oh, we don't call it a birth. {laydan yomoki won gyu}. To be forced to be born, to be forced by karma and your bad thoughts, that's samsaric birth. They take birth and they're not forced into it.

[student: Are there any other realms like that Buddha field?]

Nothing, no.

[student: In the god realm there's a form and formless, right?]

Well, the god realms start at the top of the desire realm and they spread to the form and formless realm. If you're in the form or formless realm, you're a god. If you're at the top of the desire realm, you can be a god. But what you call "god" is not a... as I said, there's two kinds of gods. One is a worldly god. He is suffering. And then there's a tantric flower or a Buddha flower, that's a totally different being. I call them pleasure beings and angels.

[student: On the Wheel of Life, it's divided into [unclear]?]

[unclear] We'll do that after class if you want. Okay, who's going to give me number three? Stillwell.

[student: What's number three?]

Good and good.

[student: Born as a human and you encounter the dharma and become enlightened.]

Yeah, that sounds good, right?

[laughter]

And [Kinon?]. Bad and bad.

[student: Born as a dog who's treated... like a garbage dog.]

Yeah, I like that. The classic example is a {vichi} hell. A {vichi} hell means {unclear}, the lowest hell of all, the name of it is "no suffering", "no torment". And what it means is torment without stopping. It's a misnomer. And that would be a bad projecting karma and a bad completing karma.

[student: So the guy at the gate of that place, right? That chief honcho who runs the concentration camp as it were, how could you go lower than that? Is he going to end up going to the bottom of the very hell that he runs because of all the things he did there?]

Actually I think he does. Normally it takes him there. That seems to be the way things work.

[student: And by the way, according to Buddhist philosophy, each of us has been in hell many many times, right?]

[student: Michael, you're not talking about purification?]

Not tonight.

But I think I'd better shove it into the syllabus. [laughs] We'll do it. We'll definitely do it. Maybe in the review class. Okay. I did pretty good. It's 9:04, we didn't even turn the clock back.

[laughter]

[student: On the Wheel of Life, you know, they have the white and black panned in, and the three animals, the craving spirit and the hell realms are in white and the humans are in the black.]

I don't think so.

[student: Oh no, I'm sorry, I'm backwards. The humans are in the white, but you described the humans as not being able to generate white karma, but it's not painted that way.]

Well, white in the very technical sense, a narrow sense. But white meaning generally.]

[student: What is... you know, being born in hell for a thousand years in hell versus ten years as a dog... what leads to the one versus the other? Why such a disparity?]

[unclear] It blows up, it increases exponentially.

[student: Michael can you...]

[cut]

Not by me.

[student: So in the idea of Madhyamika Prasangika, you know how perception creates our future karma, our reality? It's not clear to me the distinction between our perception creating it versus our good deeds creating it.]

That's the idea that the perception of your deed is planting a {bakchak}. And then the {bakchak} flowers into a perception of your karma.

[student: So it's not the deed itself, it's the perception of the deed that's important.]

Right. Mainly. Mainly.

[student: So if you stab somebody, and think I'm helping this person...]

Yes, it makes a big difference. But it doesn't make it.. it's not totally dependent on you.

[student: That's what I don't understand... how that actual deed turns into a karmic result since the entire perception is oriented towards "I'm doing goodness", you see.]

Yeah, right, it's difficult for me to understand too. There is some... it's not just your opinion of yourself as you do it..]

[student: There is some objective reality out there or something.]

I don't want to say that...

[student: Well, not self-existent.]

No. There is some essence of the deed if it hurts others that makes it bad.

[student: Yeah, I didn't understand how a {bakchak} actually creates perception in the Madhyamika Prasangika.]

You mean how it flowers?

Yeah. Well, you actually do a deed, right? It comes to conclusion, you plant a {bakchak} and in the end... I just helped somebody, I plant this {bakchak} of doing good, how does that....]

How does it... You know, I don't see any... no, I know what you mean, but I don't see any deeper than that, it doesn't get that far. The content part, you know, somebody in the other class said, why should the content part be the opposite? You're doing a bad deed to someone else, shouldn't the result be out to someone else? I don't know.

[student: It's almost like, by definition, at the most basic level of definition, in karma we say a good deed is something which brings pleasure?]

Yeah?

[student: Well, you could almost say a bad deed is something that brings pleasure and substitute that through all logical reasonings and all the logical reasonings would still hold. If you change your base definition, your base definition is "helping someone brings pleasure, right? And then everything else, all the other logic...]

No, I didn't say that.

[student: Huh?]

I said a good karma is something that brings pleasure.

[student: What I was saying is that the idea of a good karma is something that brings you pleasure.]

The definition of good karma is... anything that brings you pleasure is good karma.

Right, right. And then we go on to say, what is that? Is benefitting others?

Well, they don't say that much.

[student: That's what the whole Lam Rim's about. Isn't it?]

What if you just leave it like that?

[student: I know, I know.]

A karmic result [unclear] is a good deed.

[student: Well, that's the thing for me, you know? The base definition is faultless, a good karma brings you pleasure, but then the whole Lam Rim...]

Anything that brings you pleasure is caused by good karma. Karmically.

[student: Yeah, okay, so anything that brings you pleasure is good karma. And then the whole Lam Rim goes on to say...]

[student: Michael?]

You want me to lock it up?

[student: Yes, if you want to.]

Let me come back.

[cut]

It's not necessary to do as they're suggesting. You see, when you do something at work and it works, it's not necessarily anything to do with what you did. When something changes, it could just be the good karma of having tried to help the person rather than the outside mechanism actually working the way we normally...

[student: Can it have that rapid an influence, by the way?]

Yeah.

[student: It can happen almost immediately?]

Yeah. But it often doesn't and that's why it doesn't always work and that's why people get frustrated. With dogs, who still pee....

[student: Since you're still on this, can you clarify something? I read the last few pages of the reading from last week's class and I still couldn't quite grasp the relationship between a being's perception of an object and the functioning of the object and how those two are connected.]

The point is that because they're empty, that gives them room to be functional. And most people think the opposite. They think that if they were empty, they couldn't function. But the truth is, that because they're empty, it makes room for them to be functional.

[student: The question that was asked about, you know, is blood and pus real for a craving spirit...]

The question was—is it actual.

[student: Is it actual and why not? My answer was, it is for that craving spirit because it functions to hurt them. But I didn't quite understand that answer.]

Well, what's the test of whether something is real? That it can affect you. If it can produce an effect on you, it is real.

[student: The only measure of reality is whether or not it functions in relation to an individual's perception?]

The ultimate test of reality is: can you perceive it with a {pramana}. An additional confirmation would be, can it affect anything. But not all existing things affect anything, so really the main test is whether or not you can see it with a {pramana}. For you not to be drunk, not to be crazy, and you just see it, then it exists. Actually in that case it's also functioning to produce a perception. But anyway, when it starts to affect you, it has some reality. Those are the two arguments for why it's actual pus and blood. (A) he can see it and he's not crazy, and then (B), it affects him.

[student: And whether or not that's valid for any other being...]

Oh, there go the cookies.

[student: Oh dear.]

I got it. [laughter]

[student: Wouldn't it be nice if people stopped [unclear]?]

[unclear]

Ask Pelma.

[student: In Madhyamika Prasangika, people say, this is my past karma that caused this to happen to me. Really, who they are at that moment in time is their past karma. Is that correct?]

Well, the Abidharma system would be closer to that. They say, in the Abidharma view, that the person is in the form of his karma.

[student: Right.]

That's not the [unclear].

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Could you say that again, please?]

Yes. There's this whole thing about the person being his karma.

The past has led them to be what they are now, [unclear] all because karma is who they are now.

[student: But it's also gotten a little...]

[unclear]

[student: Would you mind if I asked you one more quick question?]

I don't mind. But ask me quick. My dogs are waiting for me.

[student: The idea of when karma ripens, you know? There's this idea that you've got all these {bakchaks} floating around and all this stuff is coming together and arising and you're perceiving things in a certain way. What determines when a karma ripens? Is it by us consciously doing things, that we lay some kind of foundation that creates the causes and conditions for the events to come together and have them happen?]

I'm not too clear on it, but tonight I read some stuff that said, they talked about this queuing... in computers they call it queuing, you know? Who goes up in front of the queue? And they said it was determined by the power of the deed, the power of the object. Some deeds are so powerful that they can bump other deeds back.

[student: Isn't there also some kind of synergy between... Well, in the sense that say you have a preponderance of karma that came from killing, that's more likely to appear and manifest as killing [unclear]]

He's talking about timing.

[student: Why does it ripen now versus later? For example, I've really focused my mind on working on my issues around...]

So, could you ripen them?

[student: At this moment, so I could deal with them, or by virtue of me working on who I am and the nature of the functioning of my mind and perception, do all those karmic seeds come to fruition or ripen now, or some of them, or...]

[student: Wasn't that what they say happens when you do purification practice? All these obstacles start arising...]

They say that. Yeah, yeah, they say that. In the Mahayana schools.

[student: So in terms of the timing of the ripening of the karma...]

[student: It can affect you.]

They say that. They definitely say...the scripture that says you can lower your karma by getting mad at a Boddhisattva, the same scripture says right after that, that you can also short-circuit the bad karma and then get a headache instead of going to hell. They say that.

[student: Would you [unclear]]

[student: Could we have one additional session in which students could bring the questions that come out of the rooms?]

I used to do that, and you know what's even better about it, is that I used to get the really important ones and go ask big lamas to speak about it.]

End

Collection of Merit *tsunam ke tsog* first 4 perfections giving, ethics, patience, effort

Collection of Wisdom *yeshe ke tsog* last 2 perfections concentration and wisdom

Form Body generated by collection of merit Physical body, either in Buddha Paradise or Sambhogakaya/Nirmanakaya emanation body on earth

Dharma Body generated by collection of wisdom Emptiness (negative) and Mind/knowledge (positive) Dharmakaya Wisdom is the knowledge that understands Emptiness

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

### Class Nine: Five Heinous Deeds

November 17, 1994

transcribed by: Mira Prabha

What did we do last class? [laughter] Oh yeah, this is worse, okay? Tonight is worse. But anyway, I thought you should know the bad ones. At least you can avoid them. This is {sum me na}, these are the five worst bad deeds, I don't how to pronounce it, heinous?

[student: Heinous.]

{sum} here means "interim". And {me} means "no interim". And what it means is that if you do one of these five in this life, you will be reborn in hell and you won't have any other births in between, you must go to hell your very next life and there's no other possibility.

[student: How do you get out of hell?]

You wear out the bad deeds. You just suffer and the bad deeds, the {bakchaks}, flower. And then they finish and sooner or later you stop seeing hell and you start seeing another birth.

[student: What leads to that?]

It just wears out. There's a priority system, right? So whichever ones were stronger, whichever {bakchaks} were stronger, and whichever were toward a more holy object, those get worn out first... they assert themselves earliest because they're stronger. And then as those wear out, the ones waiting behind them in queue start to assert themselves. Finally you don't have any more {bakchaks} to experience in life because you've worn them out. But you can die in those hells and be beaten to death and then just wake up again and they keep beating you until you die and wake you again...

[student: In the last class you talked about why anger was so much more powerful than virtue. You said you'd answer it today.]

Today? [laughter]. I don't know. John, you were there in Arizona, maybe you

remember? [laughs]

[student: I actually asked the question, why doesn't one moment of anger destroy one moment of virtue. He just said you can't understand the subtle workings of karma.]

[laughs] You can't understand the subtle workings of karma.

[laughter]

[student: I'll ask it again eventually.]

I'll check, I will check, I forgot the answer. But I should ask Rinpoche. There's a long thing in the Madhyamika scriptures because it's so extraordinary. Shantideva's statement that you lose a hundred kalpas for one second of anger is so extraordinary that they do discuss this [unclear].

[student: Could you say something about the meanings of merit and virtue? Are you using that interchangeably with {bakchaks}?)

I'm using them interchangeably. Technically merit and virtue, {sem men} and {gewa}, are a little bit different.

[student: When people say, you know, you're accumulating merit...]

You can think of good karma, which is {bakchaks}.

[student: So you've got to accumulate a lot of a certain kind of {bakchak} is all they're saying.

Yeah.

[student: [unclear]]

Not the kind of {bakchak} that creates a {namen}, a ripening, result, technically, a result of temporary pleasure or temporary pain.

[student: It's only [unclear] so in a certain sense...]

Well, no, you must collect virtue, because those virtues allow you... the definition

of virtue was what? In the short run blah blah blah... in the long run there is that goodness. You do have to create jillions of {bakchaks} to see yourself as a Buddha. That's true. And then while you're being a Buddha they feed on each other, you achieve fusion? You know, where the fuel creates more energy than...the result [unclear] than the fuel. And that's what it's doing. Okay. {sam me na}. {sam} means "intermediate birth." {me} means none, {na} means "five". So we call them the five immediate misdeeds, five immediate bad deeds. "Immediate" means there's no medium between them. You do it in this life... in the life in which you collect the karma, you must experience hell as—which of those three—do you remember the three experiences?

[student: Immediate... it makes...]

Yeah. One kind of karma you have experiences in this life, one kind of karma you have experiences in beyond the next life and then this is that middle one. {ken yin yong [unclear]}. You must experience it in the next life, immediately, with no intermediate life. Is there no bardo? No, there is a bardo. Some Buddhist scholars have said that means there's no bardo but that's not true, they don't accept that. Immediate means in the next rebirth life. They don't count bardo in that category.

[student: So it's not just an experiencing of the result in the next life, it also produces the next life?]

It is a {penjay ki lay}. It must be. But we'll get into that.

[student: Michael, if Maitreya makes his presence known, does that have any effect on...]

You couldn't see him.

[student: If you were in hell?]

No, I mean... people who do these and people who {gesa che}, you know, who cut that root virtue, they have...they create what are called {jepas} and {jepas} are like {bakchaks}. They're a kind of energy that stays in your mental stream and they obstruct you from seeing those beings, you couldn't see them. You'd go to see the Dalai Lama and you'd get into a car accident. [laughs] You couldn't see them. There was a monk named Mekar, who served the Buddha for twelve years and he said "I never saw any worthwhile quality that he had." [laughs]

The quote is in the sutras. “He has this little halo around his head, otherwise I’ve never seen anything extraordinary. I’ve served him for twelve years and I haven’t seen anything unusual about him at all.” So it’s possible. {sam men ga}. So I’ll give you the five... they’re very important to know, obviously. It’s a big subject in the Abidharma and it’s accepted by all schools. Say {maa} [repeat] {sepa} [repeat] {maa} [repeat] {sepa} [repeat]. What do you think {maa} means? [laughs] {maa} means mother, {sepa} means “to kill.” To kill your mother. That’s the first in the list. By the way, the first in the list doesn’t mean the most serious. We’re going to get into that later. This list is in the traditional order but it’s not in order of any severity. So {maa sepa} is the first one. You’ll see a debate in your reading, I thought you’d find it interesting so I threw it in there since I have time now that I’m not working. It’s this—what if a woman conceives a child, and then the embryo is transferred to the womb of another woman? Which woman does he have to kill to get a {maa sepa}? [laughs]. [laughter] After he’s born and grows up. And they say the one who conceived him. Even if he spent all eight months or something in another woman’s womb.

[student: What if the woman dies in childbirth? [unclear]]

There are four ways of being born and it’s covered in the first chapter I think, or the second chapter. There’s a list. There’s four ways. You can be born from an egg, from a womb, from heat and wetness and then you can be born complete, like Padmasambhava was born complete just as the hellbeings are born complete. They just show up there, all ready to suffer. They don’t go through a childhood. And they say those births are rated by preference and the womb birth is rated low because it hurts the mother so much. But I don’t think... there’s no intention, right? There’s no identification, there’s no undertaking, the only thing you have is the completion. So probably some karma. By the way, the whole point of talking about those four elements, and then the three elements inside the second element, was that you can decide yourself on what is a good deed. It’s not a full karmic path, but you know there was a completion if she did have the pain. Then there’s this debate about, if your father changes sexes [laughter] and then you kill him, is it still a killing of your father? And they say yes, when he contributed his part he was a man. There is a lot of that in these books.

[student: So is one considered worse than the other?]

I’m going to talk about it.

[student: Just in case we have the urge.] [laughter]

[student: We need to know.]

I think you can get close. I was close. My mother asked me to help kill her when she had cancer. And then I also... I told her to take Tibetan medicine and not to do her radiation treatment. You have to be careful about it. You can, out of carelessness, you can contribute.

[student: So if you'd said yes and you went ahead and gave them permission and they pulled the plug right before she would have died anyway and you didn't know the difference, it wouldn't have been a complete karma?]

Yeah. Right. But luckily I didn't make the decision. Okay. Say {da chemba sempa}. [repeat]. What's {da chemba}? Arhat, okay? {da} means "enemy". What's your big enemy?

[student: Ignorance.]

Mainly ignorance, but the other five major afflictions, you know, pride, anger, hatred.... {da} is "enemy," {jo} means "to destroy," {arhat} means "foe destroyer". Sometimes you see it translated as "foe destroyer." And if you remove those permanently, you achieve nirvana. So you could have done it this afternoon, you could do it tonight.

[student: {sepa} means "to kill"?)

Yeah. {sepa} means to kill, so to kill an arhat. Say {gendin kyi} [repeat] {yen chepa} [repeat]. {gendin kyi} [repeat] {yen chepa} [repeat]. {gendin} means what? Do you know? The first Dalai Lama's name. {gendin} means "sangha," the sangha, the community of monks. It has to be...technically, when, you study Vinaya, it has to be four monks or more. You don't have a {gendin}, it's like a quorum of monks. A single monk is not called a {gendin}. You say {gen long}. And then four monks or more is a {gendin}. So {yen} means "to divide," or "to split up". {chepa} means "to do that". So this means to cause a schism among the monks. To split up the monks. {gendin kyi yen chepa}.

[student: In the previous one, did we have to have proper identification? In the last class you....]

That's a good question.

[student: You said the motivation didn't matter.]

Well, they said it was less important in the case of that extraordinary object, in the case of a Boddhisattva. I don't believe you have to. I think it's from the point of view of their being such an extraordinary object and not to do with your motivation. I don't think you have to know that they're a {drachoma} to get that karma. In fact I can think of an example. Uddiyana was killed by his son and I don't believe he had any idea he was the Maharaja's son. I don't remember any mention that the son cared or knew about him.

[student: You can get bad karma just for thinking badly or speaking badly to an arhat whether you know that's what they are or not, according to what the Buddha taught us in the last class. Because you don't know.]

You get a full karmic path... you know, it would seem like you'd have to know to collect a full karma. Would it still be a {sam me} if you didn't have identification? I believe it is. Just from the extraordinary nature of the object. Last one. It's a long one. Say {deshe la} [repeat] {nyen sem kye} [repeat] {chag jimba} [repeat]. {desheg} means a "Buddha", {deshe shepa}, {sugatha}, those who've gone to heaven. {la} "to him", {nyen sem kye}, {nyen sem} means "with evil intention." And it means that you really wanted to kill him. It means you were really intending to kill him. {chag jimba}... {chag} means "blood" and {jimba} means to draw, to draw the blood of a Buddha with evil intentions. This is Abidharma system, right? Because a Buddha can't suffer, obviously. But there is a story in the Hinayana scriptures, well, it's in the scriptures, that the Buddha's halfbrother, who was insanely jealous of the Buddha throughout his whole life, you know, prepared... and several people tried to murder him... people invited him to dinner and tried to murder him. It wasn't like....nothing worked. His brother made a catapult, and waited for him, shot the catapult, it hit the Buddha's leg and made a small cut on his foot. In the Mahayana way, the Buddha was just allowing him to do it and pretending to bleed, but the Buddha can't...technically a Buddha can't suffer. But the Abidharma position is just to even try to do it is the bad deed.

[student: So to try to kill?]

It means to try to kill a Buddha, but it does say that to draw blood from a Buddha with evil intention. Those five can get you to hell directly. [unclear]

Yeah?

[student: Michael, number four, to cause a schism? In a very clear situation, for instance if you have a [unclear] when you have a teacher who isn't that great?]  
[laughs] [laughter] No, no, no, I didn't say that...]

We're going to go into it very deeply. We're going to spend a lot of time on it. By the way, now that you've mentioned it, number four of all of them will always cause you to be born in the lowest hell. It's called a {vichi}. Hell where you have absolutely not a second's respite. Not a second...there isn't a single moment where you're not experiencing the pain which is beyond any pain that any one can feel in this realm.

[student: Why is that?]

We're going to talk about it.

[student: We discussed this in a previous course and you emphasized on several different occasions that it's impossible technically to...]

We're going to talk about it. I know. [laughs] I know. [laughs] Trust me, trust me. So the other four, you have to go to hell but not necessarily to the lowest hell. All right? Number four, {gendin kyi yen che}, to split up the sangha, for that you must go to the lowest hell and you must stay there for one {parkel}. {parkel}...there's a beautiful thing in the Abidharma third chapter. It describes how the universe forms over the period of.. I think it's sixty kalpas. I tried to figure out what a kalpa... a kalpa is very difficult. Guten Rinpoche back in the 1300's tried to calculate it. The definition of a kalpa is something like that. The first people on this planet lived in a paradise, like a garden of Eden. Their lifespan is up to 80,000 years long. They lived to 80,000. And then they start to mess up. And there's a beautiful story. It's very similar to the Garden of Eden story. And they start to commit non-virtues. And then eventually, because of that, generation after generation, they reach a point where people live only ten years. So to calculate the length of an eon, of a kalpa, you have to do this mathematically. I haven't got this straight. It's many many zeroes, sixty zeroes or something like that.

[student: Is this in the Abidharma?]

It's accepted in all schools.

[student: No, but I mean the story.]

It's in the third chapter. It's at the end. I can give it to you sometime.

[student: Is every world system like that or...]

Every world system follows the same pattern. So that's one called the {parkel}. And there's sixty of those cycles. Then the people start...it's like a nuclear war, it's very similar to a nuclear war and only the people living out in the wilderness survive and then they meet in the towns that are ruined and destroyed and the people are all dead and they say, look, this is terrible, we should really follow the ten virtues. So they all decide to follow them and then the lifespan starts to increase. So there's this huge thing. That's a {parkel}. The time it takes to 80,000 years of life spans in one generation down to ten again. That's a {parkel}. Sixty of those make a great eon. And a great eon has the formation of the world, that takes a kalpa, and then the destruction of the world by one of several means, one of which is like an atomic fire, one is like the sun supernovas and destroys the planet. And it's beautiful. It's in the Abidharma. So a kalpa is a helluva long time, no pun intended, and you have to stay a {parkel} in the lowest hell.

[student: {parkel} is....]

{parkel} is one of those loops.

[student: One-sixtieth of...]

I don't even want to guess, but it's trillions of years. Yeah?

[student: What happens if someone causes a schism in the sangha from the laity, in the non-clergy? Is that...?]

We'll talk about it. Okay.

[student: Causes a schism in the sangha, or in the community of monks? Where do you mean? Aryas or...]

We'll talk about it. Everything we're talking about tonight is this {sam me}, this is a very specific deed and I'm going to talk more about it. By the way, when I say "sangha," I mean ordained monks, I don't mean... he's talking about literal

sangha. Literal sangha is anyone who's seen emptiness directly. Once you've seen emptiness directly you're sangha, you're the real sangha, and we're the figurative sangha, people who wear robes are not the real sangha.

[student: So this refers to the real or the figurative?]

The figurative.

[student: The figurative, okay.]

Okay. We have another profile, a profile of the person who commits this. And then you get into...you see, this deed, the {sam me}, the immediate mis-deed of this, has to be done, luckily, while the Buddha is on the planet, while the historical Buddha is on the planet, because it's dividing his direct followers.

[student: Oh, so it's only his monks.]

We can't do this. We cannot commit this crime. It has to be done while the Buddha is present, on the planet.

[student: Is this number five?]

No, number four again. The splitting up of the monks has to be done on this planet, and it's a historical event, it's a historical pattern that reoccurs on each planet and there's a lot of details about when it can take place. But basically...I better give you all the details. [laughs] The monk who does the split, the monk who incites the split, first of all, he's a monk, he's a full monk, he's a bhikshu. He has to be a full monk. Secondly, he has a very good morality, he keeps his morality very well. Thirdly, he's very intelligent, he's the intellectual type. They say he has to be pretty attractive, he has to be charismatic, because he has to break up the followers of the Buddha, so he's not a dumbhead, well, he's an ultimate dumbhead, [laughs] but he knows his stuff, he can recite all the scriptures, he's a...what do you call it? His reputation is good, he's a good monk and then he sets forth a list of five things to achieve nirvana and they don't have anything to do with... you can't eat [unclear], you shouldn't wear these robes with the patches on them, things like that. It's a list. Don't eat meat.

[student: They say this is the case with all world systems or just this one...?]

It seems to be that the Abidharma is saying that this is a pattern in world

systems. But there's always... you can read it in your reading, but there's a limit of time. It can only happen twelve years after the Buddha has first started teaching. During the first twelve years of the Buddha's teaching everyone is so happy and so into it that they have this special unity, and it can't happen. And it's like a dharma center. You know, when you're first learning everything it's very fresh, very interesting. Sooner or later I'll run out of interesting new things to tell you and then it's just whether you practice them or not, you know. Right now it's kind of interesting not only because you're practicing but because it's the first time you've heard a lot of this. There will come a time when you will have heard everything and I can get up here and repeat it but then it's just a question of whether you've practiced it or not, and then it's not as fresh, it's not as interesting, I can tell you. And it's a very dangerous stage to reach, they describe it in the scriptures, it's called butter on leather, like if you keep buttering the leather pouch, then sooner or later the pouch gets saturated and starts to crack and can't absorb any more butter. And that's a danger, it's a spiritual danger, that you reach a point when you've heard all these things, and what you're really attracted is more information and not practicing it. [laughs] That's a very dangerous point. So anyway, it can't happen right after the Buddha's... it doesn't happen also right after the Buddha starts teaching. Everyone is so happy. The twelve-year thing is that after the Buddha starts teaching, and as his followers spread out over that country or that planet, they start to introduce corruption into the teachings. And the last page of the Abidharma is very sad, you cry when you read it, you know, you spend two, three, four years studying Abidharma, you get to the last page and the Buddha describes how these teachings will die. He goes long descriptions of how they will die and when they will and why they will die. His own teachings, he sees they will die out.

[student: The Abidharma was written by the Buddha?]

No, but Vasubandhu...it's pretty much a compendium from the sutras. So he quotes the... and if you get to read the sutras eventually, they're quite nice, you see everything. Yesterday I found a lot of quotations. They say that the Tibetan Buddhists made up all these things about lama devotion but the sutras are even more radical. I was reading one yesterday, it's a thousand pages long, very powerful. So... it can't happen right after the Buddha starts teaching. It cannot happen in the first twelve years. It cannot happen at the end of his life. We call it when he reaches his final nirvana. I always used to be confused about that expression. You hear it in Hinayana a lot, you know, the Buddha reached his final nirvana. I said—what's the difference between his final nirvana and his original nirvana? Is it really nirvana because he achieved nirvana a long time

before that? He got rid of his bad thought? I always used to confuse it. That nirvana has nothing to do with the normal nirvana. It just means for the Buddha to withdraw his emanation from this planet. So when they say the Buddha reaches his parinirvana, it has nothing to do with nirvana, it's just the act of withdrawing his emanation from this planet. According to Mahayana, he doesn't die, obviously he doesn't die. He just decides to withdraw... he doesn't even decide. It's an automatic process when there's not enough people on the planet to benefit, it's like Sodom and Gomorrah, if there's not one good person on the planet, the emanation is withdrawn automatically. He appears to die.

[student: Is the point of teaching four and five now, when that's not an issue, is to keep that line pure so that information keeps...]

That's one, and then we're going to talk more about it. There's what we call the {nyu way tambe}, the "close to the five". There's five that are close to the five. They also lead to the hell realms. Definitely. What else? It cannot occur before the two major students appear, that's Shariputra and Maudgalayana. You want their names? These are called the supreme pair, they're called the pair, and the only other place where the word pair is used is in the secret teachings for a special [unclear]. It involves the [unclear] in tantric enlightenment. But anyway, that supreme pair must be on the planet for the schism to occur because they patch it up within 24 hours. One of them brings the monks back together within 24 hours.

[student: You mean this is a pattern that takes place every time....]

It seems to be a pattern that happens.. it seems like that. That's the meaning you get when you translate it, yeah.

[student: This is so strangely detailed.]

Yeah, it is. It can't happen after the Buddha... I'm sorry, the reason it couldn't happen right after he passed away is that everyone is too sad. There's a unity brought about by the depression of the students. They're so upset, they're so mutually and communally upset that they can't think to have a schism. And you'll see the others in your reading. Yeah?

[student: Are you describing something that inevitably happens every time a Buddha appears, or if it's going to happen while a Buddha appears....?]

I can't... I don't know for sure. The Abidharmas say that this particular Buddha, Shakyamuni, by the way, there are thousands of Buddhas. If you read the scriptures, then you'll see. Shakyamuni was not the first, he's not the last. There's a thousand in just this eon, just in this world there'll be a thousand. On other planets there have been many others. And the Abidharma says that when he was a Bodhisattva in a previous life, he caused dissension between the followers of another Buddha and as a karmic result, he has to go through this thing. But that would be a kind of suffering. It's not acceptable in the higher school. But there is a process by which for 24 hours a certain monk... and it also can't take place in the direct presence of the Buddha. He goes out for a while to another place, and then there's a troublemaker who splits up the monks during that time. It all sounds very... once you put it in a nice historical perspective, you get sort of this relief that you can't do it nowadays. But the reason I want to spend so much time on it is that you know and I know that most dharma centers have some dissension. It's not the exception, it's almost the rule. Tibetans would say that it stems from the goodness of the activity, that it attracts obstacles, that the practice of trying to improve your spiritual life attracts demons. And if you've never met a demon you think they don't exist. The day you meet a demon you'll know. The day you really recognize a demon. There is such a thing. There are demons.

[student: You mean a person who....?]

There are people who are demons. They do do things like that. And you will know it. The day you meet one you'll say, oh, there really are demons. It wasn't just a thing....and it's very dangerous, it's very dangerous.

[student: Is this guy supposed to be a demon? No?]

No. We cannot commit this one. He's worse than a demon. If you need a demon, that's a demon.

[student: I don't know what you mean by a demon. A person...]

I mean that you will meet a being who looks like a person that you have known and who you thought was a regular human being and he'll, in a very mild way, suggest that you do something, you know, try to sway you toward a certain action, and at that moment, he truly is a demon, he is a spirit who's not a human being, an evil spirit who wants to harm you.

[student: Why isn't he just a human being trying to harm you?]

[laughs]

[student: No, but you know, all the time humans are trying to introduce you to things that are not virtuous.]

I know. Not that. It will come at a very important time, at the most important time, at a very crucial time, like when if you made a mistake you could make a whole lifetime [unclear]. Anyway, what I'm trying to say is that... I just want to anticipate it. As this group gets larger, or as this group goes on longer, [unclear], you will meet the person in this group who irritates you. It's always happens. And it happened to me. I confess it. I found people in my life that I disliked the strongest of anybody. And it took me many years... what I say is don't give in to it, and don't believe it. It's a very evil thing, it's a very bad thing, dirty thing, and it'll happen. You will meet someone in this study that you really don't like, or you will start to draw judgements about other traditions of Buddhism. Just don't do it. Be happy, study on your own, do your best not to feel that way. If you can't overcome it, avoid the person, but don't ever let it reach a point where you're sure that you're right. You're wrong. And don't believe yourself. [laughs] And it will come, it will come. And I will hate to see it, I know it will come some day. You know, I've seen students leave dharma centers because of the politics in the dharma centers, people grabbing for power and they can't agree with each other. It will come, the longer we go, the better we do, the more serious, something will come. There have been horrible divisions in major centers and I want to anticipate it, and I want to say that, when the day comes—maybe it already happened that you met that person who really bothers you—[laughs]—you say: I don't believe that this person could do this to me. It's probably you. [laughter] Don't give in to it. Fight it, it's a demon, and it's a real bad thing, and it's not a {tambe kyi lay}, you don't collect a karma which must take you to the lowest hell in the very next life, but I assure you it's close, I'm sure it takes you to hell, to cause any kind of disunity among dharma students, I think it's very very very bad. With other centers, and other lamas and other traditions... I don't say you have to believe them, because I correctly believe, I believe, that some of them are flatly wrong, and I think the scriptures show it, and I wouldn't follow those people and I think the longer you study, the more educated you become as a Buddhist and you know, because these are the scriptures, and it makes sense, but you do not criticize them, and you do not criticize their followers. The Dalai Lama is very good in that way. He's very good... you know, the questions come, and he... [laughs]...like jumps out of the

way. He's very good. There's a lot of things a Buddhist scholar like him could say to blow away Christians, and then, on the other hand, he just takes great pains to make sure that everyone feels good and that he respects the good points of each religion. I just anticipate it and I say that when the day comes, you're in this class, you go over there to have tea, somebody says something, you really hate this person, don't believe it, stop it at the root, stop it at the beginning. We don't have it now, we will have it probably. Stop it as it comes up. It is a very horrible bad deed and we'll see why. The reason why... well, we'll do it later.

[student: Can I ask you a pragmatic question?]

Yeah.

[student: What if you are associated with a dharma center, [unclear] sitting on a governing board and you have to make certain decisions, and you either have to get rid of people, and a teacher. What about that? [unclear]]

I've had this problem and there's another thing, it happens in a monastery. One monk has...he's dishonored the robes, or something he's done, which is flatly... it's in the Vinaya, the process for removing that person from the monastery is in the Vinaya and it's required. You're required to remove the person from the monastery, depending on whether he confesses, or gives up his viewpoints, or depending on what he does. He can stay in the monastery and take a lower position, or you are required to ask him to leave. But it's very delicate... the territory there is very delicate. In the Bodhisattva vows, you're (not? -- unclear) allowed to kick out certain people from the monastery, you know. Because they're not meditating enough, or they're not studying enough, they're concentrating on one of the others. And this is very delicate. I think you have to be very careful and if the person has dishonored the... you know, if the person is truly an evil influence, you have to get the person out of there. And it's a very hard decision, it's a very very difficult thing to do, and you have to... I think the general thing to do is to think of them as your mother. [laughs] If he was your mother, would you do that? And in some cases, you would. To protect the group. So it's a very delicate question, a very difficult question. I've been involved with that among the monks. We had that kind of a... it's very delicate. You have to be very very compassionate and you have to make sure that it's really hurting the spiritual progress of the monks. That's a big decision. The Buddha used to leave those decisions to Shariputra because he could read people's minds. [laughs] [laughter] One day he made a mistake and the Buddha

called the person back. [laughter] He was [unclear]. All right. So that's {gandin kyi yen che}. By the way, this is also called the "breaking of the wheel". Which wheel do you guess?

[student: What's it called?]

It's called "breaking the wheel of the dharma". I'm concentrating now on the schism. It's also called the "breaking of the wheel of the dharma." Especially in the Abidharma system, the true wheel of the dharma is the understandings of selflessness, and during this 24 hour period, no one in the world can perceive emptiness directly. It's the nature of that disruption of the harmony of the whole world. No one can achieve a new path, a new realization. People's study is disrupted, people can't think straight, people can't recite scriptures, all these... you'll read it in your reading. It's very... you get the feeling that it's such a horrible deed, it's such a terrible thing, that it disrupts the vibrations of the entire planet. People cannot enter into deep meditation during that 24 hours, and it's very disruptive. It's also in a dharma center, you know that, you've seen centers like that, you know, when it went rotten it disrupted everyone's practice.

[student: Did you say it has a similar planetary effect on a lesser scale?]

Yeah, I would say so. I think I've seen that. So that's also called "breaking the wheel of the teachings." You know that {dharmachaya}, eight-spoked wheel of the teachings. I think we'll take a break.

[student: Can we get the English for number five [unclear]?]

Killing your mother...

[student: No, that last one, you didn't do it in translation.]

Oh, I'm sorry.

[student: I did the Tibetan [unclear].]

Why are these so bad? What's so bad about it? Why is it just those five and no other deeds? All right? And there's an explanation. Things that make it so... I guess we could say four. [laughter] No, because there's two combinations of two. Say {pembe shi}[repeat] {pembe shi} [repeat]. {pembe} means "assistance" or "help". {pemba shi} means "an object of assistance." And what it means is

this... you had it in the study of the four parts in the deed. It was the object towards which you did the deed? So that's here. The {shi} means "basis", but it means the object towards whom you do the deed. How many of them are killing? What's the nature of those five deed? Three of them are murder, then... nature of the bad deed of the schism is not the schism itself, it's the lie that the monk has to do to produce the schism, he proposes this new route to Nirvana and he gives you these five things and that's a lie.

[student: So you're presupposing he's intentionally doing it and not just...]

No, he does.

[student: He knows better, and he just wants to divide the sangha.]

He's lying.

[student: It's not out of ignorance that he thinks he knows a better way...]

Apparently not. It's a {du ma}, it's a lie.

[student: Can you explain how, in one or two sentences, a person could want to kill a Buddha, divide a sangha or cause evil?]

It's pretty... by the way, the last one is attempted murder. So we've got three murders, one attempted murder and one lie. I don't know. Why does anyone do a bad deed? Why did the Germans kill the Jews? You get into a milieu in which even a good person gets swept away, you know that, you know that we're very capable of very horrible things if we get into the wrong circumstances. Any one of us. We're lucky that we're not hungry, that we don't need a place to stay, or that we don't need money for a habit, that we're fortunate human beings. I remember when the oil crisis happened. I used to be so proud of Americans because they weren't like the Indians who beat each other to get on a bus... but then all these fights broke out and all these people shot each other. I remember that. And then it occurred to me that we're all the same. It's not that we're better, it's just that we didn't need it. It can happen to anybody. {pembe shi}. So {pembe shi} means help, and two of those objects qualify here. What are they? There are five objects involved in those five bad deeds. Two of them are special because they have helped you?

[student: Buddha and the arhat, or your mother?]

Or your parents. I mean, specifically, material help in this life. Your mother and your father.

[student: Oh, the {pembe shi}?)

Yeah. They are an extraordinary object. When you kill them, as opposed to killing anyone else, it qualifies as an immediate misdeed, as one of the five big ones, because of the benefit they have given you. And I studied that last night. It's very interesting. Nowhere did I see much mention of gestating you or feeding you or taking care of you, or you know, if was all, every mention of them, was that they gave you a body to reach Nirvana and Buddhahood, they gave you a life with which you could achieve enlightenment. So it doesn't matter whether they're a good mommy or a bad mommy or a nice daddy or a lousy daddy...

[student: They gave you life.]

They gave you life. Once you have a life, you can practice Buddhism, you can reach ultimate goals. That in itself, without anything else, without any good attitude on their side... I have a lot of Americans say, well, my mother's lousy. [laughs] Just the suffering... she probably put out more suffering for you than anybody else ever will in this life, but the main thing is that... no one can deny that they have given you a life which you can use to practice, you can use to reach the ultimate goals. I'll do two modes...one is...

[student: Michael, {pembe shi}, so far you say that means "help."]

Yeah, "object of help". It means that two of the five fall into here mainly. Two modes of thinking going on here that also are... when you talk about what makes the deed an immediate deed, what makes it so bad? There's these two attitudes towards the {pembe shi}. One is the rejection of them, one is to say... mentally, before you can kill your parents, you are rejecting the idea, you are almost rejecting the idea of your own Buddhahood. It's some kind of rejection of the benefit they are giving you. There's an attitude of rejection.

[student: Why do you say it's like rejecting your own Buddhahood?]

You're like... you have no recognition of what they are. You're rejecting that concept. You're rejecting the idea that they have given you this benefit. So the

first part of the attitude is that you're rejecting your parents.

[student: Could you also say by extension you're rejecting, because of emptiness, you're rejecting, it's your projection, you're seeing your stuff, not really your parents, and it's your own karma?]

Ultimately, if there's anything bad about your parents, it's you. And the day that you recognize that you'll be close to arhatship because then you won't do violence against this illusion. Okay. Rejection and elimination. Elimination means you actually take steps to kill them. The sutra says you create conditions for the non-continuation of their life-force. [laughs]. You kill them. You eliminate them. Those are two attitudes going on. One is sort of a rejection, it's like an estrangement, this thing I don't need, this is garbage... Say {yunden kyi shi} [repeat] {yunden kyi shi} [repeat]. {shi} is the object and {yunden} means an extraordinarily good personal quality. What would you call it? Fine qualities? Extraordinary qualities? And that applies to the last three. What was those?

[student: Killing the Buddha, killing the arhat, and sangha.]

Yeah, right, arhat, sangha and Buddha. In that order, actually. They are just extraordinary... and we talked about it with the Bodhisattva. It doesn't matter what your intention is much. It doesn't matter much how you undertake it. Even the completion is not so important. It's just that they are just so holy that anything you do towards them is magnified. I always tell people, if somebody had the last bottle of the only cure for AIDS, you know, if that were possible, if there could be a vaccine or elixir that would fix people with AIDS, which doesn't exist now, and if one person had the only...

[cut]

other than all the AIDS vaccines that were ever invented. It's more important, and more rare, in the world, more valuable. So that person becomes a {yunden kyi shi}. Anyone who holds that bottle is a {yunden kyi shi}. You reject them and you eliminate them in two cases, you reject the arhat and you eliminate him. You reject the concept of the unity of the sangha and you break it. What about the Buddha?

[student: You try to eliminate him.]

[laughs] Yeah, yeah, you don't eliminate him. So they say, when you're

debating, yeah, the elimination doesn't exist on the fifth one.

[student: But they try to.]

You try. You reject. Mentally you reject a Buddha. Apparently that rejection has a lot to do with the badness of the deed, the fact that you don't care anymore, or that you have no reverence or no feeling. You really believe this thing is garbage and you undertake to kill it. The mental rejection of what he stands for is what gives the deed a lot of its power. And the same with the unity of a dharma group. It's very very common. A person takes his own interests or his own opinions to be more important than the unity of the group, and that's not true, that's not correct. There's times when you have to, and it's hard for me—I'm a very stubborn and individualist person. [laughs] You know, there's times when you have to, when you must keep your mind on the importance of the unity of that group, even if it's not exactly what you want. That's more important than your personal feelings in the matter. Yeah?

[student: Does that go along with the wrong view, because the majority of the group really thinks it's true? Or...]

Well, then you could...

[student: Is it divisive if you set them straight or attempted to?]

I think normally what happens with a schism is that the person who's creating the schism really does believe they're correct. And normally, it's a misconception. The other people can see that the person is just being assertive, you know, or they're just being stubborn, or they're just hung up on what they want. You know, I'm not talking about these extraordinary cases where suddenly everybody in the dharma group believes that abortion is okay and then you have to leave that group because you don't want to be a part of that. But that's a different thing. I'm talking... the normal schisms that happen are personal differences between people and they're not philosophical usually. Know what I mean? [laughs]. I wish they were.

[student: They make them sound as if they were.]

No, if they were truly philosophical...

[student: Look what's happening with the Kagyus...]

Well, I can't judge it, I don't know, it's a terrible thing, very terrible thing. It could happen to anybody. It could happen to us too. I just don't want it... there'll come a time when you feel like that. There'll come a time when you really don't like somebody. And there'll come a time when maybe you even think you have a conviction that this thing is wrong. But examine it very carefully and try as hard as you can... the unity of the dharma is very important. It's really important. You just have to look at that. Now I'll give you the real thing—that unity is the dharma body of the Buddha. That's what the scriptures say.

[student: What?]

The Dharmakaya.

[student: Is the unity of the group?]

Unity of a group of Buddhist followers is the Dharmakaya. That's the instant expression of the Dharmakaya. That's how heavy it is. And we'll talk more about it.

[student: So how could you break the Dharmakaya even if you wanted to?]

[laughs]

[student: So can you say a little more about that?]

I will, I will. I will say more about it. So that's what makes it...I'll say it in the next thing I'm going to present, and I'm going to finish on time. Which of them is least... should I say that? Which do you think is the worst one of the five. I'm going to give you the five in order of badness. What's the worst of the five?

[student: The schism.]

Is it worse than trying to kill a Buddha?

[student: You can't kill him.]

Try, I said.

[student: But you could really break up a group.]

No, but the bad deed is not to kill, the bad deed is to try to kill.

[student: But you can't kill, so it's not as bad as...]

[laughs] No, the bad deed is to try. The attempted murder of a Buddha is the bad deed that's defined. Not the killing. Attempted murder...

[student: What's bad for you personally? As opposed to dividing up the sangha. Well, if it only lasts for 24 hours, then... [unclear]]

[laughs] [laughter]

Basically they say that the schism is the worst from the point of view of the results especially. It must have a result of one eon in the lowest hell. It must...

[student: Of, if the result is bad for you, then you...]

As far as the result. Also they say from the point of view of damage to the universe. You know, attempting to kill a Buddha is in a sense trying to hurt the form body, right? A schism is an attack on the Dharma body.

[student: So the idea is that there are many form bodies and one dharma body?]

That's true. Is it technically the dharma body? Yeah, it is.

[student: So it's an aspect or a manifestation of the dharma body.]

It is, it's an expression of his omniscience. It is his omniscience. Anyway, you can read it in the reading. It's an attack on the dharma body. It's an attack on the body of the Dharma. And it's worse than an attack on his personal body.

[student: Michael, I understand that the extreme of it is actively trying to break up the sangha, but what if when you don't know any better, you make some bitchy comments...]

[laughs] [laughter] You know, it's good that you wonder because it's probably motivated by that you did it. [laughter] Our practice is the practice of concentric circles. I heard a monk...{Dobum Tulku} explained it to me one time. He was the

Dalai Lama's assistant. A monk is not supposed to have sex with a woman, so he has to stay in this little circle here. And outside of that he can't touch a woman, and outside of that he can't look, and outside of that he can't spend too much with women, and like that, like that... eventually you get to this outside circle. If I never go within this circle, I'll never go within this circle. It just cannot happen. So with morality it's the same. You stay... you stay out here. Don't let yourself say anything bad about your fellow dharma students. If you don't... don't let yourself think anything bad about them. If you don't, then you won't get to say anything bad, if you don't, you won't get to say anything that splits them up, if you don't split them up... you know what I mean? The idea of morality is to keep yourself away... when we do our confessions, we say {samba chepa dam [unclear]}. You know, we confess the deed, the bad deed, then we confess the preparation for the deed, then we confess the preparation for the preparation for the deed, then we think, then we confess the thought to get ready to prepare to do the deed. [laughs] When you're doing your monk confessions. So you have to stay that far away, stay outside. It's just a... your morality is like that. You're not going to kill somebody. You're not going to kill this modest little dharma center. But you would... you have to stay in that last circle. Stay outside of that last circle. Don't even let yourself think it. If you don't think it, you'll never do it. It's very important, it's really really very important. There will come a day when it's important. Think about it now. Keep it in mind now. It's a big bad deed.

[student: You said earlier that as the group progresses, that's there more of a chance that that would happen. Why...]

Not necessarily. You can have groups that get sweeter and sweeter, right? But I think it's still a little bit near [unclear]. Like the group out in New Jersey, we've been there for twenty years. And...

[student: There's never been anything like that there.]

No, there's never been anything like that, we're very lucky. But what I mean is... I mean in the sense of getting hardened to the sweetness of the dharma. Once you've heard what I'm saying a few times, the third time you hear me explain this thing, it won't be fresh, and you'll be thinking, I wish he'd tell us something new tonight. That's a very bad attitude. I go to Rinpoche's classes, still go to all these beginning classes. It's just supposed to get deeper and deeper and sweeter and sweeter. What I'm saying is that it could reach a point where you get more and more hardened to it because you didn't take steps when you first started to

do something. So it's very important for the first few years of your dharma study, this is very crucial, because you won't be as open to it later. [laughs] And it's crucial to actually carry it out, to actually start changing if you can. Because later you won't. There's nothing different about the second time you hear it that's going to make you change if the first time you didn't. Okay. What's the second worst one?

[student: Buddha.]

Yeah, attack on a Buddha. Third?

[student: Arhat?]

Yeah, that's right. Fourth?

[student: Ma.]

Ma, right. And the poor guy is always getting [unclear]. [laughs] [laughter] All right? Those are the order of severity.

[student: Bodhisattva's not in there.]

[student: Wasn't the Bodhisattva...]

Now that you mention it...

[student: Mahayana...]

No, they did. They do have Bodhisattvas in the Abidharma. I used to get real confused. I'll give you the five near-ones, there's a second five. They're called the close ones. And they say they're close because they're close to the five immediate. It's not on your homework. I just thought you'd like to know. The first one is to.. I don't know the situational order, I don't know about severity. The first one is to rape your mother who is also an arhat.

[laughter]

[student: Is she your mother or an arhat?]

No, she's both. She's both your mother and an arhat. [laughter] That's pretty

terrible. Second one is to kill a Bodhisattva who is called a Bodhisattva of certainty, and certainty in this case means he only has a hundred kalpas to go. [laughter] It says...

[student: Only 160,000 years or so....]

No, trillions of years.

[student: How many kalpas?]

Hundred kalpas. To kill any one of the seven high practitioners.

[student: Who are?]

I don't know, but I believe it's people who've achieved the path of seeing. And to steal the property of the sangha. That's something I can do, we can do. [laughter] And what's the last one? Oh, the last one they say is the one which is parallel to trying to harm the Buddha, and that's to... out of a feeling of anger, hatred, etcetera, so I guess it's any one of those things, to destroy images or altars or temples. So those are the five. Keeping the finances of the dharma center... I keep them pretty creatively, but anyway. [laughter]

[student: For these you'll also go to hell?]

Yeah. And they say what the difference is. They say it's a little bit lighter. There's a big debate about it. The result is also to go to hell for these secondary five.

[student: In the next life?]

It's not very clear to me, I'll tell you the truth. It seems to be in the next life, and they say it's a little bit lighter, then they say that's what the Abidharmas say [unclear]. I didn't spend much time on it. Somebody in the reading... you'll see, they come up and they debate him. They say didn't the Buddha say that the most serious bad deeds were the mental ones? And then they say, yes, he did say that. And they say that was only with regard to the three passage ways. What are the three passage ways?

[student: Body, speech and mind.]

Yes. Body, speech and mind. So the first three of the ten... he said when the Buddha said that he was talking about the ten bad deeds, the first three are physical, the next four are verbal, the last two are mental. So of those three divisions, the mental ones are the most powerful, are the worst. And then somebody says, wouldn't killing be worse than having a wrong view? And he gives the example of this meditator who murdered people with his concentration. [laughs] Anyway, not a Buddhist... [laughs] The mental ones are much worse. And then they say, which of the five... then they quote another scripture that says {lok tha}, that wrong view is the worse, and they say, that's not even in those five. And he says no, when they say wrong view is the worst, they're referring to the five wrong deeds, bad deeds, and wrong view is the worst one.

[student: What bad views?]

There are five bad views.

[student: What is that?]

It's not part of the lesson tonight but just if you want to know, it'll take you to 9:05 if you don't mind, and I won't do them in order, all right? One is called {tsam dinki tawa}, that means to believe that everything exists the way it looks to you. And on the other hand, to think that if it didn't exist the way it looks to you today, it doesn't exist at all, that nothing matters. So those are called "extreme view". You can see how you can flock[?] them one to the other. We live in the one. The minute someone talks us out of it, we slip to the other one. That's what... [jigso la tawa] is to take you and what belongs to you as being self-existent. That's actually the nature of the first link of the wheel of life. {sutrim [unclear] tawa} means to practice mistaken kinds of morality and asceticism and think that that's a great thing. The examples are... there was a school in India that said you should meditate for years and years, then plant a spear face up, a trident, and then you should be standing on a chair, and you should jump down on it, and it goes exactly through here, and through here, and if you have the right motivation, you achieve Nirvana at that moment. You've seen things where people beat themselves... and I've seen people in Buddhist centers who were told to do a certain number of prostrations. They did it, it got to the point where it hurt them physically, handicapped them, they were told to go on, and now they can't walk straight, they can't walk, they use a cane. That's... you have to use common sense. Your body is very precious. You have to take care of it. You can't hurt yourself. Just going and being hungry or being

cold or being hot is no big shakes. If you go into meditation you want to be very comfortable. I stock up on only the kind of food I want [laughter]. It's important. Quiet, happy, comfortable, healthy, bright, you know, concentrating, that's the idea, it's not to hurt yourself. And then there's {tawa chong dzin}, which means to think that your wrong views are great. [laughs] That's another kind of wrong view. This is really good. By the way, when I say that, it doesn't mean that if you do your retreats, you [unclear]. It's a four, five, six week thing and it hurts a lot. There are times when it really hurts. That's a different thing. Then you gotta have guts and keep going. I'm talking about damaging yourself permanently. And also if your mind starts to get crazy, you have to stop. But to stick it out when it gets unpleasant is a different thing. You have to do that. Okay, last wrong view tonight.

[student: [unclear]]

Oh. Extreme view, view of me and myself, which is called "view of the perishables", what was the other one?

[student: Being glad.... [unclear]]

That was four... that was three. And four, {lok tha}. Did we miss one?

[student: Yeah.

Sure?

[student: Yeah. Five.]

Is it the one about being glad you didn't go through wrong view?

[student: No.]

Did we do.... thinking their views are the best, and then wrong view, backwards view. Do we have five yet?

[student: Thinking your views are great and then wrong view.]

We can say extreme view. And then [unclear] you [unclear] perishables, you know. And then you have mistaken morality, and then practicing that. Meaning it's extreme, extremism. And then, you know, thinking your views are best.

And then, the classic wrong view. Which is where you say, karma does not exist, if I do my bad deeds in private and no one ever finds out, then everything's okay, I'm fine.

[student: You made a point of saying the presentation was Abidharma. Any difference between Mahayana and...]

In these five deeds? No.

[student: No, the other five.]

No. Basically Mahayana accepts almost all the details of the {sam me}, of the five bad deeds. There are a few details... what do you think, I mean, for example, an Abidharmist would say that you get an aura from a {sam me}, from an immediate bad deed. What happens if you commit two? What if you do two in one life?

[student: You get an aura from a bad deed?]

Oh, sure. Any powerful karmic deed.

[student: I thought that was only from a good deed.]

You take a vow to serve in the army.

[student: You do two?]

They say your aura gets heavier, brighter, something like that. And then there's a big argument about, you know, well, does the second one ripen in the very next life. Then what? Both of them ripen in the next life? Or does it ripen in the life after? Does it have to wait in line to ripen in the next... then its not an immediate. You can imagine... Okay. So be happy. Just to talk about this makes a difference.

[student: [unclear] [laughter]]

[student: In the Madhyamika Prasangika, can you describe for me the whole progression of creating karma? What happens, the deed, the {bakchak}...?]

Everything's the same, except where it stays. And they say it just stays [unclear].

[student: So you do a deed, at the end of the deed a {bakchak} results, stays in the simple me, has the potential...]

You'll be [unclear] to your mind in its own right. They go...

[student: Okay. It has the potential to bring pain or pleasure in the future when it arises. The thing that I would like clarification on is the aspect of how this {bakchak} arises as a perception, and ultimately when you collect enough {bakchaks}, how that arises as your projection of enlightenment, Buddhahood.

[laughs] That's all, you just said it.

[student: I don't get it, I don't get...]

Oh, oh, it's just this. There is death, there is outside death. And then you [unclear]. There is this wet-flowingness in the universe and the way the {bakchaks} operate is that they create an impression from that, creates your interpretation of that. And you don't have a choice. You're forced to have that interpretation. I think that's where most people fall down. First it's nihilism. You have one of those rare teachers that gets to the point of explaining how the {bakchak} works, then the student swings to this extreme of thinking they could knowingly control it.

[student: You can program your perceptions through patterning, essentially.]

You're talking about....

[student: What perceptual pattern, is what I'm talking about.]

We're talking attitude... [unclear]. If it happens, certain things happen in that way, because it's actually a karma.

[student: You mean as a result of it?]

That's by the way why [unclear] nothing works in the world, you know. You decide to take a risk in business, and you know, it works out in more cases than not, and it's also karmic ... the pattern is governed by karma.

[student: So you have this matter, this substance, this wet-flowingness that

arises that you encounter for some reason and your {bakchaks}...]

Actually that's also... when you focus on the wet, it's also another interpretation of more basic parts.

[student: Right, right, all the way down to the smallest parts. But the idea that you have to encounter the wet, or whatever it is you're calling wet. You have to encounter the infinite smaller parts that you're labeling as wet. So whatever it is that arises in your encounter that you interact with and label and project on to, your {bakchak} causes that arisal and encounter?

Yeah.

[student: And in the case of enlightenment, then you've done so many good deeds, so many positive {bakchaks} that the stuff that arises can only be the raw material, if you will? Positive interpretation, pleasurable interpretation?]

Ultimately pleasurable. Everything around you.

[student: So in the case that we... seeing myself as a Buddha when I become enlightened. Not because I just fool myself into seeing myself as a Buddha then, as Tom would say...]

You created the causes that force you to see you to see yourself.

[student: Where it confuses me is this aspect of tricking yourself into seeing yourself a certain way.]

No, no, the point is...this is the whole point—it is only a projection. It is only a projection.

[student: You're trying hard. It's not tricking yourself.]

It is only a projection. That's all anything is.

[student: I understand that.]

Now is there a conscious thing you can do to pretend you're [unclear]...

[student: That's the issue. The issue is that we normally, as I normally think of

perception, it's a learned behavior.]

Oh yeah, no, no, you will plant {bakchaks} that will cause you to have this perception. Then there are practices that we can't talk about in front of...

[student: I can just leave the room.]

[laughs]

[student: So the idea of this learned behavior, it's not what we would normally think of as like...]

Oh, oh, see, when you're talking about that [unclear]... practice...

[student: I'm not talking about tantric practice. I'm just talking about like, if I sit down here and I say everything's empty, everything's empty and intellectually remind myself that everything's empty, that's a learned behavior.]

That's true, yeah, oh yeah. In the beginning it's learned.

[student: So does that learned pattern result in my experiencing... does my sitting here saying "everything's empty and oh yeah, I'm perceiving my projections and these arisings and..." does that result in a pleasurable {bakchak} being planted?]

Yeah, ultimately pleasurable.

[student: The results that arise later that I must see...]

If your intentions are noble, you know, it depends on your temperament... if you're studying emptiness for the purpose of getting pleasure for yourself and from other people, and if you're not...then the result would be Hinayana Arhat, the perceptual result would be Hinayana, you know, no enlightened [unclear].  
[laughs]

[student: So the idea is that the collection of merit, the idea of the collection of merit is that it requires a vast number of {bakchaks} leading to pleasurable perception.]

It's a very cold and self-interested process.

[student: Yeah, yeah.]

You know, people object to that, and I don't see it. I think Buddhism is a method, it really is a method, and it should be seen as a transferable, transmittable, cold scientific method. You just go—you do these things, you'll get that result. And you do it quite knowingly and self-interestedly and that's... there's no problem with that. That's what you do. And that will help you prioritize your good deeds. There's lots of good deeds you can do. And I think when you get to a certain point you gotta change... you know, you only have a few [unclear] left.

[student: So I'm setting out to do this collection of as much pleasurable and positive {bakchaks} as possible and the idea is that my nirvana or my enlightenment will be nothing but the ripening of pleasant {bakchaks}?]

Yeah, if they're done with this knowledge. And that's the whole meaning of knowing this [unclear].

[student: So here's the key for me... if I have a {bakchak} which is to bring me pain, say, a past bad deed, and I have this intellectual understanding of emptiness, and then this negative seed arises and somebody hits me on the head and I go, well, karma, emptiness, I understand it, you know, it doesn't really bother me so much, but I still get hit on the head and it hurts, you know...]

It does hurt.

[student: Is this...how to say this? Is this {bakchak} that just arose and caused me pain but not a full pain, you know? Are, in some way, these negative {bakchaks} being mitigated and lessened by my overall patterning, you know? Does that make sense?]

Yeah, that's true.

[student: It does work that way?]

Yeah, it does work that way. By the way, what would be the practical result? You would look like a fool, you wouldn't respond when people, when ignorant people, who are called infants in the scriptures, think you should respond, and you would act in a different way. You'd act like Jesus or something. Jesus up there, he had nails put into him...

[student: And he says, okay...] [laughs]

He's actually doing an {ommen}, he's praying for... you know, in the classical interpretation, he's using that suffering and wishing that it could represent the suffering of all other beings. That's the classic reaction to suffering... that would be the most powerful reaction to anything you [unclear]. And they're not going to nail you to that cross. The guy's going to come into your office and yell at you. And that'll be your chance. [laughs]

[student: In Madhyamika Prasangika, the idea that everything's our perception, I have a tendency...we talk about projecting on to a blank screen. I have a tendency to see myself projecting outward on to things. And I think... tell me if I'm right... and I think what it really is everything coming into me and being interpreted internally, not me projecting myself and my perceptions outwards, like a drawing in, essentially.]

I think that is a psychological... that's a whole separate thing, from a separate {bakchak}, that you might tend to project in a .... a psychological projection is much different from a karmic projection. A psychological projection... when I go into the bus, I look at the diamonds on women's fingers. I can't stop myself. And they all look at me like... [laughs].

[student: And is that a psychological {bakchak}?]

No, no, I mean those people who sell shoes, they're always looking at the shoes, that's some kind of psychological projection.

[student: But that's not a projection, Michael, projection is when you change something to accord with...]

[student: First of all, it's your karma to look at rings.]

[unclear] that's just... it's not like everybody's rings means anything to me...

[student: Projection is more like you...]

Or you see everybody as nasty because you're nasty.

[student: Yeah, because you're feeling...]

That's ultimately a karmic result, it's not the kind of projection I'm talking about.

[student: What I'm talking about, for example, I look around this room and I go, yellow wall, white red table, statue, etcetera. And rather than me projecting outward on to matter and stuff out there, I'm really taking all this stuff in to me and it's like in a way staying in me...]

It is staying...

[student: ...and processed in me and registering in me, and it's almost like the world is in me, happening, if that makes sense.]

The day that you perceive, not ultimately [unclear], the day that you perceive relatively [unclear], which is a big deal, it happens the same day, when you catch yourself doing what you're doing, which has nothing to do with emptiness, it's the projection process. When you finally see yourself doing it, you do have the sensation of it being inside your head and it's all happening right behind you, at the edge of your eyeball or something. See what I mean?

[student: Ummm.]

There is that. And the object that you're looking at, the parts are external...

[student: So it's solely the interpretation that's internal?]

But the perfection, the perfect image of that saint is in your mind. And if all you ever saw was that, all you ever reacted to was that...

[student: There's definitely all this stuff out there, but it's not...]

It's there. [unclear]

[student: All the perfectionism...]

Goodnight!

End

[student:

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

Class Ten: How To Make A Karma Powerful

November 21, 1994

The Abhidharma Kosha talks about the six perfections and Bodhisattvas, so if anybody asks you if Hinayana people teach you about that, you have to say they're actually here. They're not quite the same as Mahayana, but they are here, they are mentioned. So I thought you'd like to see... we don't have time to do all six. We'll talk about the first good deed, and then, the principles that apply there, you can apply to your other good deeds. What you have to know is the karma involved in the good deeds. You have to know the principles of the karma, how to make it a really good deed. So we're going to talk about that. Say {jimba} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat]. {jimba} means the first perfection. What's the first perfection?

[student: Giving.]

[student: Generosity.]

I like to call it giving because you can give protection to people, you can give dharma teachings to people. Generosity to me is like giving a lot of money. I like to call it giving. The Abidharma starts out by talking about four kinds of giving.

[silence]

Say {dak ke jin shi}. [repeat]. {dak ke jin shi} means... {dak} means what? Do you know? Oh no, you don't know that. {dak} means "me" or "yourself". {dak ke jin shi} means for the benefit of yourself, for your own benefit. And that's the first type of giving of the four in the Abidharma. And there's millions of divisions of giving, I'm just giving you one, all right? So the gift for your own benefit is this—it's when you give to a temple or you give to a stupa or you make offerings at a building and you're actually putting forth offerings in the building. There's no other non-Buddha person there to accept them, you're doing it for your own benefit. There's nobody else there who's going to get anything out of it. The Buddhas don't need your offerings, okay? They have everything they could ever want. That's a principle of offering. When you get up into the higher offerings and you're offering to enlightened beings, it's

basically for your own benefit. They don't need it at all. They have much better things [laughs] to focus on. I mean, they have their own pleasures, they don't need whatever cookies you can bring, or just... when you make an offering basically it's for the virtue of giving them, okay? The person here is two kinds of people, all right? One is a normal person who's not free of desire yet. And when we say "desire" in the Abidharma, in this case, it means desire for the desire realm, desire for this realm. Can you ever get rid of desire for this realm? What is this realm? The first Dalai Lama defines it as two things, you know.

[student: Food and...]

Food and sex, okay? [laughs] That's the main objects in this realm that we're interested in. And that's what defines our realm. That's how the first Dalai Lama describes the desire realm. So is there a way to get... are you guys warm or something? Tell me if it bothers you. Two ways to get rid of that desire. What? We talked about it. Two kinds of powers.

[student: To see emptiness.]

One is to see selflessness, the other is what?

[student: Renunciation?]

In the Abidharma system.

[student: Generating merit?]

[student: The path beyond....]

There was a path beyond the world and there's a path out of the world. Both of them work. You can remove your desire for this realm. The second one doesn't work permanently, the first one works permanently. So the first one is to see selflessness. You remove your desire for this realm permanently. But the second one is just where you get into deeper and deeper meditations and then in this realm, food seems to be too coarse for you. You're into more subtle realms of reality. You know the people who can live on a glass of water, you know, they don't have any desire for the gross pleasures any more. And that's called the worldly path. So the person who's making this kind of giving either still has desire for the desire realm, or what? Which of those other two do you guess he might have?

[student: The first? The higher pleasures?]

It's the person who's into deep meditation. So he's free of desire realm desire. He doesn't have desire for desire realm objects, but he's not...it's not permanent, that doesn't work completely. So basically, this is a kind of low person, all right? [laughs] He's giving with the hope of some kind of result... in where?

[student: This life.]

Well, that, and he's going to have some kind of karmic result which is sort of a lower pleasure.

[student: Did you say it was of no benefit to do this?]

No, it's a kind of giving. And it's a kind of giving where the mind state of the person doing it is not very high. It's still valid, it's still good, [laughs] you're still going to get a nice samsaric result.

[student: You said it was two kinds of people?]

Yeah, it could either be a normal person who hasn't had any realizations at all, giving things, or it could be a person who's actually free of desire for the desire realm, but how did he get free?

[student: By going into...]

Just by going into deep meditation, which always fails eventually. [laughs] You always come down, you know that. You know you go on retreat, you came back, you had sort of a glow for a few days, and then you're back to the island, right? [laughs]

[student: So the first... the largest set is anyone who hasn't seen emptiness directly and of those two subsets....]

You could say that, yeah. So that's the first one. The second one is that... {shen} is the opposite of {dak}. What do you think it is?

[student: Others?]

Other people. In other words, the act of giving is helping the other person. By the way, this act of giving is only helping the person who's doing it, right? There's no one out there getting any big benefit... no other person. But this one, {shin den chyu} is only benefitting the other person, and the one who's doing it doesn't need it anymore, he doesn't particularly care about it. I mean, he's not looking for some desire realm result for himself, so which person do you think it is?

[student: Arya?]

Could be.

[student: Mahayana?]

A person who doesn't have desire for this realm. Yeah, who has seen selflessness. So you can say an Arya, a {parpa}, a person who has seen selflessness directly, giving to a person who's not free of desire.

[student: Are you saying that's the only kind of person who does that kind of giving?]

In this division in the sutra... what you have here is a realized being. When I say "realized being" I don't mean an enlightened being. "Realized" means anyone who's seen selflessness directly. And he has no longer any desire for the desire realm. He has no hope of... he's not going to get any samsaric result for himself, he doesn't want any desire realm result, he's not interested. Yeah?

[student: He's doing it to enlighten himself?]

Well that, but maybe... the person who gets a benefit out of this is the other person. The other person is getting some food, or getting some clothes. It is not describing like a Bodhisattva attitude or something like that. But as you know, there are two definitions... what are the two parts of a good deed? What are the two maturations? The two ripenings? I mean, they give you pleasure in the short term and then what?

[student: They take you to Buddhahood.]

In the long-term, they take you to Nirvana or Buddhahood. So that's understood, any time a person does a good deed it's going to have some

ultimate results.

[student: So if an Arya were to make his [unclear] so people got to [unclear] all his teachings, wouldn't that also be part of his own bank account?]

Yeah, sure, that would be {shen din chyu} if he didn't have desire for the desire realm. There are Aryas who do have desire for the desire realm. But the person in this case is free of that karma. He's not looking for any benefit out of it.

[student: I thought you said that if they see emptiness, they no longer have any desire.]

No, they do. I said there's only two emotions that you lose permanently the day you see emptiness directly. What are they? They're only two {tonpas}, they're called {tonpas}, remember? [laughs] [laughter]

[student: That any other religion would be...]

You can't doubt any more. You get rid of {du min gyu de tesor}. You get rid of all kinds of doubt where you're not sure about Buddhism any more. Why?

[student: Because you see Buddhas.]

Because you see Buddhas directly. You see your future lives. And you know how many lives it's going to take you before they stop calling you Mike and start calling you Buddha. [laughs] [laughter]. Really. So you go through those experiences. You experience the four noble truths. So you can't doubt any more. You experience them directly and you know you're not crazy. Those two emotions are going on at the same time. The second one is what?

[student: The belief in self-existence?]

Yeah, the intellectual belief in self-existence. When you come down, and you look around, things will still seem to be self-existent, but you know you're wrong, you know you're crazy.

[student: So if you know you're wrong, then you would know that...]

Yeah, right, by definition.. yeah, good point, by definition you know that intellectually, there's no such thing as non-emptiness. But you still see

everything as self-existent, you can't stop it. The day you do stop it, you're an Arhat.

[student: The day you stop what?]

You're an Arhat the day you stop doubt and cease to see doubt. That's the difference between an Arya and an Arhat.

[student: That wasn't clear to me. Can you say it again?]

Yeah. The Arya doesn't think he's crazy, but he still sees everything as self-existent. And the Arhat has destroyed the mental bakchaks that see things as self-existent, and then he's an arhat, that makes him an arhat.

[student: And which is number two? An Arya or Arhat?]

A person here is an Arya, and he no longer has the desire for the desire realm. He's not looking for any payback in the desire realm.

[student: Then why isn't he an Arhat?]

Because he still sees things as self-existent. And the day he gets rid of that tendency, along with his bakchaks, he's enlightened, he's at least in nirvana. [laughs] So many permutations, right? Buddhists love them.

[student: For yourself and others?]

Yeah. [laughs] {unclear} means both, all right? {unclear} means "for both," for the benefit of both. This is where both people involved are going to get some desire realm benefit out of it, so who do you guess? Who's the giver? Somebody who still has desire for the desire realm. He's still looking for payback in the desire realm. And the person getting it is who? He's also getting something in the... he still has desire in the desire realm. Both of them are still getting something out of it. By now it's obvious that getting something out of it is not such a great.... it's a desire realm result, right? This person's not interested.

[student: Arya? How does the Arya fit into the whole thing?]

If a person who doesn't have... sorry, a person who still has desire. An Arya can still have desire.

[student: So you're saying in number three you only get a desire realm result?]

Yeah. I mean, that's the emphasis here. The person doing number three could be an arya who still has desire for the desire realm. He has seen emptiness directly, but he's still not free of desire realm desire. Because seeing emptiness directly doesn't remove that particular bad thought. It only gets rid of those two. And the whole goal of the fourth path, the job of the fourth path, is where you keep practicing emptiness meditation to get rid of those two emotions.

[student: So is the same motivation in one and three, except that you do it in animate objects...?]

Right. Now what do you guess?

[student: [unclear]]

[laughs]

[student: Why can't you give with a non-desire realm result?]

You can. This is just a division here, you know? They're trying to emphasize that the person's just gotten rid of this desire. You will obviously get results. But mainly those are caused by what? What's the main cause for being born in the form realm?

[student: Perceiving it in meditation.]

Yeah. It's practicing that deep subtle state of mind in this life. The main reason... the main.. what do you call it? Entry ramp? Form ramp? [laughs] It's the form realm meditations in the desire realm. This means {unclear}.

[student: [unclear]]

[laughs] And this is where... well, I'm going to talk about it. This is where a person, an Arya, who's free of desire for the desire realm, gives to another Arya who's free of desire for the desire realm.

[student: But then what's the purpose... it's like a millionaire giving to a millionaire?]

How do Buddhas interact, you know? What do you do? [laughs] [laughter] No, you have to think about it.

[student: They enjoy the act of giving? I mean....]

Yeah, I think... you'll see later. There's two motivations for giving. Giving's a neat subject. It would be nice to do a whole class on giving, because if you did it for six weeks I think you would really get into it. But there's one kind of giving where you're trying to help someone. And there's another kind of giving where you're trying to honor someone. And this would qualify as that. So Buddhas are constantly honoring each other. They're saying you're so great, no, you're so great. [laughs] [laughter] And they're both right. Okay? So those are four basic types of giving. You have to think about it. It's a deep thing. Why are you giving something? What are you really want? Do you want a desire realm result? This is even assuming you understand karma already. This is at the back of the chapter. Vasubandhu is assuming you already understand karma and you're going to get excited about doing something karmic, so now think about what you want, what do you want out of it? Is it that you just... you finally figured out the way to get rich, you know. [laughs] It's possible that if you understood karma, if you had a class about karma, and you finally understood how to actually cause things to occur, that you could then just become a desire realm consumer, I mean, you would set up the reasons for you to get rich. You can, now, you have the knowledge. If you want, you can go ahead.

[student: This is a real incentive to like find the Buddha so you can really give him a present, right?]

[laughter] [laughs] You have the knowledge now. If you believed it, and if you acted on it, and if you intellectually had meditated for hours and hours on it, your behavior would change. If you were that kind of person who wanted a desire realm result, and if you were intelligent, you would just start giving away money to the highest objects you could find. And you would be guaranteed success. But he's saying consider the consequences. [laughs] The problem is that by the time you get the money back, you might have forgotten how you got it. [laughs] [laughter] And you're just suffering again. Poor people suffer because they struggle to hurt others to get enough to live on, but rich people think they deserve it and don't do the good deeds to support it. There's trouble both ways. Those are the four kinds of giving.

[student: Michael, is there any discussion of some kind of ... if somebody has emotional problems and can't receive, even though they need it?]

Yeah, yeah. They're too proud to take it, you mean?

[student: Not necessarily that, but some kind of emotional problem, not something clear-cut, like money, but something more emotional, and they can't receive it because they just can't receive. There's some kind of....]

I think that's the kind of thing that {pretas} have. Even if you give a {preta} a glass of wine, what happens? Before they can drink it, it turns into blood or something. [laughs] The same metaphor is happening. It doesn't... it's not attractive to the person by the time it gets there. Okay, how can you make your giving better? I mean, if you're really into Buddhism and you've been for a long time, you might enjoy being generous and giving and then you want to know... you don't have all the time to do all the kinds of giving you can do, you can't take care of AIDS patients and also study all the scriptures and also go and work and give the money away and also... you can't do everything. And you can get exhausted trying. You have to prioritize your good deeds. So I'm going to go through some things that help you prioritize your good deeds. Let's say you want to devote the rest of your life to giving. Well, what's the best thing to do? What would be the most powerful kind of giving to do? So they divide it into the person who gives, the person you give to, and then the gift. You need to know the most powerful of those three. So first I'm going to tell you how to be, you know, the first one is from your side. These are seven things that make you a better giver. The obvious thing... when I say how can you improve your giving? How can you decide which is the highest kind of giving, you almost automatically think about, well, I guess dharma, and I guess helping a lama or something like that, wherever you're at. What could you change in yourself that whatever you gave, it would be a higher kind of gift? So this is something you might not think of. And these are called {papay nor dun}. Now we're talking about the giver, which normally you don't think about. What do you have to do from your side for a gift to be extraordinary?

[silence]

Say {papay} [repeat] {nor dun} [repeat]. {papay nor dun} [repeat]. {papay nor dun} [repeat]. {papa} means what? Do you know? Arya. Arya in Buddhism means a person who's seen selflessness directly, he's a pretty realized person. {nor} means riches, and {dun} means seven kinds, seven kinds of {papay nor du}.

These come a lot in the Hinayana study. First one is... {depa} means what? "Faith", {depa} means "faith".

[student: What's the entire sentence mean? Seven kinds of riches for...?]

Seven riches of the Aryas. These are seven personal qualities that you don't have to be an Arya to get, but Aryas have them. These are seven personal qualities that if you develop them, and if you at least have some inkling of them, and then you give something, the gift is karmically.... we were talking about manipulating karma. I mean, that's our interest right now. How do you get your karma? In the time that you have, in the window of opportunity of youth and intelligence, how do you make your giving the most powerful that you can? And the first thing is {depa}. Faith means understanding the good qualities of high objects and it's mixed up a lot with admiration in Buddhism. And the example is that you look at the Dalai Lama and you feel some kind of admiration in the sense that you would like to be like him. That's actually the meaning of "faith." It's actually more like emulation or something like that. The meaning of faith in Buddhism... if you have faith in the Dalai Lama it's because you recognize his value and wish that you could develop that in yourself. That's the meaning of faith.

[student: It doesn't mean "belief" in this case?]

I don't know what other kinds of faith.... when I say faith in English, what do you think? I don't know. What do you think?

[student: Taking refuge.]

[student: Believing in something you're not quite sure about?]

Right. [laughs] No, this is to see the good qualities of that object and to want to emulate it. And that means... you can take the Dalai Lama as a good example. Just this person who's... what's his career path? What's his job? What's he trying to do? What's his idea of what he's doing... is he working for himself? He doesn't have any career, right? He's just the Dalai Lama. All those good qualities that he has...that's {depa}.

[student: Is the object only a holy object, or any good object...?]

Any good object. Any good personal quality. I mean, you can have {depa}

about a good quality in a person who's not... faith in a good quality, even if the person who has the good quality is in general is a schmuck... [laughs] something like that. That can be {depa}. So anyway, you have this belief or this faith out of knowledge, I like to call it "educated faith", you understand the good qualities of the object. That's the first one.

[student: What if a person does not have the [unclear], does that mean?]

There's a thing in Buddhism called {dakay nowa} which means sort of a blessing on your eyeballs, rose-colored glasses, that everywhere you go, all you see are the good qualities of other people. And that's a desirable state. You like people so much that you're like a mother who doesn't notice the bad qualities of her kids. She just sees the good qualities. And that's supposed to be a nice state to be in.

[student: What's it called?]

[student: But then the question is if you give to someone you see as bad [unclear]...]

Well, if you were seeing his good qualities to the extent that you didn't see he's mean to other people and you didn't try to stop him, then that would be bad. What I mean is that when you're among normal people and all day long you just kind of take some kind of joy or appreciation of their good qualities and you don't concentrate so much on their bad qualities... or at your job, or anywhere else, that's supposed to be a desirable thing, {dakay nowa}.

[student: So you don't need to emulate them per se either?]

No, you just see the good parts. That's {dakay nowa}. Even in the highest secret teachings it's very important and it's just some kind of blessing you have where you don't concentrate on the bad stuff, where you concentrate on the good stuff and try to become that yourself. That's in the Lam Rim, it's a very deep thing, it's a great thing. It comes in the {mun lak}, in the {dak [unclear]}, it's very powerful.

[student: Seeing like that is based on your {bakchaks}?]

Of course, of course, and also you can artificially try to get it. That's not bad. If you're aware that you're in your office and... it's not fun and it's not pleasant and

it's not productive to concentrate on the lousy qualities around you. You just purposely try to concentrate on a person's good qualities, and after you do that for a while you actually start to change.

[student: So this is just the same as rejoicing as you described before?]

Yeah, based on the...{tsultrim}, you know what {tsultrim} is?

[student: Morality.]

Morality. Avoiding the ten bad deeds. Morality sounds boring, I don't know, wish we had a different word for it.

[student: [unclear} Giving...]

The person who's giving, the person who's doing the giving, is trying to develop... if the person who has these seven qualities inside his heart gives the same thing as another person who doesn't have these seven qualities gives, the karma is like a zillion times more. That's the point. We're talking about how to increase the kilotonnage of your karma.

[student: That's a good analogy.] [laughs] [laughter]

You're talking about how to reach it, you know. You're trying to think about how to.. so what I'm saying is the obvious thing is to give something more valuable, and the obvious thing is to give it to someone higher. So what they're saying is that if you could try to develop, knowingly, purposely, self-interestedly, try to have these while you're giving, then the giving is much more powerful.

[student: I just have a question about this giving. You said giving to a higher...]

We're going to get to that.

[student: No, my questions is that if somebody lower [laughs]...]

We're going to talk about that. That's coming.

You mean the most bang for your buck, is that what you're saying?

Your time is short. I mean, it takes a long time to get convinced that you have to do good things. And then, when you get to that point, you don't have much lifetime left. [laughs] And you have to do the best things, you really have to concentrate from this point. You want to achieve Buddhahood in this life, you want to create karmic {bakchaks} which will flower into a totally different reality. That's going to take some heavy duty good deeds. Just the normal good deeds ain't enough, it's not going to do it. The Buddha took how many billions of years? That's too slow. You have a chance now. You have to prioritize your good deeds. I'm assuming you already know you have to do good deeds. Now we're talking about how to make them more powerful, how to get the effect before you end up like Alan Toon(?). We were at his funeral and they painted his face up nice and he was dead and his opportunity's gone and he's not in that chair and he can't do it now. So you have only a short period... you have to know how to get the most...

[student: ...bang for the buck.] [laughter]

Okay. Say {tonwa}. [repeat] {tonwa} is the real word in Tibetan for "generosity" and that just means... I think the Pope said it very nicely in Giant Stadium or something. Don't give your extra, give your main [unclear], don't give your leftovers to other people. Give your real essence, the things you really... give away what you have, don't give away your extra. [laughs] I like that.

[student: This is supposed to be a quality of a person that they're holding in their heart, or they're giving? So....]

It means be... {ton sem chenpo} in Tibetan means "be lavish", don't...

[student: ...be stingy.]

[laughs] Yeah, don't go giving like... ouch... [laughter] They call it {pamba mepa}, it's in that prayer. [pamba mepa]. Means just give it, be lavish. Okay, number four is {tepa}. Know what {tepa} is? [laughter] Not {tupa}. Everybody likes {tupa}. And most Tibetans have {tupa} in their hearts already. [laughter] {tepa} means learning, okay? It means hearing, and it really does refer to raw classroom hours with a lama, with a teacher.

[student: Study?]

Yeah, learning. It really refers to how many hours of stuff you've learnt, and you need thousands of hours. It's not... it's just a direct correlation and you just have to become very well educated. You have to know your stuff. And it has to sink it, and that takes repetition, and it takes going back again and again and again. You will study the same things many times again and each time it soaks in deeper and the process is very... what do you call that? Irresistible. It does soak in. It takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of hours. You have to go as much as you can.

[student: How does that affect when you're giving?]

So you know what you're doing. [laughter] The awareness of what you're doing is really important. If you understand the emptiness of the object, why you're giving. If we are generous now, it's called {sem ke kyi gewa}.... it means we have some {bakchaks} from our past lives. We tend to be generous, we're generous people, we may not understand at all what we're doing. And insofar as you don't understand the mechanics of the process, it's not a very powerful object. If you don't consciously think about this as being empty, giving to this empty being, the gift is empty, the giving is empty, I'm empty, you know, this is going to create an empty result. [laughs] I'd like it to create this kind of empty result, you know. If you don't have that, it's not very powerful. You need learning to study that. You have an idea of emptiness right now in your mind. I don't know what it is. I'm not capable of reading your minds. But I was reading Je Tsongkhapa's biography in the last few weeks. He meets Manjushri. Manjushri comes to sit at the table but Tsongkhapa can't see him. Ummapa is there, one of Tsongkhapa's lamas. And Ummapa can see Manjushri. So Tsongkhapa's dying to ask Manjushri all these questions. So he says, can you relay the message? Ummapa says okay, what do you want to ask him? And Tsongkhapa says, ask him if I have a good conception of emptiness. And Ummapa asks: Does he have a good conception of emptiness. And Manjushri says: "No." [laughter] He's about 22 at this time, I think, no, it was later.... he says, am I more of a Swatantrika Madhyamika or am I tending more towards the Prasangikas? You know, the two schools of Madhyamika. Manjushri says: "Neither one." [laughs] [laughter]. Tsongkhapa is really astounded. He's in his early thirties. So it means that you have to... the view that you have of emptiness now.. what they say in the books is, whatever conception of emptiness you have, use it. But you have to refine it. If Tsongkhapa, after he already had all these students, he already wrote his {bk: Noshen Nggyen] and Manjushri is judging his knowledge as not too high. We have to refine our knowledge, we have to use whatever knowledge of emptiness you have as you

do the giving, but you must refine it, you must do that because there's no way to do it without hours of study. Yeah?

[student: It sounds like you're going from Abidharma to Prajnya Paramita here, at this point, no?]

Not really.

[student: Is this consistent with the Abidharma?]

It's selflessness. They say you must understand selflessness.

[student: Do they get into it to the extent the Prajnya Paramita does with selflessness of the giving, the giver and the gift?]

Their idea of selflessness is.... we're not going to get into it.

[student: I mean it sounds like you were sort of heading towards that....]

Not that much, not that clear.

[student: Next class?]

Absolutely in the next class, if we all survive. [laughter]

[silence]

I'm just following the tradition of the First Dalai Lama. When you read his commentary, it's hard to... you start to wonder if that's really what they say in the Abidharma. [laughs] Is he sneaking in some Mahayana here? He does sometimes, and it's hard to see where he's speaking from sometimes. Say {lotsar}[repeat] {shepa} [repeat]. {lotsar shepa} [repeat]. You had it before. Remember {lotsar}? It's one of the two kinds of reasons why you avoid a bad deed. Do any of you know?

[student: Reasons inside yourself?]

Yeah, this is the one relating to yourself. This is where you had the chance to do a bad deed, in the privacy of your own home, no one will ever know, and you avoid the bad deed because of this emptiness. You have this quality in you. I

think “conscience” is close. Self-esteem, some sort of self, conscience maybe. But it’s why you avoid a bad deed for reasons relating to yourself.

[student: So how do we translate those words?]

This is very... {shepa} means “to know”, an ancient root referring to your face, and {sa} is to be embarrassed, to lose face almost, to know how to lose face, but they don’t break it up, it’s an idiom in Tibet. But when you’re debating it.. they say, you should be ashamed to say such a stupid thing. [laughter] That’s the classic case of how this is used.

[student: How does that relate to giving, Michael?]

It doesn’t relate directly to the giving. What he’s trying to say is that it’s not only the gift. It’s not only the person you give to. If you yourself are a higher being by virtue of these good qualities, the power of the deed is much more powerful. That’s just something you would not have guessed, maybe. You kind of think that if Saddam Hussein suddenly has a flash and decides to give something to children, and then if the Dalai Lama gave the same thing to the same children, it might be the same deed, assuming that Saddam Hussein is a bad guy at the moment. Then it’s not true. The person who has the greater personal qualities creates more good karma. The karma is more powerful only due to his own personal qualities.

[silence]

You know this one, right? What would come next?

[student: A person who avoids a bad deed out of consideration for others.]

Yeah. A person who avoids a bad deed out of consideration for others. He doesn’t want to offend, to hurt other people, doesn’t want to let down other people, he doesn’t want other people to know he’s doing this. This is very important for monks. Monks are supposed to be very careful. We’re supposed to avoid the appearance of things as well as the reality.

[student: So you can call it public morality, whatever it is?]

You could say morality for the public, the way you act in front of others. That involves not only the impressions they get, but the repercussions for them. A)

would this deed hurt other people, and B) would they lose faith in me or lose faith in Buddhism or...

[student: Even if it looks bad but really isn't?]

A monk has to be very careful about those things, especially a monk. We're like politicians. [laughs] But in general, yeah, there are times when... I remember this story in the Lam Rim that there's a monk who's offering a mandala and he only did it because his sponsor was about to walk in. Normally he's meditating so deeply he can't do this mandala. But he wanted to impress his sponsor who happened to be coming to the door, so he picks up the mandala real fast. Then he caught himself and he threw the mandala on the floor. His motivation right then was very pure and somebody with clairvoyance praised him a couple hundred miles away at that moment.

[student: Pure when he threw it away?]

[laughs] Yeah, pure when he gave up his pretense. But obviously it looked bad to his sponsor, but that's a pure action. So sometimes there are things that are... you can't avoid a good deed because someone else might think you're doing something wrong. The impression that other people may get may be wrong. If you're sure of your motivation, that's enough. But you can't... if you're a teacher, you have to be very careful.

[student: So could that be a mixed result of his very pure motivation for him to throw the mandala, but on the other hand if it caused the practitioner to lose some faith or something it could have been bad, whereas the other way around, if you caught yourself and said, well gee, the practitioner's coming and maybe I should offer the mandala at this time and it will help generate more faith in his practice.]

Yeah, either way, either way I suppose. Okay, what's the last one?

[student: Michael, it sounds like it's almost a geometric progression here. Once you start to become a good person, it's like self-fuelling...]

These things are just... I was going to point that out. Once you start making progress in one place you usually make progress in other places and once you start screwing up in one place you're probably screwing up in other places too. It's a kind of ecology or wholeness about it, a sort of holistic-ness about it. Once

you start getting good at generosity, normally your morality is getting better, your concentration is better, they all.... {sherab}. {sherab} you know, I think?

[student: Wisdom.]

Particularly wisdom about emptiness.

[student: It's the result.. [unclear]]

[laughs] [unclear] So a person who gives with those... that's what makes what? Seven things which make what?

[student: A powerful result from the gift.]

Yeah. Well, the karma becomes more powerful because of the giver. There's also... the giving itself is... there's three things that they list about how you do the giving to make it powerful. So that would be more in the sense of the deed itself. So you want to make it powerful from every angle. The first one they say is an attitude of respect for the person you're giving it to. And that's also divided into your actual physical appearance as you're giving. So not only do you give someone something, but you do it very respectfully. And there are many cases of Buddhist kings who get off their throne, go down to the beggar and hand him the money. It's considered disrespectful, in Asia especially, to say, here's the money. You give it to somebody to give it to them, you know, it's considered respectful. I think you have to apply it to our culture.

[student: Like a street person whom you give a quarter...]

Like my boss, recently we talked him into giving some money to [unclear] for medicine [unclear]. He did pretty nice. He contacted the people who were working on it and spoke to the guys really nicely, I appreciate what you're doing, that kind of... He could have just written out a check and given it to them. That's just in your manner, how you do the giving. The second part there is when you give in time of need. You give what the person really needs at the time. And you know examples of people who are very generous with things you never wanted, like old ties and stuff. [laughs] You have to judge the need of the person. You have to hit the right time and the right place. You can't give it a couple of weeks too late. You have to judge the peak of their neediness and give it at that time. That's the second thing that makes it powerful. And the third thing is that when you give it away, it does no harm to other people. And they

give examples of... Abidharma says its like presenting a goat to a butcher, or giving people poison to someone who wants to commit suicide, or you give them food that's not healthy.

[student: You give someone stoned out of their head on a street a buck...]

I think it really does apply here, if you're sure, you're never sure a 100%, but if it's pretty obvious that they're going to hurt themselves, that particular line is very clear, you had it in your reading. To give them anything which is going to harm their health even if they want it, like poison, even if they want it, you can't do that.

[student: I've heard people say, well, in the case of winos on the street, all they have is their alcohol and it makes them feel good, so you're actually giving them the only thing that can give them any small, short-term pleasure.]

I think that if that's your motivation it's a nice motivation but I also think that... there's this line which is undeniable... also, Buddhists can't give intoxicants to anybody, you're not allowed to give any intoxicants to anybody. A monk is not allowed to touch alcohol at all. For medicinal reasons its very touchy.

[student: I don't think he's talking about giving them alcohol...]

I know, but you know very well they're going to use it for alcohol, why give them a chance? By the way, most of us don't give [unclear]. You have to judge, you have to judge carefully.

[student: Why can't you give a monk a knife to a monk?]

We're talking about if he's going to use it to harm himself?

[student: I was told you're not allowed to give knives to....]

Oh, oh, oh, I never heard of that. I know there are lots of Mongolian superstitions. Not give a knife of a monk?

[student: As a gift.]

I'm not aware of it. Generally I give them sharp things for good luck. You give them pins, needles... they're supposed to bring good luck. I haven't heard that,

but I haven't finished my Vinaya studies, and I definitely haven't finished... I know how far I am and I haven't reached all the rules yet. There might be one that I don't know about. Could be. So those are the three things that make the deed. You do it out of respect, that's the first one. Second one is what? You give someone in real need. You go and do the necessary thing when it's really hot. You don't show up ten days later and you don't show up... you know when they're really going to need you and you come there. It's like people are washing the dishes and you wait until the last dish and then you say, oh, can I help you? [laughs] Which I usually do. And then, what's the third one? And don't hurt anybody else. You actually can't steal anything to give to anyone. You cannot do that.

[student: Especially if [unclear]]

We'll get to that. You have to be careful about that. It's tempting. I've been close to that. You know, bamboozling a donor into giving a hundred more dollars. You have to be careful. You can't collect a gift using immoral, illegal means. You can't do it out of flattery and you can't do it out of hinting to the person... you have to be very up-front, honest, you have to directly ask the person.

[student: Michael, if [unclear] take the grain from the poor people [unclear]. So this guy was stealing to give it back to the poor. So he was stealing, but was he really stealing?

Like Robin Hood, right?

[student: Yeah.]

No, we're not allowed to do that.

But he was feeding people who were starving?

We're not allowed to do that. Bodhisattvas are another thing. Bodhisattva vows... you can break your Pratimoksha, your Freedom vows, for your Bodhisattva vows. A person with Bodhisattva vows might be required to do that. That's a different thing. We're [unclear]. Generally speaking, if you don't need to and [unclear]. Everybody likes the Bodhisattva vows and they can't [unclear]. Not really. [laughs] Have some tea and we'll finish.

[cut]

[student: Giving and the method of giving, right? Now we're going to cover the four qualities of the person that you give this thing to. The first one is called {drowa}. {drowa} means realm of being. What kind of being are you giving it to? So, like the choices for us, since we can't see the hell beings and we can't see hungry ghosts and we can't see... the only two realms we can see are animal realm and human realm, if you are whom you seem to be, I don't know.

[student: And the Buddhas...]

Well they are out of all the realms. So, anyway, is it better to give to an animal or to a person? There's a hierarchy. It's much more powerful to give it to the human, if you have a choice. You could possibly affect this person. As a human he has the potential. An animal doesn't have the potential, so it's much more important to give it to the human. {drowa} means type of being, human, animal, and obviously if the human is a very good person and has a good chance for getting into dharma, then that would be even better. First of all, it's the kind of being...

[student: That would almost indicate that the giving has to do with...]

...the potential for this person to benefit ultimately. Very important. And I remember that when I first read it, I was into dolphins and stuff. [laughs]  
[laughter]

[student: No, but you'd think giving to someone who's starving...]

[unclear] What's {dukgnel}, do you know?

[student: Suffering.]

Yeah. So {dukgnel} is also... if you give it to a person with {dukgnel}, it's a lot more powerful. {dukgnel} means suffering. Someone who's hungry, someone who's cold, someone who's sick. Much more powerful if the person is really in need, if the person is really suffering.

[student: What was the question?]

First one is what type of being he is. Is he animal or human or.... Second one is, is he in obvious suffering. If you give the same thing to a person who's in great

need or who's in pain, it's much more powerful karma. Say {pemba}. {pemba} means assistance, and this refers to people who have given you great assistance. If you give something to someone who has given you great assistance... and this always refers to what?

[student: Your parents.]

Your parents, your mother and father. Why?

[student: Because you give you your body.]

Yeah. Keep that in mind. We talked about it before. People say, oh my parents weren't such cool parents, my mother really didn't care about me. It's not the point. Your parents have given you assistance because they've given you the body. Once they've given you a body, they did something so important that they are now a very powerful karmic object for you. Once they have given you a body, and in fact it's the two substances that come from the mother and father that ultimately can be of great importance to you in your higher practices. And they've given you that opportunity, they supplied you with that physical body. They're already a very powerful karmic field and you have to be very careful towards them. If you give them something, it's much more powerful.

[student: If somebody sells the egg...]

We talked about it.

[student: I know, I know, I'm going to ask that question.]

All right.

[student: Is it considered bad?]

No. It's not bad. It depends... there is this thing about giving all your body parts and things like that. If you do it for money, it's much less virtue then if you did it for charity, but if your intention is to have a child who can't have a child, that's a good intention, no problem with that.

[student: [unclear]]

Obviously... meaning what?

[student: Teachers.]

Yeah, I think so, ultimately.

[student: So we could take this to the other extreme and negative karma...]

Excuse me... but the Abhidharma usually mentions your parents.]

[student: So, by inference, you can take it to the other extreme and say it's really bad news to be angry at your parents?]

Oh, very bad, very bad. Even if all the circumstances are... even if they deserve it in a sense, it's very bad because of the power of that object. Very potent karmic object. If you can't be nice to them, at least be neutral. [laughs] That's a thing in America. Remember {yenden}? Common to that name [unclear]. Anyway, it means good quality, it means high spiritual quality. By the way, giving is supposed to have two modes. One mode is when you're trying to help the other person. The other mode is where you're trying to honor someone, you're trying to show... the Dalai Lama doesn't need your flowers and your fruit and your cookies and you know... but you just want to be there at the Kalachakra... you want to make sure you offer something just to honor his presence, just to say "I honor who you are." And that's a {yenden kyi shi}. I think we had it before. People who had just come out of certain states... what was the obvious one?

[student: When they just saw emptiness for the first time.]

Yeah. That's obviously... a person who's just... especially when he's just come out of that state, anyone who does anything to him is magnified. A person who's seen selflessness directly, anything you do, good towards them or bad towards them is magnified, very much more powerful karma.

[student: [unclear] oftentimes turning around and giving it to someone else, right?]

Well, there's this famous story that after this lama died in Tibet—he was a hermit and people used to shower him with presents and stuff—and after he died they found all these coins and clothes and food... he lived near a cliff. He used to go and throw them over. [laughs] [laughter] He never used them. It doesn't matter.

[student: Explain what you mean by the high spiritual qualities?]

It means that person, regardless... he doesn't need your offering, but you're honoring him. You meet the Dalai Lama and you offer him a flower and that flower given to the Dalai Lama is much more powerful than the same flower given to... I'll give you an example. When Tsong Khapa in his previous life met the First Dalai Lama, [unclear] he was a certain person, and he offered the Buddha a rosary, a crystal rosary. According to tradition, that deed helped him become so intelligent in this life. Just the power of that deed... and he was dragged to that Buddha by Manjushri, the bodhisattva Manjushri.

[student: Michael, let's say you have \$5 in your pocket...]

I love this question, I'm hoping someone would ask this question. We're talking hierarchy now. What do you do with the \$5? I don't want to say. You consider all these things. I'm going to give you one more list. Abhidharma loves lists [laughter] as you might have noticed by now. By the way, it's easier to remember things, if you know it's the six this and... there's whole dictionaries in Tibetan with five of this and six of that. I'll give you the data, you can figure it out. But I like the question because your resources are limited and your time is limited and your mind... [laughter] I mean the time of your own mind, no I mean the time space [laughter], the minutes that your mind will be clear in this life are numbered. You will have so many hundreds of hours of clear thinking and that's all you have, and then it just gets fuzzy and then you just can't do this thing. [laughter] So really, seriously, you have to do these things. It is an important decision and I'm glad it occurred to somebody. Now what shall I do? Shall I reprioritize my giving. You decide, from the information.

[student: What about the three categories? Is one more important than the other?]

I don't remember any... I have a feeling they are increasingly more important.

[student: That the object is most important?]

Yeah. You can read it in the reading and he bases it on sutras. Sutra says if you give something to a person in the selflessness realm, the karma is more powerful. Okay, I'm going to give you a new idea.

[student: Michael, if you have \$5 and you give it to the Dalai Lama, clearly he doesn't need that \$5 dollars but a starving person needs that \$5.]

That's what I'm saying... you have to study to accept that. It's hard to accept that. You have to think about it. Dalai Lama tells you to give it to the poor person. But I don't want to draw those conclusions for you. You can read the Abhidharma. I gave you the readings.

[student: [unclear]]

Oh, I will. Maybe I'll do it now. But I have one more idea to tell you. Say {jela sak pa}. [repeat]. {je} means "committed", {la} here means "and", {sampa} means "collected". This is a future karma. You can have karmas that are committed but not collected. You can have karmas that are committed and collected, etcetera. Neither committed nor collected. What it means is that this particular karma is going to stay with you and be stored more firmly in your mental stream if it has six causes. It's a distinction made in the Abhidharma.

[student: "Collected" meaning "ripened"?]

Meaning stored in your... you know, if you we go back to the higher schools, the {bakchak} is really firmly planted into your mental stream.

[student: How can any karma not be...]

You can debate the Abhidharma stuff. I like the question. We'll get into it. By the way, we would like to reach a point where we do {tela masapa}, which is what?

[student: [unclear]]

We did it, but we can unstore it, unactivate it, that's the whole idea. And the review class is very important. Next class... is that it? A week from today? It's very important. This is going to lead in to how to deactivate the seeds. And we'll do a little bit of that when we do our review. So six things that make the deed... the first thing is that it's done intentionally.

[student: This is [unclear]]

Six things that make it very firmly stored, not only committed but also stored.

[student: So this is the good deeds we're talking about now?]

Either way. The intention plants it more firmly.

[student: Are you saying there are only two options? Committed and collected or committed and not collected?]

They give all four moves(?), okay, and I don't quite know how you can collect it but not commit it. [laughter] But to tell you the truth, I didn't read it very carefully. They do say there's such a thing. Maybe it's where you did a mental deed but you didn't act it out. Okay. We had that before. Do you remember what it entailed? A karma basically has about four things going on.

[student: thought, intention, the undertaking of the action...]

And the conclusion, right? And those four...and this is interesting, because the Abhidharma is more clear than Je Tsongkhapa was actually at this point then. If you have all of those complete, the karma is more powerful. It's just much more powerful. If all four are complete, and the Abhidharma gives six and they include the other four. I'm not going to redo that because it'll be too long.

[student: But this again sounds negative?]

This is negative. What would be in the positive side? Rejoicing. So no regret means you do the bad deed and somebody asks you... this is also in a court of law, right? They ask a guy, are you sorry about what you did and he says no, I kind of enjoyed it. Then they give him twenty more years. Karmically also. If you have no regrets about what you do, then the karma is more powerful. In the case of giving, it's rejoicing. To be happy over what you do good really magnifies your karma, it's much more powerful karma. Probably I should have done a homework question like—design the ideal karma. In the computer magazines, the guy goes and buys the best monitor and the best chips and he collects the best, they call it the ultimate good deed. Give me all the elements of the ultimate good deed. What's the ultimate object? What's the ultimate motivation? What's the ultimate thing to give? Number four...no antidote.

[student: What's that?]

We're going to talk about antidotes in the next class.

[student: You mean afterwards?]

But what it means is...

[student: In a good sense?]

Let me think about it. But you don't do anything to make up for it. In the concept which develops from the Abhidharma...you can see now it's root is in the Abhidharma, in the concept of the four forces, where you try to purify the {bakchaks}, you try to deactivate them or ruin their ability to do some result, this is very important. Antidote means you do something to make up for it, you try to make up for it somehow.

[student: But in a positive way, it would be sort of like maybe just allowing it to grow, you know, for it to become more generous or something?]

I can't think... let's see.. maybe just a continuum.

[student: I would think that allowing this giving to...]

Multiply.

[student: Yeah.]

Number five. By the way, what's the most powerful of all antidotes according to the Lam-Rim?

[student: Bodhichitta.]

[student: Seeing emptiness.]

Meditating on emptiness. I used to do that. My confession. You just go home and try and meditate on something. If you did a very bad deed and you want to purify it...

[student: And you see the emptiness of it?]

[laughs] By the way, if you saw the emptiness of it, what would you see?

[student: You didn't do it, and you didn't it to the person...]

No, no, you would see how absolutely certain it is that it's going to hurt you. It's not the opposite. We wish, right? When you understand the emptiness of your bad deeds, then you're going to start shaking, because then you know that they work. Number five.

[student: Michael, how come there's intention twice? Intention is in number two also.]

I think he means here... they do overlap. The other ones are going to overlap also. But I think that here he means the idea of all four elements being complete.

[student: Oh, but intentional is not the same as intention, is it?]

Well, it does, it does. There are two Tibetan words. {sam shintu} means...it's "knowingly", and you can say, knowing the consequences, knowing what's supposed to be happening, you still do it. And then {kun long} which is the word "intention", which means that you want to do this thing, it's your full intention to murder somebody. It's not that you hit them by accident in your car. A {sam shintu} would be almost unthinkingly, unintentional means "unthinkingly", but with no intention means you didn't have that specific intention to kill somebody, you killed him by accident. Number five is with the attendant(?). There's a debate in the Abhidharma, there's two viewpoints about what it means. The easiest one to remember is what you hear in the Lam Rim, where they say, when you're done with the deed, you take some joy in it. And obviously in a good deed it would be the same thing, you did it, and after it's all done, it's kind of the wrap-up, a mental wrap-up, the guy's there on the floor, he's got the knife sticking out of his vest and you say, "hot damn," [laughs] [laughter]... that's called an attendant, the satisfaction that you did it. That's the easiest one to remember.

[cut]

I should say karmic result. I think this is more describing the whole thing, you know, I think it's the last one, and it means {sappa}, the idea of collected..."collected" means it's going to give you a karmic result. And I think it's almost a result of all the other five. I don't think it's like... it's hard for me to conceptualize it as a different category altogether. To me it defines the idea of collected. "Collected" means you cemented that seed to have this perception

later in your mind, it's now cemented in there, that you're going to experience this result, you will perceive yourself having that result, and I think that's part of the idea of collection.

[student: I don't really understand... number two has already been described as the complete path of karma, has every single cause of a full karma...]

There's actually six elements and I don't have time to go into them. They're basically the ones that you've learnt before.

[student: So given that number two is a complete path of karma and say these are the four steps, everything will karmically ripen fully, why is this of any more consequence than the other ones?]

The other ones?

[student: Yeah, one, three, four and five.]

I think that what the Buddha's doing... remember the Abhidharma. If I was a college professor, I would say that well, well, you can see that from this crude Hinayana belief, the sophisticated Mahayana belief comes out later, of the four forces. But I think that if you're a Buddhist, you have to say that the Buddha is setting you up mentally for the four forces. They're coming next class. But it's the idea specifically... he's setting you up for the idea that if you did have regret, if you did do some antidote, you could somehow, maybe you could affect those karmic seeds in your mind, in your being, maybe you could do something, I think he's setting you up for that idea. Sutra is not always cut and dry, sutra is not always... they don't overlap or subsume each other, the divisions are not always strict divisions, sometimes they overlap with each other, and that's no problem as long as you know which ones overlap, you can define them. Okay. {kum [unclear]}

[student: I'm talking about karma, the path of karma. You said karma is movement of the mind, and the path of karma or the actions [unclear]

I taught those four things...

[student: I thought karma was the movement of mind and what follows.]

Yeah, yeah.

[student: So any action that follows from the movement of the mind is still karma.]

That's true.

[student: So what we're saying is that...]

Yeah, there's three possibilities, right? Something which is a karma, but not a path of karma, something which is both a karma and a path of karma, and something which is only a path of karma and not a karma.

[student: But I'm saying since a path of karma is defined as what you go out and do...]

It's a very tricky thing and it's not too clear to me, but apparently it has to have all six of those elements in it or those four...

[student: So you do have some karmas.... [unclear] But you see, what I'm saying is that since karma is defined as what follows the movement of the mind...]

No, no, {sema yuji lay yi no de ni chepa}... it means both are karma.

[student: Right.]

The movement of the mind is karma, and what it instigates is karma.

[student: But I understood the path of karma to not be karma.]

No, it is. In the case of the first seven bad deeds, it's both.

[student: Right, but in the last three, it's not. But my point is...]

They're not karma, they're paths of karma.

[student: That's my point. How can a path of karma not be karma if karma is defined as the movement of the mind and what follows?]

What they mean when they say what follows is only subsumed by physical and

verbal deeds.

[student: What do you mean by subsumed?]

They can only be physical or verbal. They can't be mental.

[student: But the movement of the mind is mental.]

Right. When they say {de ni semba don de che} which means "karma is a movement of the mind and what it instigates", the words "what it instigates" only refers to the first seven.

[student: I understand, but you're saying...]

The movement of the mind...

[student: ... is karma.]

Yeah, the point is this. It's a separate mental event from the anger or the desire. It's going along in the same mind with them, but it's a separate mental function, and that's the point. In fact, when you get up to Swatantrika Madhyamika, they define "dirty karma" as karma which is instigated...as the movement of the mind instigated by the bad thought of one of those last three.

[student: How can you have a thought that's not a movement of the mind?]

Well, all thoughts are accompanied by movements of the mind, that's the point. You see, when you're talking about the last three, you're talking about a strong emotion, a bad emotion. And the emotion is separate from the...]

[student: The mind and mental functions are separate is all they're trying to say?]

No, that the few mental functions going on in the same mind at the same time are separate, but they are linked in five ways, they are focused on the same object, they have the same coloring towards the same object, they are simultaneous towards the same object, they are based on the same sense organ. Like if you're pissed off by what you're looking at, they're based on the same eye... and they are equivalent in those respects, but they are not the same. They are independent of each other. And one Buddhist school says that the Sutrists,

the Sautantrikas say, no, the last three are karmas also. So, it's even a debate in...

[student: Another question is, the idea of the perception, the {bakchak} that you create? If someone yells at you, and you perceive it as being yelled at and as being unpleasant, is that planting a {bakchak} so that the next time you get yelled at that you will perceive being yelled at as being unpleasant? Versus if you kind of fool yourself... you know like, oh, that wasn't so bad that he yelled at me, you're planting a {bakchak} to not perceive being yelled at as so unpleasant next time?

It helps, it helps, but it's not the main karmic cause...

[student: Of perceiving it as pleasant or unpleasant?]

I mean, the karmic result of attempting to perceive his emptiness at that time is separate from another event in which an older karmic cause makes somebody yell at you.

[student: You see, I'm not talking about [unclear]. There are a lot of people who go around just trying to fool themselves, like pretending that it didn't hurt, or pretending that it wasn't unpleasant, I'm wondering if that...]

It's a virtue if your intention is not to get angry... but if it's one of these weird new age things where they say, or when they explain emptiness poorly and they say, oh the guy's not really there, and there's no reason to get mad.

[student: No, I'm thinking more of people who go around always wanting to be nice and happy and they're in denial in a way of the fact that they're getting yelled at....]

They could be in denial, or it really could be their perception.

[student: Well, okay.]

See what I mean? There is a denial thing, I believe there's both. I believe there are people who honestly don't see the bad there.

[student: But that's a whole other matter there. I'm saying if someone is consciously saying, well if I just trick myself that this is not...]

Yeah, yeah. Shantideva says that's all right. Shantideva and Nagarjuna both spend their whole books, {bk: Surleka [unclear]} and {bk: Bodhicharavatara}... they both start out with all these tricks of how to fool yourself into not being bad, and then the classic thing is in {bk: Surleka}, Nagarjuna's half-way through the book and somebody says, well, how can a monk not have desire for a woman? And he says, well, look at the poop coming out, and the snot coming out, and everything's coming out, and then he says, but that won't help much, see her emptiness. [laughs] And then the whole rest of the book is emptiness, that's his excuse for starting his explanation of emptiness.

[student: In Madhyamika Prasangika, I understand the whole aspect of the {bakchak} generating our perception of the event. What I don't understand is the aspect of the data that's out there that arises.]

I know, I like this one. I know what you mean and I like it.

[student: I don't understand how that karma causes that data to function in a certain way. Do you know what I mean?]

Yeah, I know what you mean. According to Madhyamika Prasangika, the highest view, when you look at the guy at work and he's angry at you, you are getting outside objective sensual data that you're interpreting...]

[student: And what causes that? How does this karma function that causes that...?]

As soon as you focus on that, as soon as you asked me this question, you're focussing on the redness of his face and the decibel level of his voice and stuff like that, then you're perceptualizing those also.

[student: Yeah, right.]

And there are external sensual data and you perceptualize those. And when you back up one step again, and you're just thinking about the guy, then the red face and those things are outside sensual data, they're the data on which you're basing your perceptualizations. But when you go down to study the redness of his face and why you see it as anger, then the data is the parts of the red matter.

[student: Yeah, that's all the pure perceptual side which I got...]

No, that's also from the object side. [laughs] You're asking does the glass of water change when the [unclear] puts it to his lips? Yes. Yes, the water tastes [unclear]...]

[student: So my question is, how does karma impact that? What is the mechanism, the functioning mechanism that causes it to do that?]

It was in the queue, it was prioritized by the power of the karma and it ripens first, before the others. That's all, whichever one was more powerful according to all these factors. It ripened first. And you had the karma to want to study the redness of his face.

[student: I'm just going to have to let go of this one.]

No, I like the question.

[student: I can't get it, I can't get it.]

[student: What makes the seed with the objective constituent of that which you then perceive as the ripening of your seed?]

Well, Mind-Only says, you know, the same seed created the objective data and your perception.

[student: But that would not be in the higher schools?]

Yeah. We don't believe... we accept the principle that the object is coming from the same karmic seed. We don't say that they were both expressions of some seventh consciousness called alaya vignana. That's the difference. And that used to bother me in the monastery. It sounds great to me. Why can't we accept that? My teacher said, it was like one of the most profound things he ever said to me, he said, oh, we can accept that, we just don't believe that it's in the alaya vignana.

[student: Okay, last question. I understand that as far as powerful objects go, the idea of benefitting more beings, making a more powerful object. But what makes inanimate objects powerful? Objects of karma to perform an action toward?]

Well, we said religious books, religious temples....

[student: Why are they powerful since they're not...]

Just their potential to act as a {jedang} of wisdom. We had that.

[student: What's a {jedang}??]

{jedang} was when we studied the word Abhidharma. The real Abhidharma is wisdom and its accoutrements. Then there's real accoutrements and symbolic accoutrements.

[student: Like a stupa, walking around, circumambulating a stupa. How is that a powerful object?]

Because of its relation to the act of escaping suffering.

[student: Which is what? How is circumambulating a stupa relating to escaping suffering?]

Oh, it contains the remains of some person who had deep insights and when people see the stupa they'll think of it...

[student: But the idea is even without thinking they benefit... a fly going around a stupa benefits from it.]

Yeah, there is.

[student: So how is that a powerful object for a fly...]

Oh, the fly has no conscious awareness of the holiness of the object.

[student: Yeah, [unclear]].

They say it works, I don't know. [laughs] [laughter] I know what you mean. They say it in the opposite way, that if you kill a person and he's a {drachoma} or an {arhat} and you didn't know it, it doesn't matter much.

[student: Okay, thank you.]

[student: So we don't know why a traveling...]

Well, if I was in a debate ground, I'd say, well, he's going to.... just by being in the presence of that object, he's creating a {bakchak} to see that object more in the future and when he's born as a human, he'll see this object, and he'll wonder what's inside and you know, something like that, maybe?

[student: Well, that makes it a normal {bakchak}, not necessarily a powerful object.]

It has the potential to turn into a human being's curiosity or attraction to stupas. Which people have, and sometimes you don't know why. Some guys are obsessed about taking pictures of Tibetan stuff and they don't know why. Some people are attracted to the letters... they get this thing when they see the... many people have told me, that when they see those Tibetan letters they freak out.

[student: I was at Century 21, they have leather coats with Tibetan script around the sleeves. [laughs] Like high-end designer leather coats.]

Really?

[student: I don't know what it says, but....]

Just [unclear]. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: Michael, I just wanted to say that I'm moving, so this will be my last class.

Okay.

**End**

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## HOW KARMA WORKS

Class Eleven: Course Review

December 1, 1994

transcribed by: Mira Prabha

... we'll take a break, and after the break we'll discuss [unclear] thinking time.  
[laughter]

[student: I visualized the homework, and now I remember some [unclear].]

All right.

[student: [unclear] [laughter] ...some funny parts. I thought he was cheating  
(?)... [unclear]]

These are some of the things that would be good for you to know. Okay? I think these are the most important things. And I'll just go around the room and ask people questions. I know I got [unclear], you didn't, all right? Who wrote the book we're studying and when did he write it?

[student: Vasubandhu, 350 AD.]

And what was the book?

[student: The Treasure House of Knowledge.]

The Treasure House of Knowledge. In Sanskrit what? Very famous?

[student: Oh, Abhidharma Kosha.]

Yeah. [laughs]

We should call him Master Vasubandhu or something like Acharya or something like that. We're not supposed to mention them by their naked name. Vilma, who wrote the commentary?

[student: Gyalwa Gendun Drup.]

What is it's title?

[student: Illumination on the Path to Freedom.]

Yeah. What dates?

[student: 1357-1419?]

That's Tsong Khapa. [laughter] I didn't write it down here and everybody knows it.

[various students speaking at the same time]

[student: That's what I said, wasn't it?]

[student: No, no. [laughter]]

[student: That's what I heard.]

So how old was he when Je Tsongkapa passed away? He was 28. Okay. [student's name], literal meaning of Abhi, Dharma and Kosha?

[student: Kosha means "treasure house," Abhi means "path approaching" ...]

Approaching.

[student: And the Dharma part I think means "Nirvana"?)

It means Nirvana because Nirvana's the highest Dharma. Nirvana's the highest existing dharma, especially in this school. Robin, the literal meaning of the word "Abhidharma".

[student: You just said "literal meaning".]

I shouldn't say literal meaning, that was the literal meaning. [laughter] What's Abhidharma? How's that?

[student: It's the treasure house of knowledge that leads to nirvana.]

"Treasure House" is the book, okay? So don't mix up Abhidharma Kosha with Abhidharma. What is Abhidharma? You know, people have some pretty weird

books out there about Abhidharma. If somebody asks you what's Abidharma....

[student: The realizations that take you to Nirvana?]

Yeah, specifically what?

[student: Selflessness.]

That's pretty good. The perception of selflessness. The last three paths. Unstained knowledge. Unstained wisdom. Unstained wisdom in this school means the last three paths of the five, which are what?

[student: Seeing, habituation and no more learning.]

Right. So seeing is the first time you see emptiness directly, habituation is getting used to that perception and using it to remove the last of your bad thoughts, and then no more learning is when you've removed your bad thoughts and that's Nirvana, okay? Then what's the connection between... I'm sorry, we didn't quite finish with the... when you explain the literal meaning of the word "Abhidharma," you should add one more thing. "Abhi" means "takes you up to," "dharma" means "Nirvana". But what is that which takes you up to Nirvana?

[student: Wisdom?]

It's Abhidharma. [laughs] So you have to tie it up. It's not enough to say "Abhi" means "up to" and "Dharma" means "Nirvana", you have to say "Abhidharma" is higher knowledge and it "abhi's" you to "Dharma". So it's a pun. You have to say Abhidharma "abhi's to dharma". Abhidharma meaning knowledge, takes you, abhi, up to, Dharma, Nirvana. So you have to tie it up. It's not enough to say "Abhi" means "up to" and "Dharma" means "Nirvana".

[student: That's for the literal translation of the meaning?]

Yeah. So there's three parts to it. Abhidharma means "Abhi Dharma", meaning that knowledge is the thing that takes you to Nirvana. That's the point. That's a little tricky. Next question says now what does Abhidharma refer to? And then you say, "unstained wisdom," meaning the last three paths. And then there are accessories to Abhidharma. What are they? They are also considered Abhidharma. Can you name any of them? There's two kinds of accessories to

Abhidharma. One is real accessories, and one is not real accessories. Wisdom you're born with is one of the not-real, nominal, accessories. What's another one?

[student: Wisdom that you gain from hearing?]

Hearing, contemplation and meditation, which all occur before the first path. So those are also accessories.

[student: Hearing, contemplation and what?]

The three wisdoms, the one you get from hearing, classroom time, really, the one you get from contemplation, and then the one you get from meditation. The difference between contemplation and meditation is this: in contemplation, you're supposed to be analyzing something to see if its true or not. And in meditation you take your conclusion and meditate on it. That's the difference between meditation and contemplation in this case. So those three are also nominal accessories to Abhidharma. They are Abhidharma, but they're not real Abhidharma. What's the real accessories to Abhidharma? Remember any of them? Something that has to come along with that knowledge, something that must be present with that knowledge, especially at the path of seeing, especially when you see emptiness directly.

[student: Intellectual understanding of emptiness?]

Not at that time. Must be concurrent, must be going on at the same time. What?

[student: Bodhichitta?]

Nah. [laughs] Especially in this school. Concentration, okay? Meaning those meditative levels, those high meditative levels. Your mind has to actually be in the form realm. So the concentration and also the other parts of the body and mind at that moment, your physical body, your other five heaps, the other parts of you that are going on. If you're in the formless realm, it's the fourth.

[student: You're talking about accessories?]

Yeah. The real accessories are the parts to you and the levels of meditation that you must be in to before you can see emptiness directly. The levels of concentration that that wisdom has to be married to, and that's where you get

into shamatha and vipashyana, that's the great marriage of shamatha and vipashyana. She's late and she's allowed to come in because she called to say her plane was late and she was rushing from the airport. [laughs] That's all. Okay. So that's what Abhidharma... that's a little bit of a long story, but I want you to say the whole thing, okay? Abhidharma meaning higher knowledge, unstained knowledge, meaning the last three paths, meaning you're not anywhere in Abhidharma until what? Till you see emptiness directly, till you see selflessness directly. In this school, you don't even have Abhidharma until you're an Arhat. And then obviously the meditative levels that you have to be on—those are accessories, they're not the main Abhidharma, but they have to be around. And then the parts of accessories. And then not real accessories, but nominal accessories, are those three wisdoms, and the wisdom you have from birth, and also the books on Abhidharma. They're not real Abhidharma. That's very fundamental teaching and instruction, that the books are not real Abhidharma. Okay, a good book should have four qualities... be on the New York Times list... [laughs] [laughter]

[student: For two weeks, at least.] [laughs] [laughter]

Stillwell... shouldn't waste your time on a book that doesn't have these four qualities, that's the point.

[student: Subject.]

Has a meaningful subject matter. Then what? By the way, also, on this question, tell me in the Abidharma Kosha, what is the subject matter?

[student: Stained versus unstained matter.]

Stained and unstained phenomena. Stained things and unstained things. They want to teach you the dirty side of the universe and the clean side of the universe. That's the subject matter.

[student: Then the purpose?]

Yeah. You can say a temporal purpose or a short-term purpose of something like that. That's a {duba}. In this case?

[student: To plant the seeds of selflessness?]

To plant the seeds of knowledge that can discriminate between what and what?  
[unclear]

[student: Selflessness.]

[student: Stained and unstained.]

What's stained and what's not stained. We're confused, you know. We don't have that kind of knowledge because we think that some things that are stained are nice. And we probably haven't even experienced those things. So it's to give the student the ability to discriminate between those two things, to plant that wisdom. Third thing?

[student: Ultimate goal?]

Ultimate goal. Which is what?

[student: Nirvana.]

Nirvana. And then fourth one?

[student: To show the relationship between the prior three.]

There has to be a relationship between the first three. You should state it backwards, okay? You should start from number three and go down to number one. How do you do that?

[student: To reach Nirvana you have to have the wisdom to discriminate between stained and unstained things and to get that you have to read a book.]

Read a book. [laughter] Read a book that has the subject matter of stained and unstained things. That's it. That simple. But all Buddhist books must have those four qualities. If a Buddhist book does not have those four qualities or any book, then it's not worth your time. Your mental... the time of your life when your mind is clear and you have time to read a Buddhist book and you're healthy and you can meditate, it's very brief. Don't waste your time on other books. Test your reading material against these requirements. I think the New York Times will leave quickly. [laughs] Something like that. Even the New York Times. Don't waste your mind time. I mean, you know, if you've got half an hour, use it for something meaningful. Your healthy time is very short. Use the time.

[student: Michael, for the exam, do you want us to reverse the order?]

No, I want one, two, three, four, but when you get to four, explain the relationship by saying that three depends on two and two depends on one.

[student: Oh, I thought you said...]

I didn't mean to reverse it. I just meant when you explain the relationship, it's easier to go from three to two to one. Three depends on two and two depends on one. But the order should be like John gave you. Helen, two basic... most, most, most basic divisions of karma.

[student: Motivated and motivating.]

Yeah. Called {sembe lay} and {sambe lay}. {sembe lay} means the movement of the mind which motivates you to do something. That in itself is karma. And then the actions of body, speech that you do. So one is motivating karma, which is the movement of your mind, it's shifting towards its object, and then the result of that, a physical or verbal deed, is {sambe lay}, is motivated karma. The main point is that you know who's the driver. And you know that any time the mind moves, that's karma. And that means you're collecting a helluva lot more karmas than you thought. Before you thought you were doing a couple of karmas a day. Really, you did think that. Now you know that you're doing karmas every few seconds.

[student: But you can't do much about that.]

You have to learn. That's the whole point. One mental slip can cause you hundreds of years of suffering.

[student: But you don't have control over your thoughts.]

Oh yeah, you do, if you try. You have to practice. That's the whole point. One slip of the mind can cause... according to Buddhism, one slip of the mind can cause many years of suffering.

[student: What's a slip of the mind, Michael?]

Like a very angry thought, or [unclear]....

[student: When you meditate and you're watching your thoughts...]

...something you wouldn't do when you're well-rested or your healthy... you know, to keep your morality you actually have to take care of your mind and make sure it's not weakened, if you can help it, you know, you don't allow yourself... out of your responsibility to keep your morality, you shouldn't let your mind reach a state where it could be easily tempted. And that means... that's the whole idea behind not drinking. It lowers your ability to resist, and so does exhaustion, and so does not eating properly and so too a lot of other things. So your morality actually gets into taking care of your mind so that it's always strong enough to resist.

[student: So the idea of understanding emptiness, when somebody yells at us, we choose to say, oh I understand my karma caused me to be yelled at. He's empty, therefore I'm not going to yell back.]

Right, I like that. [laughs] That's the essence of Buddhism.

[student: There's still the guy yelling at you and the initial, perhaps impulsive, reaction is that oh, he yelled at me and I don't like it. And then the thought process kicks in of all this. So you still the thought even though you don't speak it. So even though you break the cycle of the karmic action, do you still have the karmic thought ripening as a result of this?]

Until you get more and more used to it and it happens more instantaneously.

[student: So the idea is that the only time you really break that cycle is when you don't even have a thought, when you just have a natural thought of emptiness.]  
[laughter]

It is like that. It becomes so much of a gut reaction that it actually... your implication is that the reaction of anger is a natural thing, and it wasn't something that was caused by your former habits. And if you condition yourself in the opposite way, you'll never have a moment of anger. But, you know, obviously it takes a lot of conditioning. I'll tell you one thing—if you don't work at it you'll never get that far. And if you work at it, you'll find some nice results. And if you don't keep a record of your progress, like some kind of daily diary or something that you carry around, I doubt that you can, I don't think you can do

this. You have to be a scientist of your own reactions. You know these English journalists, Samuel.... eh?

[student: Pepys.]

Pepys. Anyway, they kept these stupid diaries of every thought they had. You need to keep a similar thing of... you know, pick something that you're worst at, keep a little diary. If you don't do something on a regular basis, on a formal basis, you'll never do anything, you'll never change. It's not enough to go to classes. You gotta undertake some kind of regimen. Okay. Whose turn? Mikael! (?) [laughs]

[student: [unclear]] [laughter]

The Abhidharma school believes that when you do a really good deed or a really bad deed, some kind of cosmic photograph is taken. We called it an aura. It has five qualities. Give me any of them. It has five qualities. [Tibetan -- unclear]

[student: It has something to do with a {bakchak}...]

No, this was first class. It's a very unique idea to the Abidharma school, the Vaibhashika school, nobody else believes it. But I think it's a useful idea and it is or else the Buddha wouldn't have taught it and he did teach it, so there must be some use to it. So what's the first one? Even if you're not thinking about it, it's there. For example, if a monk takes a vow, on the day he takes the vow, in the moment that the Khenpo snaps his fingers, he has that vow, and that somehow causes a physical form to form on him. And even when he's not thinking about that vow, he has that aura. So that's the first quality. Even when you're not thinking about it, you have it. [Tibetan--unclear] Even when the mind stops... does the mind really ever stop? No. Will it ever stop? No. Did it ever begin? No. That's one thing you're stuck with permanently, okay? [laughs] But it gets to a very low level in deep meditation. Even on those occasions, which means you're totally not thinking about it, it's still there. [Tibetan--unclear] It has an ethical component. It's either very virtuous or very non-virtuous. You don't get [nambay richi ma yi me su], you don't get this kind of aura from doing a flimsy virtue or a flimsy non-virtue. It has to be serious. You get it when you take a vow, you get it when you agree to kill animals for the rest of your life, to be a butcher, those are examples in the Abhidharma Kosha. So it has to be a virtue or non-virtue. {je del gang je dang}. It continues in a flow, which means, if I take my monk's vows here, and then I walk outside, it comes with me. It sticks to

you and it continues on like a stream. It's like those slow-motion photographs where those things follow the car, the light, you know what I mean? [Tibetan--unclear].

[student: Does it end at death?]

Yeah. And it ends when you lose that vow also. If a monk loses his vows, that is gone, the aura disappears. Or when a person decides to give up the vow to be a soldier or something, when he formally renounces being a soldier.

[student: Or when you move, also.]

No, when you move it doesn't. That was the fourth quality. If you move around, it follows you. And number five? It's made up of four elements, which means... it's Buddhism's way of saying it's physical matter. When you say, in ancient Buddhism, it has the four elements, what you're saying is, it is physical matter.

[student: Does that mean it's obvious to someone else?]

No. No. It means that somebody else must be able to perceive this, but not us. It's subtle physical matter and we can't see it. But if someone were on the correct level, like a real-life person, he could see it. But what it means is that... when you say it has the four elements, then it has the four functions of the four elements. It must be able to affect other things as the four elements do. Give them motility, give them stability, give them some kind of quality of being able to produce light, warmth, things like that. Okay. Those are the five qualities of that aura. It's an important idea in this school, especially in morality, because as far as ethics, we accept most of what Hinayana says, and the monk's vows are all Hinayana. The whole practice of monks is Hinayana. So we study that. And we study Vinaya. Next one. Mikhail. Definitions of virtue, non-virtue and neutral karma.

[student: Eeyu.] [laughter]

It's easy! What makes something good or bad in Buddhism? Is it that God doesn't like it? Is it necessarily that it hurts other people?

[student: No, it's what brings you a pleasurable result or an unpleasant result.]

Yeah, that's the guts of it. Something is a good karma if it brings you a good karmic result later, a pleasant karmic result later. Something is bad karma if it brings you an unpleasant karmic result. And something is a neutral karma if it brings neither one. And there's another little part to the first one which you'd better put down. What was that?

[student: That it takes you to nirvana ultimately?]

Yeah. Ultimately, it brings you to nirvana. In the short-term, it gives you a pleasant karmic result. In the long term, it brings you to Nirvana. That's the definition of virtue. The definition of non-virtue doesn't have them, right? Doesn't have that part. Doesn't say also prevents you from going to nirvana. Actually it does. All right. The Abhidharma school says that when you do a good deed, there are two mental functions that are always there, and they have to do with some kind of shame. There are two kinds. You remember what they are?

[student: There's shame that's not doing it because of yourself, and then there's consideration, not doing a bad deed because of what other people might think.]

Yeah. You have to put in the word "avoiding", okay? The definition is that {jerba}, {rang gye che [unclear] gyewa zemba} means... you must put that down. A lot of people just put if you do it for yourself, or something like that. [laughs] The definition is that this is a negative thing, you avoid a bad deed, you turn away from a bad deed because you would be embarrassed personally to do it, even if no one ever found out about it. You're in your own room, the door is locked, nobody's around and you still don't do it. That's {mosa} and then {cheyu} means you avoid it either because it would hurt other people if they found out, or if just actually it would have some bad effect on other people.

[student: I thought it was more [unclear]]

That's a very important part. That is part of the meaning of that word. Especially for monks. Monks are supposed to avoid the appearance of a bad deed because it might hurt others, because other people might think badly of Buddhism. That's part of it. One part is that... it's consideration for others in two senses. One is that they would think badly of you. And secondly, maybe it's something that actually hurts them. Like a lot of times a good person will avoid doing something because it will have ramifications on others, even though it would help him. So it has both of those meanings. Okay. [Meshin?] Ten good

deeds, ten bad deeds. Give me the first three. Three bad deeds of the body. These you should have like Om Mani Padme Hung. If you don't, then what are you doing? [laughs] It's your guideline for Vinaya.

[student: My brain went blank.]

Okay. Any bad deed of your body. Guess.

[student: Killing.]

84,000 kinds. Killing...

[student: Oh, killing, stealing and lying...]

Killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. Those are the three for... I used to remember them as "kiss", KSS. [laughs] when I was first learning. Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct. Those are three that are to do with your body. Then four of speech. What are they?

[student: The four of speech? Lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle speech.]

Okay, good. And divisive, we don't have a good word for it in English, but you know, it's either true or false, but the intention is to alienate other people from each other. Mrs. Kiley. Three mental ones.

[student: Coveting, being happy when other people fail...]

We call it ill-will.

[student: And wrong views.]

And wrong views. What's a classic wrong view? Especially in Abhidharma?

[student: Not believing in emptiness, self-existence.]

Their's is more specific.

[student: Not believing in karma]

Not believing in karma. The tenth bad deed. The ultimate bad deed. Right?

The mental ones are the worst. The ultimate bad deed is, in this school especially, is to not believe in karma. Because then what? What about the other bad deeds? [laughs] If you think there's no karma, then why the hell be good? Just do what you like. (A) Do what you like and (B) think you can get away with it. Those are the ten. [unclear] Karma's also divided into three according to when it's experienced. What's the answer?

[student: Karma experienced in this life, next life and after.]

Yeah. And that's an easy thing, and why repeat it? And why have all these...? Could be on the exam. [laughter] Probably will be unless the thing isn't printed. It's very very very very important because it explains why life is so screwy, you know. It explains why good people have to die, and bad people get rich, and things like that. I think if you don't have your mind on this division, you could go crazy, and it's very hard to believe Buddhism because you have to realize that much of what you experience is not your fault in this life. A lot of people come to me. They have terrible experiences, you know. They have really terrible experiences. And they say, what did I do? And you study the books and you say, you must have done this karma. And they say, but I never did anything like that! And it's true, they never did anything like that that they can remember. And I think that if you don't keep your mind on this, you can't really be a good Buddhist. Once you study the correlation between certain deeds and their three results, which we'll talk about later. Then you can explain, theoretically, where every experience in your life came from. But you didn't do anything, and that can really bother you, that can make you crazy. So it's much easier... and it's not a cop-out to say that you have done that in the past. And it's still very important in the act of purification to examine yourself for any traces of that kind of deed. I had a lady who told me she got molested when she was a child and it ruined her whole life. Many people are like that. And you know, in the Abhidharma, according to the laws of karma, it would have been some kind of sexual misconduct that she did in the past. But she was too young to have done sexual misconduct. Then the person goes crazy trying to think of why this could happen to them. People's lives are ruined at age three by some event like this. I think it's very important to recognize these three divisions of karma.

[student: [unclear]]

We're going to talk about it tonight. So it's not like I'm going to say fourth year, right? That's my usual answer.

[student: Second hour.]

[laughs] If you don't die from the tea, you'll be all right. Okay. This next question is one that nobody got right in the homework because it wasn't phrased very well. [laughter] I said give an example of a deed of body and a different example of a deed of speech and a different example of a deed of mind, and give me the three results. So, for example, in the first one, you could put killing. The deed is killing. What's the first result? That's called {namen kyi debu}, that's what we call classic karmic result. What is that? It's one of the three lower realms. So the answer for all three, for the first part of all three, is that it gets you into one of the three lower realms. That's the main {namen kyi debu}, that's the main cooked result. Then the second one is what?

[student: Personal.]

Yeah, you can call it a personal result. The literal word for that is "corresponding result," somehow similar to the cause. And what is that? That has two flavors, and by the way, you always start the line by saying, and even if you were born as a human, because the last two take over then, the first one you already said you take a birth in one of the three lower realms. Then finally you're born as a human, and then what? You have a short life, you live in a country.... it's amazing, things in India don't work. Penicillin doesn't work, you know. People take tetracycline and they still get stuff. And it's weird. You eat all day and you get skinny. The food doesn't help. I mean, the whole country... you go to Thailand, it's on the same latitude, same parallel, same dirt, same soil, same everything, and everything gets you fat, I don't know. It's really strange. It really is something strange. So what was the second personal result? You have a liking... what do you call it? You gravitate towards that sort of thing in your next life. So some kids that you knew in high school were cruel. I remember one guy, you know. And some kids were just naturally very pure, they loved to help you. Where did they get this from? Where did it come from? So that's the second part. So if you give a good answer to number two in each case, give me a personal result like, I don't have much money because I stole. And secondly, I like to steal, I'm kind of attracted to the idea of stealing. Those are the two. Third one is what?

[student: Environment.]

Environment from killing? [unclear] [laughs] [laughter] Or you [unclear]. [laughter] I asked some people from New Jersey and they said they don't want

to come to class because they're afraid of this one lama. [unclear]

[student: [unclear] New Jersey] [laughter]

All right, that's all. You answer that way on the exam. Okay.

[student: It's not clear to me, the idea of taking a lower rebirth a higher rebirth... which actions lead to which?]

Projecting karma, right? Oh, which of these necessarily causes lower rebirth?

Yeah, in this case we're talking about...

They don't have to. They have to be of a certain strength to do it. And a lot depends on the last moment of your life. Your thoughts...

[student: So when you're saying...]

They say in.... Tsong Khapa says it comes from doing it over a period of time.. you know, constantly.

[student: So in this case you're saying select a bad deed and what it will result in... it's going to lead to a little...]

We're talking patterns, we're not talking like one specific case. Those eight... the first result and the second result are contradictory. Okay. What are we up to? You're going to like this question.

[student: Philosophical.] [laughter]

[student: [unclear] after I'm gone...]

I bet you can answer it anyway. According to the Mind-Only School, what are you really looking at when you're looking at the sense power of your eye and not the outside object?

[student: It's a conceptualization, or it's a flowering of a pre-existent seed....]

Mind-Only School. Mind-Only School. Guess from the name of the school.

[student: From the mind.]

They say that it's like a....

[student: In your mind there's a storehouse of consciousness which projects as this image that you see.]

Very close to that. They say that it's like a you, and here's your mind and here's the object of your mind, and they're actually the same stuff. It's just the mind curved around and you're looking at your own mind. And that mind is appearing as Eric Davis to me, and my eyes are here... even my own eyes I take to be apart, outside of my mind, but they're all actually made of my mind. Prasangika says you do exist out there, but you are my projection of certain data. But Mind-Only School says no, it's more radical. You are my mind. I never got past this skin right here, you know. You were never beyond that. And you're just in my mind and you're part of my mind. And the reason they give for that is a good reason and accepted by everyone, which is that the seed that creates the appearance of you for me, and the seed that creates my mind to see you, are the same seed, the same karma. I love that. I think that's great. It's one karma that creates the appearance of the object, and also creates the eye which sees the object. That's where they're coming from, and that part is okay. That's true.

[student: Say that again please?]

One karmic seed is creating the thing you're looking at and the eyes you have to see it, and the mind you have to think about it. One karmic seed is creating all three simultaneously. And it has to be that way, I like that, that makes sense. Even if he's only a projection of mind.

[student: Why do you distinguish those things into three different things, then? What makes those three different things different?]

Oh, there's a time line, for example. The object exists for a millisecond, and then the eye senses it, and then the mind perceives that. So there's a three second time lag.

[student: So you're saying the interpretation...]

That's the higher... you're mixing up Prasangika.

[student: That was brilliant(?).

Brilliant?

[student: The object exists and then a second before you look at it, just like we had with that glass of water...].

You're always a nanosecond behind. Your perceptions are always a nanosecond behind.

[student: It exists because I have projected the nanosecond earlier, but I only perceive it a nanosecond later?]

All right, give or take a nanosecond. [laughter] It's like the light of the stars. Some stars have actually gone out and we're still seeing them? The light hasn't got here as yet? Something like that. All right. Janet. You've got a hard one. All right, three things about Mind-Only School. We're talking about how a mental seed from a karma is planted. How is it planted, where does it stay, and how can that seed hang around for the million years it might take just for it to ripen?

[student: After you do a deed, for instance, yelling at your boss, right after you've completed the deed, the energy gets transferred to the {bakchak}....]

As a {bakchak}.

[student: ...which gets stored in the kunshi, and then it replicates itself, over and over again like still frames in a film, and then it eventually flowers so that you're yelling at someone else? No, wait.] [laughter]

No, if you yell back...

[student: Yeah, if you yell back, then somebody yells at you. I think that's a terrible example of a boss because I always think of a boss yelling at you, [laughter] I don't think of you yelling at the boss, that's what I mean.]

All right, I get it. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: If you're yelling at the puppy, then [unclear]] [laughs] [laughter]

I knew there was a reason he was around. The only thing you need to add, and this is very important—seeing yourself yelling at the boss is the main thing.

[student: So wait a minute.... I was just thinking about like bad deeds. It seems that most of us don't do too many really bad deeds consciously. Most of us don't consciously do stuff that isn't too nice, so a lot of times you don't realize how bad it is and then you think about it five minutes later, and you go, oh, I shouldn't have done that. So how does that affect all this? If you're not really conscious of it at the time?]

[unclear] We'll get to it. That's the reason for the distinction between a karma and a karmic path. And the karmic path has to have those five elements present. And if one of them is incomplete, like one wheel on a cart, you know, still you can get somewhere, but it's not as deep or as powerful as I thought. And the same thing on a karmic path. Any one of those four, like if you don't identify with it, you really didn't realize that.. you really thought that animals couldn't feel anything, that they didn't mind having their skin stripped off. [laughter] [laughs] If you really believe that, and a lot of people do, they really believe that animals can't feel anything, then it's actually less of a bad karma than if you really learnt how badly it hurts to kill them.

[student: Let's say for example that, like to a person, where maybe you did something differently that wasn't nice, and maybe on some level you kind of knew it, but your negative emotion was stronger than your desire to be nice to the person, so it's not exactly like you thought you were being nice, but... you know what I mean?]

Then it's {koolong}, then the element of {sampa}, the element of thinking, is not complete. We're going to get to that. But basically, when you're thinking about those questions, think about the idea of a karmic path with those four parts complete, and if something is defective there, if something is less than whole, then the karma's much less.

[student: Remember we talked about the {bakchak} being created and streaming for millions of years. You know, you're saying that the energy doesn't dissipate, this is some energetic thing that is preserved and doesn't dissipate, like when you yell at someone, the energy runs out and it turns into a {bakchak}. So I don't understand how the activities of generating a karma... the energy runs down, and yet a {bakchak} maintains and increase.]

It's the question... there's two things going on, okay? I remember having this argument with my boss like twelve years ago or something, in the back of a car. And he said, your obsession with impermanence, or that things are always falling apart, this Buddhist idea is incorrect. What about a muscle? The more I use it the stronger it gets. So you have to view it in two planes, two dimensions. As the muscle appears to be getting stronger as you weightlift, it's actually approaching death. It's going up, but it's reaching this axis faster. Know what I mean? It is going up. It appears to be getting healthier, and a company which is growing appears to be growing rather than being destroyed. But the longer it lives, the closer it is to its destruction, the longer it gets stronger, the closer it is to its destruction. So that's an illusion. So here it's the opposite. The seed is actually getting stronger as time goes on, but it is being destroyed in the sense of getting closer to the flowering of it, and that's the moment it's destroyed.

[student: Where's the energy coming from, if it becomes stronger? There's this energetic seed which is streaming on and yet it's increasing in potential. How does that happen?]

Let's say a lot of factors. What makes a seed healthier than other seeds? It's the secondary causes, the fertilizer, the earth, the water and the sunlight. And then, what's in your mind that would make those seeds fresh and healthy... what keeps them from rotting? Mainly ignorance. Mainly the misperception of objects.

[student: So you're saying that if you changed your mind, those seeds would disappear?]

They don't disappear, but they become... they call it rotten, unable to produce their result properly. And we're going to get to that... the purification process is just that. The seeds are there. How do you deactivate it? How do you make them rot in your brain and never flower? That would be nice.

[student: I have a question about Janet's question. When you hear about, let's say a psychopathic killer who is defended by the defense of being temporarily insane. Now does he.. can we assume that he goes through a complete karmic path with those four parts, or that he goes through it and he doesn't know it?]

No, it's not all complete because we always say insanity is a defense. Because he's not having a {sampa}, his motivation, his perception of the events, is all

defective. It's not complete. It's as if you machine-gun a corpse in a bed which you didn't know was dead already. He's in a similar situation. And we believe that because of certain factors like extreme grief, that a person can actually go temporarily crazy, misperceive objects and do something bad, and he's not as responsible for that.

[student: So extreme disassociation would be the same thing?]

Yeah, yeah. Somebody didn't like that because it would mean that Hitler's getting less of a payback for his deeds than he would have if he really thought that all those beings were nice people who deserved to live. He had this misperception, and actually it would make the karma a little lighter for him. Or my father, he thought that animals couldn't feel anything when he went fishing. He really believed that. So actually his karma would be a little bit less, not much.

[student: I mean, it strikes me that we're all in this class, trying very hard to know what we did, what we're going to do, [laughs] and there are a lot of people that you talk to on an everyday basis who don't know when you ask them a question, they don't know.]

Well, the more you know, the more dangerous it is. [laughter] Seriously. The more you know, the worse the karma is, much worse. Maybe you don't want to be in this class. [laughter]

[student: I know we had that immediate life, and all those things about when it plays out, but how do you... what is it that makes the {bakchak} come back?]

Many people ask me that. It's a queuing process. You know computer printing? Whoever gets their printing job in first gets the first thing out of the printer, unless there's this program where you can shove it ahead in the queue, and it's the same thing. Deeds done with those peculiar aspects, extreme rage towards a very holy object, where you torture the guy as you kill him, those all move it up in the queue. So you must experience those karmas first. That delays the other ones.

[student: So you're always going to experience lesser ones further on?]

The more powerful ones first. It doesn't mean that the first birth won't be much longer and more painful because the same power can maintain human life, I mean, the megabytes it takes to maintain a human life and the amount it takes to

maintain a hell life... it takes less energy to maintain a hell life. A smaller bad deed can give you more time in hell than a very powerful deed can give you in the human realm. That's just a... in the Abhidharma, in the third chapter at the end, they describe how time slows down for those beings. They have a different perception of time. A day here is a month for them.

[student: [unclear]]

You can ask questions, but you guys stay till 9:30. It's a deal? [laughs] [laughter] Don't get mad at me now.

[student: How does the energy really move once you die? How does it move to the next life?]

That's when you get to what stores it, you know, and that's why you have to say, on a gross level, you have to say the flow of the mind. Which is actually just a replication as is the {bakchak}. But on a more subtle level, it's the flow of your perception, and that's the Prasangika, and that takes some time. It's not the flow of the mind, it's the flow of the perception of the mind. That's where the {bakchaks} stay. That's Mahayana.

[student: You said, very briefly, the most important thing, the thing it's very important to understand is that it's your perception of what you....]

I should go back to that. What's particularly important is your perception of yourself yelling at your boss, or at your dog. [laughs] All right? You should mention that. It's the perception of yourself doing it that is paramount, and that's why intention is so important. But it's the actual perception of what's going on, naturally. A mental event which causes the {bakchak}, the karmic seed, to be planted. And that's why the result is a perceptual event, isn't it? It's a conception, isn't it? It's thinking you're seeing yourself being yelled at. [laughs] Okay? Which is equivalent to being yelled at, by the way. Except that you can change the second one and you can't change the first one. Sorry. If it weren't that way, you could never stop being that way. That's Nagarjuna's obsession. It's this... yeah. I said the perception of getting yelled at is equivalent to being yelled at. But if you only understand it on the level of just being yelled at, you'll never be able to change it.

[student: So the perception being understanding where that's coming from? Is that what you mean?]

Oh yeah. Okay. No. Partly. But if it weren't just a conception, you could never change it. If it were actually the outside event, the way it looks like, you would never change. If it's a conception, you can change your karma, change your perception, and then the event changes. You never achieve any thing you want to happen in the universe... nothing in life is going to happen the way you want it to happen except that it happens through your past karma. There's no will power involved. There's no manipulation that you can do to your world, which will bring anything to you that you wish, except to be good. And that's profound. That's why sometimes you try something and it works, and sometimes you try it and it doesn't work. Because that's not what's causing it. And that's the proof of it. Anyway.

[student: If nothing can come to you through will, then how can making changes do...]

What I mean is ... you can will to change your deeds, and therefore change your perceptions. You use your will to change, and then you get this understanding to be good and then you be good, and you get your results.

[student: So then there's no will in that, I mean, that's all...]

That is will. That's all will ever was. But it's good enough to be will. What do they say? {unclear}. Because something is illusory, it's enough to say it exists. {unclear} But because something doesn't exist ultimately, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. That's very beautiful. If something exists illusorily, we can say it exists. If something doesn't exist ultimately, we cannot say it doesn't exist, we get in trouble. Okay, we ought to go on. I think we're back up near Fran. Mind-Only School says we are right because the Buddha said in many places that the universe is made from the mind only. And that's...what did the Buddha really mean when he said the universe is mind only? What did Shantideva mean when he said hell was not put there by ACME Construction Company, hell was put there by your mind? [laughter] What did he mean?

[student: That there's no creator.]

There was a negative way and a positive way. Negatively speaking, don't blame it on god. Positively speaking....

[student: That the mind is greater than matter?]

Yeah, that mind is the main cause. It doesn't mean that everything is made of mind. That's not what the Buddha meant. Mind, especially in the form of ignorance, not understanding all these things, creates all this. All right. Next question I think is the most holy statement in Buddhism. I really do think that. So I give... [name] should be good at this. Maitreya in his work called [bk: The Higher Line] describes six different steps in the process by which the tendency to grasp to some self-nature causes karma and therefore the [unclear]. So where does all this screw-up come from? That's the thing. Six steps. Mr. Kiley. Got a minute? Six steps as to where this whole trouble comes from. Where does this come from? Remember? I don't mind if you look.

[student: Well that's nice of you. [laughter] Where does the bad karma... the mental seed from past lives...called a {bakchak}...]

Okay, the mental seed for ignorance, that's the beginning of the beginning. You carry a mental seed for ignorance. By the way, it's different from a karmic seed. That's number one. Number two?

[student: Tendency to grasp to the self-nature of my self as a person exists...]

And something else. Me and my.

[student: Yeah, me and my self.]

Two kinds of ignorance. Ignorance about me, and ignorance about my parts and my things. They start. So the seed starts. Amoebas have them, kids have them, turtles have them, according to Madhyamika Prasangika, every living being, I mean non-Buddha, non-Arhat, has them.

[student: Does that extend to possessions?]

Yeah. Because in a sense they're all objects of your eye-consciousness [unclear]. I used to wonder about that myself. But mainly parts to your personal self. Number three, Kiley?

[student: We see things backwardly, things that seem to be pleasant to us really are unpleasant.]

That's not quite it. That comes next. Okay? But we perceive things as pleasant

or unpleasant. Is that wrong? Is that a misperception, is that a {tsema}?

[student: No, yes.]

It's a {pramana}, it's a {tsema}, it's a correct perception. Some things are nice and some things are bad. Third step here, the third part of the process, is not thinking that some things are nice and some things are not. They are nice and bad. They are. It's what?

[student: It's how they exist, how they come about.]

Yeah. It's misunderstanding how good things and bad things exist. It's not the perception that some things are nice and some things are bad. They are nice and bad. Are you going to go out and eat a rock instead of a doughnut? I mean, that's not a crazy thought, that's a {tsema}, you don't want to eat a rock.

[student: So what's the confusion?]

It's to think, it's to perceive a good thing as self-existent, and to perceive a bad thing as self-existent, which is not to understand where they came from. And then what?

[student: Then the desire to avoid unpleasant experiences and the desire not to lose pleasant objects.]

Ignorantly. Please add that. Okay? Ignorantly. Is it bad to want nice things? Well, then the Buddha never would have become a Buddha. He worked for 213 countless eons. [laughs]. It's nice to work for good things. It's nice to want good things and to not want bad things or you would never be a Buddhist. You're here because you want good things. But ignorantly, because you don't understand their nature. So you think that the way to get something good is what?

[student: Just get it.]

Yeah. Keep the money for yourself, that's how you get rich. When you give it away, your bank account runs down. That's crazy. That's the ignorant part. Okay, number four. [unclear]

[student: Karma and the accumulation of {unclear}.]

Yeah, then you can collect karma. Then you can actually withhold money from people and think that action is getting you rich. And you're actually doing the opposite of what you should do to get rich. And it seems to work, doesn't it? For a while. And there's the rub, that's the problem. That's coming from a former karma. Some people try to take the money and it gets worse. That proves it doesn't work. Number six.

[student: You're suffering in samsara because you don't understand the emptiness of it.]

They just say {korwa la kor}, you circle in the circle. That's all. That's all the sixth one is. Then you suffer. But specifically you should say, in the English... what's the word? When something you do makes something go wrong?

[student: Perpetuate.]

Perpetuates. That's how you should say it in English. That's exactly the problem. The natural reaction causes it to perpetuate. And you know that. Let me ask Vilma something. Maybe I should just let you study all the realms. [laughs] What are we up to? Okay, Vilma. This is a little bit of a hard one. This is a question that was unclear and it was fuzzy on your homework because it was fuzzy for me too. And I got a little better understanding now. How does Madhyamika Prasangika explain it? When a person comes into a room and he sets down a glass of water and then you get a hungry ghost, a hell-being and a human. What do they say is going on? One being sees water, one being sees blood and one being sees ambrosia.

[student: Well, there's a material cause that is wet and flowing and there are three parts to the wet and flowing that are what each one of those different beings has the {bakchak} to see. And so that's what...]

That's how they explain it. I'll do it a little bit more, but why is it important to say three parts? It's a reference to {pramana}, to {tsema}. Yeah, what?

[student: [unclear]] [laughter]

[student: Because they're perceiving different things.]

They have to be seeing different things. They have to be seeing different things.

You cannot have three {tsemas} towards the same object which are contradictory. That's impossible.

[student: Doesn't make sense. [laughs] No, how could you say there's three parts? I mean, it sounds like [you made it up?]]

The three parts is not... the emphasis of the three parts is not at the time of the perception. The emphasis of the three parts is at the time of the cause of perception. The moment before they all sit down, at that point, it has three parts. When they sit down, it has three parts. When they sit down, it has three parts. Did it have three parts when the guy came in and put the water on the table? No. Just before they come in and sit down...

[student: You're saying that the wet and the flowing has three parts. I thought that you were saying the cause...]

The material cause, the stuff that turned into blood, the stuff that turned into ambrosia, and the stuff that continued being water, was liquid. There has to be three distinct pieces of liquid that become those three things. The moment before they come in, there has to be three parts to the liquid.

[student: So there could have been twenty-five parts if there were twenty-five beings?]

Absolutely. And if there were 8 million people in New York, there would be 8 million parts to the Empire State Building.

[student: But what does it mean to say that? If it's [unclear] a number of parts, then how is it a part?]

[unclear]

[student: I think a part...]

Infinite perceptions of the glass.

[student: Yes, but a part implies a part, a section.]

I don't... people don't think of it as a physical part so much. If you want to think of it as a...

[student: Wouldn't you say they're more like attributes or modes that [unclear].]

They say part, and then they clarify it in the reading. Part in the sense of arms and legs and a hand. Pretty....doesn't mean there's a glass of water and there's three appearances. They're trying to say that it's not that. That a priori there's a glass of water, and there's not.

[student: Wasn't there some discussion about it not being the kind of part that's obscure? That one part obscures another part? So, if it's physical, how can that not be, because the pus and blood would certainly obscure water?]

That came from a... somebody came to Chandrakirti and said, didn't you say before that it wasn't this sort of obscurity thing. How could you complain about this Hindu school that said that all objects have all qualities? And then there's a karma creates this screen, and you only see one part. That's not blood, pus, water and ambrosia all at the same time. And the human's karma screens out blood and the ambrosia. And Chandrakirti says, that's not the case. That's what he means by that.

[student: In the other class, didn't you say that you visualize this glass of water as there are three beings looking at it as having something like interleaved molecules, so that each side was the...]

There's a perception of the sense, there. There's a perception of the sense.

[student: But didn't you say that [unclear]]

And that becomes reality. That is reality. As much as the guy is bad and got to you, you [unclear]. Okay. I don't mind. I can stay late.

[student: I've heard a lot about this also, and I'm wondering, can this be a situation where the object sort of has different facets to it, and depending upon the perceiver of the being, their capability is such that they pick up on certain facets while not being able to pick up on others? For instance, if I look at a flower, and see a flowery object that's red with a dark center to it, and a bee looks at the same flower, and because bees look at things with infrared light, the bee would see something yellow with a white center to it,. And it looks flowery also to the bee. That's a bee, I'm a human being, we see a flowery type of thing in a very different way. The same object. Is it something like that?

He discusses that. He says, what about a microbe in a glass of water? His perception of the water and the human's perception of the water? Because one perceives of the water as his home, his conception of the water is as a place to live. And the other has a perception of the water as something to drink. And he says that's not quite the same time. You can read it, it's at the end of the reading. And he says that those are not contradictory {tsemas}. The perception of a bee, and the perception of a human, of the same object, as being red to this wavelength-catching eye, and yellow to that wavelength-catching eye, those are not contradictory {tsemas}.

[student: But it seems to me that...]

[cut]

Four parts to a karmic path. [name]. [unclear]

[student: For the complete path, you mean?]

Yeah. Complete path meaning a nice big ball of karma, really powerful. Anything missing is not quite as powerful.

Okay. Correct identification of the object.

Well, object. Not the identification. That's the second part. Object is what? In the case of killing?

Living being.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, Buddhism personally extends to bugs.

[student: Oh, I'm sorry.]

It does, actually. The word extends to bugs. Okay, living being is the object. Then what?

[student: Intention.]

Then, what's called the thinking. I translated it as thinking or thought because it covers a lot of different things that we're going to get to later. Third one?

[student: Undertaking.]

Yeah, undertaking. Pick up the knife and you go after the guy.

[student: Completion.]

Completion, which is what?

[student: When he dies.]

When he dies, as a result of your {jorwa}, as a result of your undertaking. And then the second one has three parts of its own. Caroline?

[student: Intention?]

That's number two. What's the first one? The first one was identification. You see him for what he is, as a living being. You understand this. We talked about somebody who thinks that animals don't feel any pain because they're not a sentient being so it's okay to kill them. Second one?

[student: Bad thoughts?]

Bad thought. Are you under the control of desire, hatred or just stupidity?  
[laughs]

[student: Motivation.]

That's the motivation, which means, I want to kill him. That's what's not complete when you run over somebody in the car by accident. We're getting there. Robin. What does {gesar}, "most basic virtue" refer to?

[student: It's the virtue that you have from birth as a result of virtuous deeds from many previous lives.]

Yeah. Of the two collections, which one is it?

[student: It's the collection of merit?]

Yeah. There's the collection of merit, and the collection of wisdom. Collection of

merit causes what?

[student: The form body?]

All the good deeds you ever do are massed together and someday will force you to see yourself as a Buddha. That's the idea. Okay? That great mass of good deeds, that great mass of energy is called the Collection of Merit. And what's the other one? Collection of...

[student: Wisdom.]

Collection of Wisdom. Wisdom is not the one meant here. A lot of people, you know... I talked about the two collections on the homework, they said, oh, virtue root is those two. That's not the case. It's mainly the Collection of Merit. Mainly the cause for your form body. So if you cut your {gesar}, if you destroy your most basic virtues by which two actions? Anger at a Bodhisattva or...

[student: Not believing in karma.]

Yeah, {loktha} wrong view, then what would you be mainly be cheating yourself of?

[student: Form body.]

Form body. Looking like a Buddha. [laughs]

[student: You could still be a Buddha, but wouldn't look like a Buddha?] [laughs]  
[laughter]

Sorry, you have to look like a Buddha. All right. Let's just do a...

[student: Collection of wisdom, what it causes?]

The omniscience of a Buddha, and it's not what we're talking about here. Don't give me both collections on that answer, it's just the first one. Stillwell. Give me personality type for the person who does that kind of thing.

[student: Someone who's intellectual, who can clearly evaluate the idea, hold a conclusion and sustain it.]

Yeah. They are intellectual rather than sensual types, and they are smart. Well, they're not really smart. [laughs] [laughter] But they are capable of holding a sustained conviction, and that's what it takes to destroy that virtue. It's not just an occasional thought that that might not be true. It's a strong conviction. A well-thought out, well-considered conviction. Let's see. Janet. Why is an immediate deed called an immediate deed?

[student: Because you feel the result in the very next rebirth.]

Right. There's no other birth between this and the next one. And that makes a perfect what?

[student: Oh, if it's a bad deed, then it's hell, and if it's a breakup of the Buddha's sangha, then it's the lowest hell.]

Yeah. Any one of the five will get you to hell, must get you to hell. And the worst one of the five must get you to the lowest hell. And any one of the other four could get you to the lowest hell, but not necessarily. The schism always does, unless you do a purification. Which, by the way, the Abhidharma wouldn't accept that philosophy. Fran, the five great bad deeds in order of worst to least. What's the worst one of the five bad deeds? Fran?

[student: Causing a schism....]

Breaking up the monks.

[student: See, I don't know... [monks]]

Historically what? I guess so, you can have {gandin} here. The idea of {gandin}, which is a quorum, applies to the nuns also.

[student: The next one is to kill the Buddha.]

Attempting to kill a Buddha.

[student: The third one is killing of an arhat.]

Right.

[student: The fourth one is killing your mother.]

Right.

[student: The fifth one is killing your father.]

That's from worst to least. Faith, four qualities that make a person to whom you give something to exceptional? And give an example for each one.]

[student: First one is type of being, a human is better than an animal.]

Good. Okay.

[student: The second one is suffering, it's exceptional to give something to someone who's suffering.]

Right, or sick.

[student: Third one is giving to someone who has given you assistance in the past.]

Like parents. Why? There are a lot of people.

[student: Because they've done so much for you, and have given you life, even if they do nothing else.]

Right, okay. A lot of people, ah, my mother was bad to me. Or she beat me, or she left me, or.... it doesn't matter. In Buddhism, once they give you life, that qualifies them as an exceptional object because with life you can attain nirvana, without life you can't. Last one...

[student: Is giving someone with high spiritual qualities like the Dalai Lama, who doesn't need your offering.]

Okay, take a quick break. Then we'll do a short thing on purification. Try to come back in ten minutes. I can finish in ten. [cut] It wasn't supposed to be part of this class, but since you know how karma works, you might be concerned about it. All the karma you collected in the past. And that's [unclear].

[student: While we're waiting, can I make a real quick announcement? It seems like a fair number of tapes are gone, so if anybody's got the class tapes, bring

them back so that they can stay in the library and other people can use them?]

By the way, December 9, 6:30 p.m., holiday party. Heroine is... Nancy Nelson one time in a...

[cut]

Get rid of the all the bad karmas I did hundreds ago, and I don't remember any more, and even when I was young I don't remember, or even yesterday I don't remember, so, there's this thing called {chishak}. {chishak} means general confession, blanket confession. And we have... the monks have to do it every two weeks. And it's a very nice confession ceremony. It covers the bad deeds that you might have done, it says here from time with no beginning up to the present moment. [laughs] Okay? So it's a blanket confession. We believe that if you do it correctly, you can move those {bakchaks}, or you can deactivate them. We'll talk about how that works. It's not easy, because if it was easy, you could just do whatever you want and then five minutes later, you could just confess it. It doesn't work that way. And then this is a translation of that, and there's a picture of the Buddha here, so I suggest you fold that and keep it in your wallet and every time you do a bad deed, you pull it out and... Atisha used to carry a stupa, and he would be riding around Tibet on a horse, and every time he had a bad thought, he would get down off his horse, stop the whole procession, and go off somewhere and confess the thought. Other lamas used to keep black and white rocks in their pockets, and move the rocks every time they had a bad thought, and then count the black rocks at the end of the day. [laughs] You can keep a little... I keep a little diary in my pocket, a little pocket book. Just to track your progress. There's a thing in manufacturing that I do, that if you're getting a lot of defects, you don't yell at the people, you don't say cut down the defects, you say could you please count them for me. Just count them, you don't have to fix anything. Just count them for me and give me a report everyday. And then they fix it, because they notice it, and then within two weeks, you don't have any defects. You don't even have to tell them not to do it, just ask them to watch out. This confession has to have four parts. If the four parts aren't complete, it doesn't work.

[student: Excuse me, Michael, could you write the Tibetan for [unclear]?)

You want the Tibetan? Actually they're called the Four Forces. Okay? Four forces. First force is foundation force. Some folks describe this as the person you offended, and it's either the Buddha or other living beings, but the deepest

interpretation of it is different, and the deepest interpretation is that the foundation force is refuge. Refuge means putting your faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha for what's going to be able to help you. What kind of faith is it? It's faith by knowing.... the ultimate dharma by the way, is exactly what we've been talking about in this class, is knowledge. It's refuge in knowledge. It's not refuge in some big guy up there or anything else. The ultimate refuge is your own understanding or what's right and wrong and selflessness. So really, this is the state of refuge, the mental state of refuge, which means, the ultimate Dharma refuge is understanding emptiness. And karma. So that's the foundation force. It's called foundation because you've gotta have some firm foundation... when you fall down, it takes something solid to get up from, and that's why... when you fall down, and when you do some bad deed, you restore yourself, you stand back up, by asserting your refuge. That's the meaning of foundation force. It's going for refuge again, it's not some blind belief in some guy, it's understanding what happens, and that's refuge. And that's the only thing that will save you. Destruction force is this. It's called {nambar sim jimbe tho}. {nambar sim jimbe} is a really nasty word in Tibetan. {nambar sim jimbe} doesn't mean just mean destruction. It means to rip something out of the ground like what you do to a weed. It's the word for rape in Tibetan. It's a very powerful word. It means to rip out the roots of something.

[student: [unclear]]

{nambar sim jimbe tho}. That is regret, and regret is defined as follows. It's not a guilt complex, and it's not this fuzzy bad feeling. It's an intelligent knowledge that you have just screwed yourself. [laughs] That you have just caused yourself much suffering. And the example they give in the scriptures is there's three guys sitting at the bar, and they all order the same thing, and the bartender comes out and pours three glasses out of the same bottle, and they all down it, and then the first guy starts choking and he goes like this and he falls over dead. And they all realize that the guy has poured out a bottle of poison by accident. And then the second guy starts to go like this. And then the third guy starts to feel creepy. And it's the feeling of the third guy. Really, that's what the Lam Rim says. It's the feeling he has that, oh my god, I'm dead, I'm really dead. And for you, as an educated, intelligent, American Buddhist who has understood all the theories of the Mind-Only School and Madhyamika theory of emptiness, and has studied karma carefully, and knows damn well that you just planted a {bakchak} and you must experience the result of that {bakchak} unless you do some incredible deed to purify.... you now know that you must experience that result, and you know how it was planted and everything. Mainly through the

perception of what you did. And you know you're going to have a result. And it's just that cold, calculated knowledge that you have just caused yourself much suffering. That's what the destruction force is. Because that has a peculiar power to fix up the whole situation. If you really understand what you did, and if you have a sincere feeling... I think regret is a lousy word... it's a sick feeling... it's this...

[student: Oh no.]

It's this... when the space shuttle blew up, the last thing on the tape... [laughs] there was this oh, oh, you know. You know you're in trouble. You know as an educated Buddhist now, you know the process, you know what happened, you know how many of the elements were present, you know what's going to happen, you know how it stays in your mind, and you realize that you did it, and you just feel bad. It was a compulsion that made you do it, and now you must experience that result. It's that cold knowledge that you're going to experience that result. That's {gyepa}, regret. Last one has a long word. Third one, sorry.

[student: The destruction force... is it always purely selfish just knowing the suffering that you're going to face yourself?]

Yeah. Also there's this other element which we talked about. Knowing how much it's going to hurt other people. And the ultimate form of that is that if you take longer to become a good person, for every day that you delay becoming a good person, you're influencing other people badly, you're messing up other people. As long as you have your particular problem, I know what mine is, you know what yours is, you're going to affect other people. So in a way you're hurting other people. As long as you delay your own perfection, you're hurting other people. One less Buddha around to help people. [laughs] Okay, the restraint force is very simple. You just don't do it again. Now you see why it's so difficult to do a purification. And now you see why you can't just do what you want the night before and take the morning-after pill. You do this confession the next morning, and then everything's okay, I can do what I want tonight, because as long as I don't die tonight, everything's all right in the morning if I just do a nice confession. It's not like that. Because if you have the restraining force, if you have restrained yourself from doing it again, you're not doing that confession for that particular deed. And then the lineage instruction, the instruction of all the lamas in the lineage, let's be frank, you can't stop, probably. We're like alcoholics. You probably won't be able to stop completely

doing that thing again. You're supposed to work on the thing that you do the worst, the thing that you do the most, the thing that you're really out of control on. And frankly, you and I know you're going to do it again. So the lamas say, and it's a very profound part of the instructions, set a time limit. So for the restraint force, set a time limit.

[student: So they say then you have to do that, or it's recommended, because of human nature?]

Recommended. Probably you won't be able to stop it for the rest of your life. I mean, if it was you know, an abortion, or something like that, and now you know it's wrong. That's the kind of thing you can say I'm never going to do that again as long as I live. But if it's something like yelling at someone, or me looking at a girl on the street or something, I'm not supposed to, I know I'll probably do it again, I have to set a time limit. You can't keep your awareness that tightly for a long period of time. If it's a slight thing that you're doing that's very easy to do, it's very important to set a short time limit and swear that you won't do it for that period. Because if you break that, what happens?

[student: You lied.]

You lied. [laughs] You collected number four. You just piled a bad deed on top of the first one.

[student: So you just keep renewing it, then?]

You have to keep renewing it. But these are for things that are chronic with you, and in all honesty, and in all frankness, you know that you can't stop right away.

[student: When you say you set a time limit, I thought you meant that I'll stop in six months, when six month's up I'll stop.] [laughter]

No, not like that. Maybe that would be a better one. So you say look...and the book says one year, one month, one day, one hour. I have had the same thought occur before I finished my confession ceremony. [laughter] That's very depressing. [laughter] So I have to set a 30 second limit. But it's very important to set one that's realistic. And you know, that in that exercise and in any other thing that you do with practice, make it longer, build it up, build it up as long as you can. But be kind, and be very pure, pick a time period in which you can truly keep it purely. Then you'll get used to being pure, and that's what I do. If

you don't do that, it's not a confession, and that's why you can't just keep doing whatever you want to do and then next morning confess it and everything's okay. People accuse Buddhists, Mahayanists, of thinking like that. It's not like that. If you're doing it repeatedly, then you're not improving and you're not doing your confessions. Yeah.

[student: So you're saying that if you get to the.. you set a time a limit of like, I'm not going to do that for ten minutes. If you're successful in that, is that a successful purification.]

Yeah.

[student: And if you set it for thirty seconds, and you're successful....]

If it were an reasonable honest maximum that you could do. Okay. What is it mean purification? Okay, you have to experience some kind of result, but it's much less. You are knocking out the table legs of those karmic paths elements, as opposed to karma elements. You're knocking out a lot of the intention, a lot of the {sampa} part, a lot of the motivation part is being ripped out and that seed is getting much less powerful. They say that if you're supposed to go to hell, you get a real bad backache. And practitioners who are really good at this, and I've seen that in India, you know, in certain places. People do a teaching on purification for six weeks or something. They're all really working hard on it. Everyone gets sick. Some guy died, you know. [laughter] It's like, really, you may experience some minor problems after this, and that's a good sign. You're wearing off something that would have been much worse.

[student: Michael, is there any time when what you did hurt a particular sentient being like a person, is it important to apologize to that particular person?]

It helps a lot. It's part of the {deng yo tong}. It helps a lot.

[student: For the first one?]

In the sense of them being the object. It helps a lot. Really helps a lot. Okay. Antidote [unclear]. [laughter] I've been thinking about Tibetan... antidote is like this. There are six antidotes. Antidote means you do something to make up for it, you undertake some concrete act. I remember, we have a guy in our community down in New Jersey who was in Vietnam. He was an infantryman. He says he sprayed jungles with machine guns and he doesn't know whether he

killed anybody or not. He doesn't remember shooting someone, you know, and seeing them fall down, but he was in fire fights and he thinks he may have hit people, he doesn't know. So he asked Rinpoche what to do. And Rinpoche knew that his father was keeping two sheep with the intention of killing them, and eating them. So he said, get the two sheep from your father and feed them until they die of natural causes, [laughter] These sheep live like sixteen years, you know. So that's like a {unclear}, okay? All right. They're like this. The first one is studying the names of the Buddhas. Reciting a Buddha field.

[student: Any of these six or all these six?]

Any one of these six and I'll explain. Some of them are more powerful than others. And there is a confession which I didn't give you which is a lot longer which is called the Thirty-five Buddhas and [unclear]. You recite the names of the Buddhas that have lived...

[student: Is that more powerful?]

It would be nice if you had it, but I also think that as an American in this society, you have to do the ones that are most powerful. I could have given you a five-page thing, but then you wouldn't use it. Okay. Second one is to recite mantra.

[student: [unclear]]

We talked about how a mantra works. Do you remember? Of all places it was where? It was in the logic text, of Dharmakirti, and he said a mantra works because... two reasons must be present for a mantra to work. It must come from a holy source. The person who wrote the mantra or invented the mantra must be a holy being, and secondly and most importantly, the person who recites the mantra must be moral, must be a pure person. You know, the person who recites it must really have noble intentions and good morality. I like that. He was explaining how mantras work. It's not like it's a holy word and if you say it you're a cool person. All right. Number three, is to study or read the scriptures. Fourth one, which is the most powerful one, is to meditate on emptiness insofar as you understand it presently. It doesn't matter if your understanding is crude. I told you last week about Tsongkhapa, right? Je Tsongkhapa? I was reading his biography, and the first time he met Manjushri, he was not good enough to see him, but he was good enough to ask questions through another person and he asked Manjushri, how's my view of emptiness? And Manjushri said, terrible. And then he says, well, am I more a Madhyamika

Prasangika or more Middle-Way? What is that word? Why is it such a good antidote?

[student: Conditions(?) you the next time?]

It's the only thing that can remove your tendency to do the thing the next time. Permanently. It's the only thing. Only that understanding can remove... you can try all the tricks you want to be a good person and you could try all these mental gymnastics and acrobatics which you must try as a temporary measure, but you cannot remove your negative emotions permanently, impossible. Fifth one is making offerings to a Buddha image or...

[student: Actual offerings? What about offering your good deeds?]

The highest kind of Buddhist offering, it's well-known, it's called the {dupe chupa}, the highest kind of Buddhist offering is to succeed in your practice, to do what your lama taught you. If you go to work and someone screams at you tomorrow, and you keep your patience, that's the highest form of offering, according to Buddhism. Better than all the money or...

[student: Michael, whatever [unclear] only the things that are done.]

That's rejoicing and that's a great, that's a powerful good deed, that's a great offering. You know, some people interpret that to mean that they should never go to a temple and offer anything. It doesn't mean that either. You should have to do both. Do everything you can. And the last one is to {kusubla temba}. {kusubla temba} is to use holy images. And to tell you the truth, I'm not very clear what that means. [laughter] I guess it means to confess in front of the image.

[student: Confess yourself in meditation perhaps?]

Could be. It says to use holy images. I tell you the truth, I don't know exactly. I'll have to ask Rinpoche. I think it's... normally they say it's very good to confess in front of the image.

[student: Michael, you said that when we do bad things we should take out a sheet of paper...]

Which you've already lost... [laughs] [laughter]

[student: No....]

By the way, Anila has agreed to show you a little thing that you can really fit in your wallet. What do you call it? A plastic covered thing...

[student: Laminated?]

Which you slip open, and you have a little Buddha there.... I think that would be good for us.

[student: This you could do anywhere, I mean at work.]

Oh, absolutely. That's the whole idea. You can thank Anila. She did...

[student: What you're saying is that we can't just read this and have a purification, it won't work.

Well, if you read it carefully, you'll see that most of these elements are in the prayer.

[student: Reading is enough?]

No, reading is not enough. It will not work without these four.

[student: Without feeling it.]

Especially without restraining yourself from doing it in future. That's why, if a person's doing this general confession over and over again, he's still a lousy person, he's not improving. It will not work. It's not removing the {bakchaks}. If you do do it, it does remove.... according to Mahayana, according to the highest teachings of Buddhism, it does remove the energy. And it is important when you finish to believe that it's finished. It's important to think to yourself, that's it, I'm clean. That's very important. Especially as you die. [laughter] I'm not kidding. As you die, hopefully you've got this {tichak} in your mind [unclear], and you do it, and we believe that the Catholic thing about last rites is correct. As you die to believe that you're pure.

[student: Can you explain what the ten non-virtues are and the [unclear] one.]

This took us six weeks to do, and you can ask any of these Buddhist scholars in

this room who've just finished a course on that.

[student: Michael, there's two schools, but I'm not sure if they refer to the [unclear] right now?]

Yeah, {Khenpo} and {lopen} is a little bit special. {Khenpo} most people think Abbot. {Khenpo} literally in the Vinaya means the person who grants you the vow. And {lopen} in the Vinaya is the assistant to Khenpo. So this part is for monks. By extension, it can be the person who gave you any of your vows, Bodhisattva vows or secret vows.

[student: Is that the same {khenpo} as in [unclear]?]

That's the same one as in Khen Rinpoche. {khenpo} has three different meanings. One is the abbot of the monastery, one is the person who grants the monks his full vows, and then the third meaning... you can reach a certain point where you are like reincarnated.

[student: Michael, how do you do this?]

You go in order. Go ahead, Kiley.

[student: Someone had mentioned that the Vajrasattva meditation, which I presume is the same thing, or similar thing, or achieving the same result for the same purpose...]

More powerful.

[student: Then what?]

[student: That's more powerful?]

Yeah.

[student: So in other words to...]

But this is a basis for that.

[student: I understand that, but if you have a certain amount of time everyday that you allocate to that, it would be a mistake to cut that in half....]

No, right, that's much better. Much better if you have that initiation and you know how to do it, that's much better. They're actually, what do you call it, you know....

[student: One goes into the next.]

They go together. I wouldn't say it as either/or.

[student: So whenever they talk about, you know they say do 21 recitations of Vajrasattva mantra to purify your karma, that's not really correct. But that's just a recitation I'm talking about.]

That's number four, but if it's not accompanied by the other three, it cannot work.

[student: So it doesn't really have any effect, really.]

No, to recite it is always good.

[student: Michael, how do you do this?]

[laughs] When you do a bad deed, a particularly bad one, pull it out of your purse and recite it, and get these other three ideas...]

[student: But if you're at work, you cannot do the other ones.]

Write them on the back. Write these four on the back. And then as you read it, think of those four. That's all.

[student: Okay, you cannot write....]

And do it as soon as you go home, you might die on the subway. It seriously is the game of not dying with it on you. And you don't know when you're going to die. I always tell people go to the bathroom. Nobody'll stop you from going to the bathroom. They'll just wonder what you're doing in the stall so long.

[student: You cannot [unclear] which is a Buddha, Michael.]

You've got one right there.

[student: Oh, okay.]

[student: Quickly, I need to put emphasis between confession for lay people and monks and nuns?]

We have more responsibility. It's worse for us. [laughter] All right. So please please read this, and also I want to tell you, you did a very good job. I know it's late, and I know when I rarely work a full day [laughter], I know how hard it is to come here, and I admire what you did. I really admire you. You're coming here, there's no degree to speak of, at least they come like six months later [laughter] and you're not getting any financial benefits on this, you're not getting famous, no worldly benefit out of this, you're coming here after work, I know it's difficult, I know everyone in New York doesn't have much time, and you're studying these things out of some good {bakchaks} that you have, and I admire you. I think it's a great deed and I'm very happy. It's excellent. You must do some regimen, you must keep some kind of log, you must have some daily check. None of this will work, it will all fade away, you know that. You know, make it a part of you. If it's not a practice, you won't do it, and there won't be much benefit to doing this in class. Keep up the habit of doing something every morning and make confession. And then you'll just be happy. And the side-effect... even in this life, it's much more pleasant. All right. Okay.

End

**Course V: How Karma Works—NYC  
RAW TRANSCRIPT**