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REFUGE

**GESHE MICHAEL ROACH
VAJRAPANI INTITUTE, BOULDER CREEK, CALIFORNIA
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Day 1

I don't know how I ended up here, but this is a very famous Dharma center. I've never been here before, but [unclear]. It's nice to see it. The [unclear] here, I know this from the people who come to the east coast and to India, that the people here have worked really hard for many many years, I think almost twenty years, hmmm? And built a really beautiful place, and had many many great Lamas here. I think the greatest Lamas have been here. And maybe the Lama who was most kind to westerners yet, Lama Yeshe, who helped found the whole place, so it's sort of beyond me to be here teaching, but I guess by default. But you're very fortunate that you have a, there's a great history to this place, and more people have been affected than I think you're even aware of. Many people I've met all over the world, so it's a great kindness that you've got this place, and it's, I think there are many people affected that you don't even know about, so, salute you for that.

Tonight I'm supposed to teach about refuge. My background is more in monastery and in debating and it's what we call {tsenyipa}. {Tsenyipa} means a study of Buddhism through debating and philosophical studies and a lot of examinations and things like that. It's opposed to a {lamrimpa}. A {lamrimpa} practices a lot, changes their heart through the lamrim teachings, and throughout history there have been these parallel teachings going on side by side. In the monastery you don't even study lamrim very deeply until you finish about 18 years of {tsenyi}. It's considered an honor to study lamrim. You don't even, there is no course in the monastery called lamrim. It's only when you get be a very big Lama that you get heavy doses of lamrim. I think Lama Yeshe was very, he gave a very powerful thing in the west that he gave lamrim right away, and it's a great blessing. So I thought you might be interested to see how the subject of going for refuge is taught in the monastery, even up to present time.

In the monastery we study five great books. The first one is perfection of wisdom from the [b: Abhisamayalamkara of Maitreya], and inside that in the first chapter we study the subject of going for refuge. That book takes us twelve years in the monastery. Then we do two years of {Madhyamika}, two years of {abhidharma}, two years of {vinaya}, and then two years of logic interspersed. So I'm going to present going for refuge from the point of view of how a monk would study it in the monastery, based on those five great books. Actually the study of refuge, parts of it are all throughout those five great books, and I thought you might like to see how that came about. So I'll hand out something first. This is from the textbook that is used at my monastery, Sera Mey. Sera Mey is the sister monastery of Sera Je. The most famous Sera Je Lama of modern times was Lama Yeshe. We are great competitors of Sera Je, but I have to admit they're pretty good. They absolutely have the best support in the west, and that's due to Lama Yeshe's kindness, and Sera Je monks are all big and strong and they study very well. Their study is actually the best in India, and that's another great kindness that all of you have done. You don't know that, I think, very much, or maybe you don't appreciate it unless you've lived there, but all of the other monasteries are struggling; people get tuberculosis all the time from not having enough food, the buildings are falling down, there's five kids in a room.

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Sera Je's doing very well, it's very strong, there's over 2,000 monks now and that's a lot due to Lama Yeshe's kindness and Zopa Rinpoche's kindness, so salute you for that too.

{Kyabdro}, the Tibetan for going for refuge, is {kyabdro}. {Kyab} comes from a word that actually comes from another word, {kyub}. {Kyub} means to cover something. So for example in debating in the monastery, if you've ever seen people debate, they say {kyaba ma chun}. {Kyaba ma chun} means not necessarily so, which means that doesn't cover that. So the word {kyab} means to cover something. {Kyab dro} means to go for cover, to run for cover. So the actual word for going for refuge is to run for cover.

It has two meanings, if you think about it. {Kyab dro} or to go for protection or to go for refuge implies two things going on. One is there's some kind of danger; there's some kind of fear. You don't run for cover unless there's some kind of danger. The second thing it implies is cover implies that something can help you; something can protect you. So the definition of {kyabdro} in the monastery we say {yul shen la}, which means some other object, {rang tob ki}, which means by its own power, {rewa chawa} which means you believe it can help you; you believe this other thing can help you, so the word for {kyabdro} itself, the word for refuge means you're afraid of something, and you do believe that something else can help you.

The classic refuge in the west is when you're a kid and you run to your mom. Both parts are there. Something happened, like your brother hit you, and you ran to your mother because you believed that that object can help you. So everything's complete for going for refuge when you run to Mommy. Some kind of danger or pain, which is that your brother hit you, and then some kind of belief that somebody can help you, which is running to your mother. And all throughout our life, we have going for refuge. The actual definition of going for refuge can cover all kinds of going for refuge. Running to your mother because your brother hit you fits the definition of going for refuge as stated by Maitreya. It does fit the definition.

We have other refuges in life ... when the house starts to burn, we take refuge in the fire department. When you get sick, we take refuge in the doctor. When you want to learn something or you're afraid of your ignorance, you take refuge in your schoolteachers. In other words, all through your life, you're going for refuge; all throughout your life, you're seeking protection in something or somebody. Later in your life, you seek it in some kind of financial stability like your career or your house. You go for refuge in material things. So all throughout your life, you have fears, like not having enough money, not having enough food, not having a place to stay, and you go for refuge in your career or your friends or the places where you get your money from, and those are all different kinds of refuge. They fit the definition of refuge in here. It's a {yul shen la}, which means something outside of yourself, {de le kyuba nuba yuba yuche ne}, because you believe it can help you, you go for refuge in that thing. And those are all kinds of refuge that you take.

Buddhist refuge is different. So there's refuge, there's going for refuge, and there's going for Buddhist refuge. There's two kinds of going for refuge. One is called ordinary going for refuge, and one is called extraordinary going for refuge.

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So those are all the kinds of ordinary going for refuge. The question is do they work. For example, if you get sick and you go to a doctor, will it work, is the question. Is it a good refuge? Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. It works more often than not, so we go for refuge to a doctor. So that kind of refuge works. If you run to, if you call the fire station because your house is on fire, it normally works. Normally they can come and save your house. Apparently. But ultimately no. Ultimately they can't prevent you from losing your house. And that gets into the thing you're afraid of in Buddhism.

In Buddhism when you take refuge, it's not that your house is on fire, and it's not that you're sick. It's that you have the three kinds of suffering. The three kinds of suffering are very famous. They're called {dungyel ki dungyel}, {gyurway dungyel}, and {kyaba duche ki dungyel}. The first one, {dungyel ki dungyel} is defined as, they don't even define them. Well, it's {sache gi tsowa dungyel}, which means sensation of pain. So {dungyel ki dungyel}, which means the suffering of suffering, or you could call it outright suffering, is just defined as the sensation of pain. And those are the classic examples in the scriptures, the ancient scriptures is a backache or a headache. So they had them then also. The classic example of {dungyel ki dungyel} or the suffering of suffering, or you could just say obvious suffering is a headache or a backache, and you get them from time to time; you get sick from time to time.

I think, one time I had the honor to translate for the Dalai Lama's doctor, and he had a group of about 50 people listening and he said ... they all looked like a normal group of people like you guys, and he said anybody who has a medical problem, a serious medical problem can come tomorrow and I'll be here and you can come. So the next day about 40 people showed up. And I was shocked, you know. This normal group of people; they all looked normal, but everyone had some serious medical thing, you know, I think every one of us has some kind of medical problem going on. If you don't have it now, it will come. And it's there ... you have it ... it will come. That's {dungyel ki dungyel}. And that's not enough reason to go for refuge, I think.

I mean people say that you kind of get to admit that in life you're going to have troubles from time to time you're going to get sick, from time to time you're going to have a backache. But it's not like you're in bed sick all the time, so people put up with it. You're not running to Vajrapani to take Buddhist teachings because you're ill all the time. You're not ill all the time. It's not enough to make you come here. Second kind of suffering maybe is.

The second kind of suffering is called {gyur wai dungyel}, and that means the suffering of change. That's a very complicated kind of suffering. It's defined as {satche ki tsawai dewa}, which means impure feelings of happiness or pleasure. And that's pretty complicated. It's called the suffering of change. I like to call it suffering waiting to happen. And it's anything good that happens to you, basically, any good thing that happens in your life is the suffering of change. Why? Because it's always attached, there's something always attached to it. There's something always tied to the end of it, and so you, anything good that happens in your life, there's always an appendix attached to the back of it.

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There's always something that comes along with it which is the end of it, and the subsequent suffering. So, this should get into some big debates, you know, and I can understand them because I'm a westerner also. People say, you know, what about the look of a beautiful child's face, or the look of the sunset or some kind of feeling of happiness that you have in your home, or something that ... those can't be suffering. I mean I understand that they have to end, and we would be immature people to think that they don't have to end. They do have to end, and I understand that, but it doesn't seem to me that therefore they are suffering. And Buddhism says no, that every event of anything good in this life is always attached to suffering. Suffering is always attached to the back of it. In other words, any good thing you can name, which could be your health, it's attached to illness. Illness will come after the health. Or old age. Your body will deteriorate. It's deteriorating as we talk. Your body will be less strong and less healthy by the time this talk is finished than when it started. And that goes on without stopping.

Any health you ever had, which in Tibetan medicine is defined as, it's described as an accident. In Tibetan medicine the condition of health is an abnormality; illness is the normal state of the human body, and anyone who's healthy, it's an accident of a lot of good things come together temporarily and then the body goes back to its normal state which is illness. So every good thing you could name, your health ... attached to your health is some kind of illness. Your health will always end in illness. Any vigor you have, any strength you have, any good feeling you have in your body will always end in illness. Illness is attached to it, or old age is attached to it. The loss of your energy, which we all feel at our age, right? I mean almost everybody in here. You sense the loss of your energy, you know it, and it's attached to the vitality you had as a youth. It's a necessary attachment; it will always be connected to it. And you can say that about every other good thing in your life, your career, the career must end.

I work in a large corporation part of the year. I see people go up and go down, it's like a waterfall, you know. People work there have got to vice president. There's no place to go after that. Then they make some big mistakes. Then they fire you. And you had. We counted up, there was eighteen months average for a vice president in our company, you know, and then they were all disgraced, and they throw you out and you lose your income. The only position that you can get ends that way. In other words, the loss of the position, the loss of the money, is always connected to gaining money. Any time you gain anything, any time you get a position, losing it is attached to it. The minute you get the position, you get what's attached to it, which is the loss of it. That you can just see, I don't have to debate with you about that. You just know it's true, and so it's almost not necessary to have a class about it. It's just true; we just didn't think about it. Every good thing that could happen to you, if you look nice, you will lose it, if you have good friends, you will lose them, if you have a nice family, if you have a wife or husband, you will lose them, if you have children, you will lose them, if you live in a nice country, the country some day will be lost also, I mean everything you can point to, this building, attached to the pleasure of having it is always the loss of it; it's always attached to it. So that's what they mean when they say the change of suffering, the suffering of change.

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Every good thing you can ever get, attached to the back of it is the loss of it. And there's nothing in our life that's not that way. Everything we have is like that. That's the second kind of suffering.

The third kind of suffering is {kyapa duche ki dungyel}. Here you hear the work {kyap}. It's the same word as the cover for, or the shelter for going for refuge. {Kyapa duche ki dungyel} means the kind of suffering that covers all the other kinds of suffering. That's just the condition of your aging and death. Your body, and the human condition, your condition and my condition is that we will all die, and people won't remember us. I mean, you'll die, and then after a few years, no one will even remember you. They'll throw out the pictures, they'll throw out the letters. It's really funny, it's really weird that no matter [unclear] and uh, and uh, it's just, not only will you die, but you just, the whole memory will be wiped out, and for you, a few minutes after you die, your whole memory will be wiped out. You won't remember anything about that whole long life you struggled through, and all that good, you know all the things you tried to do and everything. You won't have any firm memory of it; it'll just be a big blur, and you'll forget it within a few minutes, I would think, after you die. The whole thing is senseless after a few minutes, and that's it; we're all headed for that.

And those are the three kinds of suffering that you can see. I don't have to prove them to you; I don't have to be a great wise man to say it's happening, because you can see it, and you have to, there's no debate up to this point. These are all sufferings you can see in your life, and you know that's the way it's going. And that's the beginning of Buddhist refuge. And the second kind of sufferings, those are three sufferings that you can see.

There are supposedly other kinds of suffering that you can't see. That's when you get into Buddhism and to future lives. Supposedly you can't take refuge, even at the lowest stage, if you don't understand the other kinds of sufferings. Those are the sufferings I haven't even mentioned yet. Those are sufferings of the future life and what happens to you after you die, you know, what happens to you the moment after your consciousness blanks out in this life. To take refuge as a Buddhist, which is called {kyamdro kyepa chen}, the kind of refuge that makes you a Buddhist is the one, the lowest kind of refuge is the one that is concerned about what happens the moment after your breath stops. If you don't have that, you don't have refuge. If you don't have refuge, you're not a Buddhist.

There's a joke in the monastery in India that one monk, I don't know how many years ago, he had the ability to read peoples' minds, and this one monk worked his way up to abbot, abbot of the monastery. So he was sitting up on his high throne, and everyone's bowing down to him and this monk who has the ability to read minds says wait a minute, he's not a Buddhist. [laughs] This new abbot of the monastery is not a Buddhist. They said, "Come on you're crazy, he's been here fifty years, he's the abbot of the monastery." He says, "No, he doesn't have refuge. He's not doing anything. None of what he does is motivated by concern about his death or what's going to happen after his death, so he's not a Buddhist.

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Because if you don't have the lowest form of refuge, going for refuge, then technically you're not a Buddhist. It's like baptism or confirmation in Christianity. If you don't have ... except in Buddhism it's not a ritual. There is a ritual to proclaim it, but it's actually a state of mind; you can read that in this text also. Uh, it's the state of mind of worrying about what's going to happen after you die, the moment after you die. If you don't have that, you're not a Buddhist, and it doesn't matter [unclear] or anything. You can take all the Buddhist vows. They don't actually form; you're not a Buddhist. We have to talk about that kind of refuge.

And let's talk about what happens to you them moment after you die. It's very popular nowadays to pull out these old texts, which are actually not approved of by the tradition, and describe what's going to happen to you after death and talk about them for a long time, and get into them very deeply. But actually if you are honest, you don't know if those are true. You can't confirm those. If you're really honest, you have to say, unless you are not what you seem to be, and I don't know, uh, I don't know. But unless you have the ability to see into the future, or unless you have reached a state in your meditation where you can see what's going to happen to you after your death, or where you can actually see the stage of death, you don't know if those books are true. You can't confirm it. So if you're doing {tsenyipa} way, you have to say, "I don't know." You know, you have to say, "I understand that there are these Buddhist books. I understand that they are particularly popular nowadays. I understand that there are different kinds of them. Some seem to be more, maybe more logical and some less logical, but I can't confirm any of them. If you're really honest, you have to say that. You have to say "I don't really know. They sound good; there are some people teaching them. I don't know if they're true." So, in the monastery, for a {tsenyipa}, we're not allowed to accept them. Yet. We have to try to establish those things by, by reasoning, by thinking. Uh. And that's as valid as seeing them.

In other words, if you were able to meditate very deeply, and somehow see what's going to happen after your death. And you can do that. You will reach a stage like that. At some point in your Dharma career, I don't know, in this life or another life, you will reach a stage where you can see your death and what happens after it. Directly. You will know how many lives you've got left. How many. You will see your future lives. And then you, you won't have any doubts about it, you won't have any questions about it. You can do that. But it's just as valid and it's just as proper to try to establish them logically. In other words, if, if, can you prove to your own self, in your own mind that there is a future life? Because if you can't, then you can't take refuge. Because refuge is a concern for what's going to happen to you after you die. If you think you're just going to dissolve after you die, or if that's what you really feel in your heart, no matter what you say, then you can't take refuge; then you don't have refuge. If you can't, if you haven't reached that state of meditation where you can see your death directly, and what's going to happen after it directly, then you have to try to establish whether or not you're going to go on. And whether or not you came from some place else.

And so I think the most interesting thing would be to start from that. So we're going to cover that. It'll start tonight and go into the next class also. In other words, try to establish to a normal thinking person, and no mumbo jumbo. No voodoo.

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I can't show you your future life. Directly. If I had even seen it, you couldn't believe me for sure. I mean, you wouldn't know if I was being honest or not. If I said, "Look, I did see your future life.", how could you confirm that? You can't. And so, according to the tradition of Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism especially, you can't, even if I could see your future lives and describe them to you, I'm not allowed to. Cause you can't believe it. You can't check it out. You can't confirm it. It's better if I could give you something based on your own experience that you could somehow consider it carefully and decide, yeah, probably there is a future life. So we'll try to do that.

There are very few books in Buddhism that try to prove a future life. Why do you think so? [pause] Everybody believed it. I mean, Buddhism grew up out of Hinduism and all the Hindus believed it already. So it wasn't necessary for somebody to come and try to prove it. It's actually pretty hard to find in Buddhist literature, any really long discussion of trying to prove a future life, because everybody believed in it already. They didn't know why. It was just their mom and dad told them. The same way we got told a lot of stuff that now we're questioning. For no better reason they believed in a future life and past life, and even Tibetan Buddhists in Tibet and Tibetans in India believe in a future life. If you ask them to prove it, they can't give you a shred of evidence, but they just believe it. But that's not healthy. So it's hard to find in Buddhist literature any proof of a future life.

There was a group of Hindus who lived in India about 1200 years ago. They didn't believe in a future life. They believed that the mind was located somewhere in the body, and that there was, maybe in the brain or the heart, and when you hit that person hard in the head or when you stabbed him in the heart, then the mind would stop. And that there was no future life. And the minute the body was burned in a funeral or the body stopped breathing, that the mind stopped. And they were very much a minority in India, but they were these very strange people, this very strange little sect of Hindus who said when the body stops breathing, the mind stops. And there's no more person. Nobody goes on. And it's all over. One life to live. Might as well make the most of it, you know. And there was a group like that. They're called, they're like different [unclear] and like that.

So Dharmakirti, who was a very famous Buddhist philosopher, he lived about 750, 650 A.D., about the seventh century, he wrote a refutation of them. He wrote an argument for future lives. It's very famous. It's in his book called [b: Pramanavartika], which is still used in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. It's the basis for all Tibetan debating, logic, and also the study of perception, how does the mind work. It all comes from that book. In the second chapter of that book, we reach the argument where Dharmakirti tries to prove that there is a future life. Most folks never reach that, because you don't get to it until about your sixteenth year of your studies. You don't reach the second chapter of that book until about your sixteenth year of your studies. So he debates this, and he tries to prove that there's a future life. And the way he does it is also used by somebody named Khedrupje, who was one of the most famous disciples of Tsongkapa. So I'm going to give you that paper tomorrow. There's an argument by Khedrupje. And I'll start it tonight, and we'll go into tomorrow. Tomorrow you've got to give me a blackboard, OK? [laughs] All right. And by the way, we'll take a break. It's my custom to take a break in about, what time is it now?

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[student:] We're only going til nine tonight.

We're going til nine? And what time is it now?

[student:] [unclear]

Okay, well maybe we won't take a break til afterwards, whose that. Cause if it's a two hour, I like to take a break, but, then we'll have some snacks tomorrow half way through, because that keeps people awake. Alright.

Dharmakirti said the following. He said, "I'll prove to you the existence of your future life. You don't have to meditate and sit and you don't have to take anybody's work for it. In fact, in Buddhist logic, we're not allowed to prove anything without using what you accept already. In other words, we can only use what you believed already to prove to you something. So how do we prove the future life? Um, you talk about the first moment of your mind. Okay, you can imagine it. You can't remember it, but can imagine it. So you know, close your eyes, go back to the first moment in your mother's womb. Okay, you know according to western science, according to what our parents told us, according to everything you know, we must have had our first thought in this life. There must have been your first thought in this life. And you can imagine it. You know, you have to go back a long way. Your thoughts are a train of thoughts. Each thought triggers the next thought. Everyone believes that. That's why they have first grade before second grade, because whatever you learn in first grade is supposed to stream on in the mind until second grade. And so we believe that. There is a continuum of the mind, and it does collect stuff. Because supposedly you get smarter from first grade to senior in high school, and that's why your parents send you there, because they're hoping it'll collect. Sometimes it doesn't, but anyway, ...

So you're going to this, the mind is a continuum; there must have been a first moment of your mind. Each second of your mind triggers the next second of your mind, so there must have been a first second, in this life. What was it like? Try to imagine it; what was your first thought? Wasn't very complicated. Something like, "It's hot in here." [laughter] "And it's wet." You know. It was, and it had to be something like that. Probably some kind of discomfort. According to Buddhist books, it was some kind of discomfort. It was some kind of thought like, "Oo, this is too hot. Some kind of painful thought, you know like, "This is uncomfortable." Something like that. But you did have your first thought. I suppose we can all agree that it happened in your mother's womb. It doesn't matter. Or when you started screaming when the doctor hit you. Okay? But you had your first thought. There was your first thought. Okay? Where did that come from? What triggered that thought? And we're looking for a certain kind of cause.

Buddhism has five or six different kinds of causes. That's studied in the second chapter of the {Abhidharmakosha}. But basically you can divide them into two, which is called {gyu} and {kyen}. {Gyu} means the main cause of something, and {kyen} means the factors that help cause something. So we can talk about {nyer len ki gyu}, which is the stuff that turned into the thing.

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And then we can talk about {kyen} which means the other conditions that help something grow. So we'll talk about {nyer len ki gyu}. Okay. What's the {nyer len ki gyu} for an oak tree? Where I live there are oak trees. Where you live there are redwood trees. Okay? Oak tree is an acorn. Okay. The {nyer len ki gyu}, the direct cause, what we call the material cause, is the acorn. The acorn, the stuff in the acorn turns into the oak tree. The stuff in the acorn, in Buddhism also they say, "flops over into the oak tree". The acorn goes, "dut, dut, dut, dut, dut", and then it flops over into an oak tree. But first there's a sprout that comes up. So the stuff in the acorn becomes the stuff in the oak tree. That's called the stuff cause, okay? Material cause, {nyer len ki gyu}, the stuff that turned into the oak tree. Okay? The stuff that turned into the oak tree, the main stuff was the acorn. Okay? Was the acorn. And that's actually the material that converts into the oak tree. There are other kinds of causes. There are lots of other kinds of causes. There's gotta be sunlight, there's gotta be water, there's gotta be fertile ground, and there's gotta be a lot of other causes. Those are conditions; those are what we call {kyen}s. Those are called {hlen chik che kyen}. {Hlen chik che kyen} means contributing factor. But {nyer len ki gyu} means that stuff cause, the material that turns into the oak tree. And everything has that. The {nyer len ki gyu} for a vase is the glass or the clay. That's the main stuff that the person used, and that stuff [unclear] the pot was finished and fired and that became the vase. But that's, it went through a time, that stuff went dik, dik, dik, and then it turned into a vase. So that's the main material cause. So whenever you put a main material cause there must have been a main cause for that first moment inside your mom. Okay? That first thought. The very first thought you had.

And Dharmakirti, when he gives his argument, and I can't remember the name of the other school, hum, anyway, I'll get it. When he makes his argument, he says, "What was the {nyer len ki gyu} of the first moment of your mind? There must have been one. There's always a {nyer len ki gyu} for any caused thing. So he says, what was the {nyer len ki gyu}, what stuff turned into the first thought you had? What was the thing that went dink, dink, dink, dink, and then flopped over to the first moment of your mind in this life? What caused it? What was the main cause? What was the material cause? So he says, get back to, think about that first moment of your mind, get back into it, and let's take all the possibilities. Okay?

It's a very beautiful proof. Then Khedrupje refines it, uh, up around 1400. You know, 700 years later, this great Tibetan scholar, he writes it all out into it, he's got a nice chart, more or less. It's a chart of existence. That's presented in the first chapter of the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. Let's break down every existing possibility. We'll do it by elimination. Okay? He says, "let's do it by elimination. Let's decide what the stuff was that provided the {nyer len ki gyu} that turned into the first moment of your mind in this life. Let's go through all the possibilities." So the first division ... now for this you've got to get this big breakdown of all the stuff in the universe. Okay? And it's nice to have a drawing -I'll do it tomorrow.

It starts out like this: objects, knowable things, existing objects, they either are changing or unchanging, what's called permanent or impermanent, which are not, they're a little bit difficult translations. Changing and unchanging is better. Caused or uncaused. So everything in the universe is either caused or uncaused. Okay? Everything in the universe has to be like that. What's the stuff that caused the first moment of your mind?

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Was it something unchanging? Was it something over on this side? How many unchanging things are there; can you name any? Uncaused, unchanging things, can you name any? There's only two or three actually.

[student: Space]

Space is a tough one. Space is a very tough one. Space doesn't mean where the Apollo went. Space doesn't mean what's between your ears. [laughs] [laughter] Space doesn't mean what's between the walls, even. Okay. It's a very difficult concept; space means place. It means the place where this table is, for example. The place where the table is, if I took the table out of that place, would the place still be there. And when I reinsert the table, is there still a place where the table is? Yeah. The place never changes. This earth can dissolve; the whole sun can burn out, but there will always be this place. Whether or not it is still one inch above, one foot above the earth. When the earth is gone, who knows, but the place'll be here. The place never changes. There's this big argument in Buddhism; if I put something into and take it out of it and move things in and out of it, doesn't it change? No, it doesn't change. [unclear] It's either full or it's not full, but it doesn't change. And it always will be there. And it always was there. It's just place. Doesn't change. So that's the ... do you have a question?

[student: unclear]

It's an interesting [unclear ...] permanent doesn't mean eternal. Okay? Permanent in Buddhism doesn't mean eternal. That's why I don't particularly like the translation permanent. It does not mean eternal. It doesn't mean that. For example,

[student: unclear]

It doesn't mean that. It just means unchanging, uncaused. There's an idea of the emptiness of this table, for example, which we will get into. But when you destroy the table, its emptiness is gone. But its emptiness never changes. Okay? What it means is that quality of this table doesn't go through a process like that. It doesn't start, start, start, start, start, start, start, start, reach its peak and then start dying like that. It never does. It's either there or not. The minute it's there, it's fully grown. The minute it's not there, it's fully gone. And while it's fully there, it's never less or more of that. It never varies. It never changes. And when you destroy the table, it's gone. It's no longer there. It doesn't go out though like this. It's just not there. And that's the key to understanding subtle impermanence, and that's a long story in itself.

And the day that you, in meditation [unclear] you perceive subtle impermanence, that's something you grasp, is that there's qualities of the table that are in existence or out of existence but never change while they are in existence. But they neither grow nor perish, because they don't go through this process like that. Then there's that anything that does go through the process like that is not unchanging; its cause is not unchanging. Okay.

Refuge - raw transcript

So what can we say about the mind? Does your mind change? Of course. [laughs] [unclear] we're trying to do. [laughter] Our mind, our mind changes. If you ever feel good and then bad, then the changes behind it changed.

But the process holding it up got weaker or stronger, so your mind got happier or sadder, or your mind got clearer or darker, or your mind got wider or Tibetans call it narrower. So all those emotions indicate that your mind is caused by something, what?

[student: Changing}

Changing. The cause has to be changing, because the mind itself varies. Anything that varies is caused by something that's changing, because as the cause gets more or less strong, then [unclear]. Like that, you go through, through waves. So that's an indication, says Khedrupje, that your mind is not caused by something unchanging. So you can, you can rule out, you can, you can change, you can, all existent phenomena, all what we call dharmas are either changing or unchanging. So put changing and unchanging. And we just ruled out this one. Okay?

Now we don't have to worry about this side. He's going to get you to a point where you can't deny that your mind was caused by a previous moment of mind. Then we're stuck! Because if that's true, what was its cause? The minute you accept one millisecond of mind existing before the first moment of this life, you're stuck with a past life. And if you're stuck with a past life, you're stuck with another one in the future, too. It's very interesting. If he can trick you this way - this is a process of elimination. He goes through every single possibility with you slowly. And this happens in the monastery when we debate, if you're not sharp, if you don't feel too clear that night, you just keep agreeing with the guy, he gets you into a corner and he goes, "checkmate!" Now you have to agree with me, right? Everybody, there's five hundred people looking, and you have to say, "Yeah, you got me." [laughs] So he's leading you slowly along and he's going to trap you into saying, "Yeah, it can't be anything else." So how many changing things are there? Basically two, what do you guess?

[student: unclear]

You've got three, but ...

[student: unclear]

All changing things fall into one of two categories, basically. There is a third category. [Unclear]

[student: unclear]

Refuge - raw transcript

Uh show me anything that's not. No that's the ... there is a third one, by the way, uh, it's called 'concepts' like 'you', like Steven or Richard or [unclear]. It's a concept. It's not mind itself which is having the concept, and it's not a physical thing. It's a concept of a person. A person is neither physical nor mental. It's an ideal that's imposed on a combination of physical and mental things, but I'm sneaking out of that one [laughs] [laughter]. I mean, you're the scientist, okay? [unclear] So we can divide matter into basically two types. What do you guess? I mean, what's the, do you have any natural guesses? Dividing matter into two different types.

[student: unclear]

You could say that. I think that would be a classic [unclear]. What Khedrupje does is inner and outer [unclear]. Living tissue, I mean dead things, you know, just dead matter, atoms, he says, but he means not a living tissue. But what it is it's a sense, he calls it 'sensory matter'.

[student: unclear]

Which is organic, and then, inorganic. Okay, let me go now with that. Sensory and then what was it called? Let's just say organic and inorganic, okay?

[student: unclear]

[unclear] Organic is, according to Buddhism it's five types, it's basically anything that senses. The sense powers, they're called in Buddhism, the five sense powers. Heart Sutra says mik me, nawa me, na me, che me, lu me, and it goes down your body in the {Abhidharmakosha} first chapter, it says, "go down your body, eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body." An explanation of the physical senses, they identify receptor cells. They say in the {Abhidharmakosha} written 1600 years ago, "there are cells at the back of your eyeball, a certain patch of cells, that are sensitive to light. And as the light changes, then those cells change and they transmit information to the mind. Those are the sense powers, they call them, wangmo. Those are the organic matter. All of them, all sense [energy] sentient matter, is in one of those six ca, five categories. Okay.

You're only aware of matter by way of your eyes, your ears, your nose, your tongue, or your body. And that's all. So Khedrupje says, "let's look at those first." And he has an interesting proof, it's a little difficult to follow, but he says, "Do they all, do you think they all cause the mind together, or is it one-by-one they could cause the mind?" Could any individual one cause the mind of the first moment in your mother's womb, or is it all five together that cause your mind? And we're not talking about a condition, we're talking about {nyer len ki gyu}, the stuff cause, the stuff that flopped over into the first moment of your mind. Okay, so is it your, is it any one of your sense powers? Is it any one of those receptor cells? You know, he says, could they cause the mind? Could they cause the mind? And he says, "first of all, let's consider them all together." Suppose all five of them. Suppose we need all five kinds of cells there for the mind to occur.

Refuge - raw transcript

Then when you poke a guy's eye out, his mind should disappear. Because there's no longer, let's say he's five years old, you poke his eye out on his fifth birthday; the day after his fifth birthday, his mind should disappear, right. Because the thing that should cause the mind to continue, the {nyer len ki gyu} of the mind, is gone (cut).

[Side B]

he should also never have a mind, because the cells that would cause his mind to occur are not there. And then the guy says, "Oh no, I, I, uh, don't agree. I say any one of them could cause the mind." Then he says, "well then we all agree that causes and results should have some similarity."

So then the mind, the consciousness of your thoughts, should see objects as well as your eyes do. And that's difficult, that's a little difficult, but it's like this. I mean, when you close your eyes, and you imagine something, you see, you see in a way, but it's always very fuzzy. Anyone who tries to visualize sixty-four tantric deities can tell you. You know. I never got past the first ones. Uh, you know, it's very difficult. [laughs] If, if, if that mind were caused by visual cells, and if visual cells were the main cause and the the only main cause, right, he's saying one-by-one, then the mind, that the consciousness of your thoughts, by the way, we're not talking about the consciousness of your eyesight, there are six consciousnesses, and we're talking about the mental consciousness, the main mental consciousness. It's the one that hears you thinking. It's the guy who hears your thoughts. Did you ever wonder who it was? Who's listening to those thoughts? If they're my thoughts, they can't be me. I must be listening to them. That's your mental consciousness. Uh, it's what you lose when Mike Tyson punches you. It's your {mikye namche}, that's your general awareness. That's what you call your mind.

And then that, that mental consciousness should see things, I mean I visualize a cup of tea of something, it should be perfect. Because it's caused by visual receptor cells, are its main cause. And Khedrupje said that that's not true. Okay, so that's not your [unclear]. You know, when this bogs down, I usually just keep going, and don't let anybody argue. [laughs]

Okay, we crossed out organic. Now we're up to inorganic. Okay, he says that's very simple. Buddhism has this concept of a {sa chu me lung}. {sa chu me lung} are the four elements, okay, the four {jewa shi}, {jewa shi} means the four elements. All physical matter has four kinds of elements behind it. Um, I remember when I first heard about the elements, I thought it was like some kind of primitive concept of, of explaining physical matter. And I thought that, and I remember thinking that it was kind of primitive, and maybe two thousand years ago they didn't understand about atoms and stuff like that, and I didn't really like it. I resisted the idea of the four elements, but if you read the {Abhidharmakosha}, and if you study it carefully, it makes a lot of sense. What it means is, and it says in the {Abhidharmakosha}, the four elements are not earth, water, fire, and wind. That's what they are called. {sa chu me lung}, earth, water, fire, and wind. He says they are not, they are not those four physical objects.

Refuge - raw transcript

In other words, fire itself or water itself is not the element of water or fire. The element of fire or the element of water is totally different from what we call water.

So it's not like the Buddhists were some kind of like, or Buddha himself, who was supposed to be omniscient, which we also can't confirm right now, that he thought that there was some water hiding in uh, you know if you cracked a rock really hard that some water would jump out, you know.

According to Buddhism, all physical entities have all four elements in them, Okay? So, so what does it mean? Is there little pools of water inside of everything? Uh, it's not what the elements mean. The elements mean, the functions of the elements that underlie all physical matter. In other words, uh, all physical matter, behind, underneath all physical matter, in all physical matter, there is some element of solidity. In the smallest piece of physical matter, there is some factor of solidity. It does have some solidity. Even water has some solidity. Even air has some solidity. I mean, I got here half an hour early, and she couldn't find me at the airport because all that air solidity was pushing the plane faster. And we got here half an hour early. Air has solidity. Air has also some element of liquidity in it. So it's the energies within matter that they have of being able to move or being stable, being able to be cohesive. Those are called the four elements. Now I've got you to agree with the four elements? Okay. So he says, "Is it the four elements?" Okay. Is it

[student: unclear]

Is it [laughs] is it [unclear], is it inorganic matter, basically, okay, is it atoms? Is it atoms that causes, what,

[student: the mind]

the first moment of the mind in your mommy's tummy that said, "Ooh, it's hot in here." Okay? Just a conscious thought. Some thought of this is not, this is unpleasant, or something like that, this is warm or this is wet, or something, can't breathe very well. There was something, some kind of a thought. Okay. Did it come from physical atoms? And he says, "Well, I'll give you the same argument, he said, is it all of them together or is it any one of them individually?" Okay? And it's the same argument. Uh, if it has to be all of them together, then any time you remove one, then the mind should disappear. If it has to be any one of them, like fire, then what, is the mind hot? You know the fact is that the mind is, the nature of the mind is totally different than the nature of matter. It's totally different. Um, matter can be divided physically. Always. You can't divide the mind. Forget it. What are you going to, how are you going to cut the mind into three pieces or four pieces? Forget it.

We tend to confuse the mind and the brain. We tend to, when I said mind, you started to think of that thing with all the wrinkles on it and stuff. Don't confuse the two. Mind is invisible. You cannot see my mind; I cannot see your mind. For all I know you are all Buddhas. I am not. Okay? [laughs] I can't see your minds. I can't perceive your minds. They are clear. You can't divide your mind.

Refuge - raw transcript

We have no evidence, and this is a very important point, you have no real evidence that you can destroy the mind. You can't prove to me that the mind can be destroyed. Okay. The best you can do is to say the body stops flapping around and gets cold. So I say what's that got to do with the mind?

The mind is something clear. It's ineffable. I could set off an atom bomb next to you. I have no proof that your mind is destroyed. I don't have any proof. I'm assuming it, because you stopped moving. But you don't have any proof that your mind stops. In other words, the the. And you have to agree that the the qualities of the mind are totally different from the qualities of physical matter. You can't see it, can't divide it, can't weigh it, can't locate it. It, it covers up to the edge of your finger or not. No I can see my room right now. I mean my mind can go to my room. My mind can imagine my room. Uh. It's not restricted to my skin. I mean, that's a pretty primitive idea. The mind is much, it's much different stuff, totally different stuff. Doesn't depend on atoms. It's not caused by, it's stuff cause, the thing that turns into the first moment of the mind in my mommy's tummy, has nothing to do with matter. It's not hot, it's not cold, it's not warm, it doesn't run, it doesn't stop, it doesn't do any of those things. It's invisible. And it knows. And that's the definition of mind in Buddhism. {Sel shi rikpa} It's invisible and it knows. And that's all you can say about it. You have some kind of light called mind, and it lets you know things.

But it has nothing to do with physical form. So he says, neither the atoms individually, the elements individually, or the four elements together causes it. Now how about mental stuff? Could mind have caused it? Nobody complained. Good. Uh. I already got you. Two kinds of mind - two possibilities. All right? Two possibilities with the mind. What do you think? What do you guess? I'll give you ...[laughs] ... it might go on a little too long. It says your own mind or somebody else's mind. Okay? Okay, yours or somebody elses? Or someone else.

[student: or God.]

That's someone else. All right. Okay. Yours or someone else's mind. Was it your mind that flopped over into your mind or was it someone else's mind, and the [unclear] the argument in those days of the Charvakas (I remember their name now) was that uh, it was your parents' mind. Uh, that ch, it, your, they when they got down into this corner, they went for this one, because they said it's your parents' mind. They said your parents mind, somehow, in the womb, is communicated to those cells, and take on, uh, you start thinking, because it's your parents' mind, acts as a cause for you to have a thought. So Khedrupje says is there any similarity between the, the abilities and talents of your parents and yours? You know, is it always the case that uh, that Einstein's, you never hear of Einstein's son. And in my, uh, high school, it was always the minister's sons who were the worst. And you know that. In other words, it's the, the, the talents or the predilections of the parents are in no way passed on to the child. Some genetical traits, you know like diab, a tendency towards diabetes, and things like that, which are carried on through the physical cells, but mentally you don't see anything.

Refuge - raw transcript

Mentally there's no necessity at all that the child shares any of the predilections or the talents of the parents. It's just not true. You know it; you see it. So Khedrupje says not the case, not that, not your parents. So he says, what do you got left?

[students: [unclear]]

No, you've, you've. I mean it seems like a little bit simplistic, and you know, you're not going to run out tonight and take refuge because of that, but, uh, but maybe you should. In other words, every other possibility is truly, honestly, I mean, but you had a few other reservations as I spoke, each person had his own doubts. You say, yeah, that sounded good, but I wasn't quite sure. At that point he pushed a little bit and then he went on. I guess he was afraid to stay there. And you know, I admit it. Everyone in the room had some doubts about what this this process.

But mostly, mainly, on the whole, roughly, you have to agree that pretty much we got down to here. It had to have a cause. The first moment of your mind in this life had to have a cause. It had to be physical, or or mental. It's not physical. It's not, it has nothing to do with physical matter. Um, there are other proofs in Buddhism, or you know all the rocks might as well have minds. As long as you get the right chemicals in the right place, a mind should occur. It just doesn't happen. It hasn't happened for millions of years. St... It comes from mind. Which is quite natural. The causes of the thing should be very very similar to it. Especially when you talk about {nyer len ki gyu}, we admit and we agree that physical matter underlies the mind; in other words supports it. It acts as a {hleng chik che kyen}, like the water, and the sunlight, and the soil. It does, they do contribute. You know, obviously if you slash yourself on the arm, you tend to get upset. It tends to upset your mind. Not necessarily, by the way, which is another proof of Dharmakirti.

You know, he says, heroes in battle, in his time, he had seen people get cut badly, and it only made them more strong and more daring. You know they saw their own blood. He says some people see their own blood and faint. Some people see their own blood and get more heroic. Uh, so prove that the mind is not, it's it's based on the body, but it's not caused by the body. That's a different, its a distinction. When you get drunk, uh, it affects your mind. The physical body changes, and the mind which is resting on the physical body gets stupid. But it doesn't mean that mind comes from the physical body. Obviously there's a relationship. Obviously the physical body is helping to support the mind. But the mind doesn't come from the physical body - it's not related. There has to be something similar. Mind has to come from something very, very similar. The "stuff" cause.

The main cause, the {nyer len ki gyu}, has to be mind. And it's not your parents mind; it doesn't resemble your parents mind. It has its own habits, it has its own predilections, it has its own thoughts, it has it's own tendencies and habits. It's coming from somebody else. And that was the mind of the last moment of your last life. Okay? It has to ... There's no choice. There's no other where to go. There's no other existing object in the universe. I mean, it looks kind of simple, but you actually cover every object in the universe this way.

Refuge - raw transcript

There's no object you can name to me which is not covered in this outline, and we got down to the one that it had to be. It's your, it's your mind. It comes from your own mind. From your past life. So where did the mind come before that? Or where did the first moment of the mind in that life [unclear]? Where did it come from? From the life before. So how many - but wasn't there a first life? Buddhism says no, there is no first life. Okay. There is no first life. It's very interesting. The mind is a long spaghetti noodle that goes back endlessly, okay, it's like this long spaghetti,

[student: [unclear]]

[unclear] {tsa}, you, know, {tsa}, show me the first moment. Show me a moment of your mind that didn't have a cause. Are you crazy? If it didn't have a cause then it would never change. You know, it can't. You can't have a, you can't show me the first moment of your mind. You cannot postulate to me the first moment of your mind. It's crazy, it's silly. Of course you didn't have a first moment of your mind. Your mind is beginningless.

[student: Can we start, can we ask some questions?]

Oh sure, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, sure. [laughter] I'm just about run out [laughs], you better ask some questions.

[student: The clear light knowing nature of your mind - it changes?]

Oh yeah, uh, the {tsen nyi} doesn't have to change. Actually in the school of logic, the relationship between a definition and the thing it defines don't ch, they don't change. That relationship doesn't change. You know, fire's hot.

[student: so that,, that...]

That's a kind of permanent thing. That's a kind of unchanging thing. As long as there ever is a mind, it will always be knowing and clear.

[student: So it's on the other side of the ...]

The relationship between the mind and its qualities is, is here. The fact that m, The fact that the mind is always knowing and clear is over here. Mind is over here. [laughter] Big difference; totally different. You know. The fact that mind is always knowing, and mind itself are on different sides of the line totally, but that's a very, in debating, that's a fifteen-year-old thing. "Come on man, I'm not talking about the fact, I'm talking about the thing itself." The fact that whenever you have a mind, it's knowing, and mind itself, are two totally different things. You know. But, the fact red things are always red, and redness are two totally different things.

[student: Mind itself is not clear and knowing?]

Refuge - raw transcript

It is. The fact that the mind is clear and knowing.

[student (Drimay): It's not the definition of itself.]

Right, right, it's the instance of the thing. So what you can say is, you know you can close your eyes and imagine that that apples are red. In other words, I don't know some sort of species of apple that are always red, okay? Uh, Washington apples are red. I mean once you have a Washington apple, it's always red. That's permanent. That fact is permanent. Anything caused by karma and bad thoughts is suffering. That fact is permanent. But sufferings's not permanent. The whole practice of Buddhism is to remove it, is to stop it. You see? The fact that anything with those causes behind it is suffering is, it'll always be that way. As long as there's something suffering, there is always bad thoughts behind it. That doesn't mean you can't stop suffering. You see what I mean? The fact of something being something is permanent. And the thing itself is impermanent. That's interesting. You gotta, my lama would say you gotta cook it. [laughs] [laughter]

I don't know what's another example, you know, the fact that the, that Harrison Ford is handsome, and Harrison Ford, are two different things, you see. One is a fact, and one is this guy who's gonna die, you see, that's different things. The fact of something being something is permanent. Normally. And the thing itself can be impermanent. That's a, that's a distinction. I can't think of another one. The fact that the mind changes is permanent. How's that? The fact that the mind is impermanent is permanent. The mind itself is not permanent. The quality of the mind being impermanent is permanent. That quality will never change. As long as there's ever a mind in the universe, it will always be changing. That fact is always unchanging. But the mind itself is changing all the time. Unfortunately. That's why...

[student: It's changing all the time, but its true nature, its underlying nature, it's true nature...]

That's another subject.

[student: That's another subject.]

That's another subject. If you mean its ultimate nature,

[student: yes]

which means its emptiness, which is, there's two kinds of {sel shi}, {sel}s. {Sel} means clear. There's the clear light nature of the mind. Then there's the clear nature of the mind. And they both have the same word. {sel shi rigpa} meaning the definition of the mind as being clear and knowing, clear and sentient. That's impermanent. Those qualities are impermanent. But the quality of the mind that it's not such that it doesn't depend on its causes is permanent. That's its emptiness. And that's called clear light sometimes.

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Is that changing or unchanging?]

Unchanging.

[student: unchanging.]

That nature of the mind is unchanging.

[student: that's not a fact, that's a]

Nope, it's not unchanging because it's a fact, it's unchanging because it's an object that doesn't change. And those are two different kinds of clear. Two different meanings of the word clear. One clear means invisible, you know. And the other clear means .. empty. Which means..

[student: [unclear]

Yeah.

[student: not empty like]

No, not empty like, [laughs] buckets and stuff like that. Two different meanings of the word, 'clear'.

[student: Mind can be in a bridge or in a rock.]

The Buddha ...

[student: Like we hear stories of bodhisattvas taking ...]

The Buddha can emanate, the Buddha can emanate, there are extraordinary cases where, for example, the Buddha can emanate as a tree or as a bridge, uh, and that's the form body of the Buddha, that's the Nirmanakaya. There's two Nirmanakayas -one is {cho ki trulku} and one is {trulku}. {trulku} means plain old Nirmanakaya. {cho ki trulku} means the ultimate Nirmanakaya. The ultimate Nirmanakaya always has 112 signs. And always looks like the Buddha. And all those other Nirmanakayas that he also sends out can look like anything, but they don't have mind.

[student: They don't have mind..]

His mind is behind them. [laughs] His mind sends them out, but they are physical. They are in the Rupakaya side of His existence. Yeah, they're all physical.

[student: So the bridge,]

Refuge - raw transcript

is not his mind. It's, there's a mind behind it, let's put it that way. Got out of that one. [laughs] Sometimes in the debating, you just try to move the subject [unclear] around, [laughs] before the guy figures out that you didn't [unclear] [laughter] Any more questions? [laughter] No, that's real, that's the real [unclear]. Okay. So, so what's that got to do with taking refuge? It's like this. Um. You have to, then you have to study what's going to determine the content of your mind next life.

So you determine that your mind is indestructible basically. That's really the position of Buddhism - your mind is indestructible. Uh, ultimately, your mind will become the mind of a Buddha. Uh, sooner or later. The lazier you are, the longer. But sooner or later your mind will become the mind of a Buddha. It's indestructible. Even after it becomes a Buddha's mind, it'll keep changing. The Buddha's mind does change. Its quality is that it's always moving, it's always changing. But it's uh, it always has the same content. The content of that mind is paradise. You know, that mind is subjected and that mind is forced to perceive paradise. Forever. And that's where we get into the content of the mind. What will the mind be seeing in your next life? And then you have to get into the principles of karma, and there are four principles of karma. Uh, how are we doing on time, okay?

[student: unclear]

Okay, I'll just start them and then you can cook them. Uh, this is basically that, uh, with similar causes and similar results. In other words, your actions, what your actions lead to is like every other kind of cause. And it's funny, when we get to our actions, we stop, uh, being logical. But up to that point, we agree that if you have good watermelon seeds, and you take care of them properly, you're gonna get good watermelons out of it. And if you have good corn seeds, and you take good care of them, you'll get good corn plants out of it. You need to have good seeds to have good results, and lousy seeds, you know, seeds which are genetically defective, seeds which are rotten, seeds which have holes in them, you know, seeds which are in any way deficient can't give you a good plant. It's impossible. The quality of the seed always resembles the result. No farmer takes corn seeds and plants them and prays for wheat to come up. It's impossible, and it would be silly to say that. It'd be silly to say, "Oh here's some watermelon seeds, I wonder what's gonna grow next year from these seeds? You know. You don't wonder. No farmer sits all night sleepless, you know, "I wonder what kind of plant's gonna come up?" You know, it will be silly. You laugh because it's silly. It's silly to think that the cause and the result could be very much different. It's silly; it's funny. Um, and the same with your deeds.

I mean if the content of your actions is bad; if it hurts somebody, the result has to hurt. That's just the first principle of karma. It's absolutely the first principle of karma. If the deed is harmful, the result has to be bad. Suffering. There's a lot of reasons why, and it's a very very beautiful subject. It's covered in Madhyamika; it's covered in the fourth chapter of the {Abhidharmakosha}. It's something you could explain to somebody in about two or three days, and no matter what religion they were, they would accept it. It's, it's very interesting. It has to do with your perceptions. It has to do with how you perceive things.

Refuge - raw transcript

That as you commit a karma, you perceive yourself committing the karma, and that starts the process of the carrying of the karma through your mindstream, and that's the whole thing is laid out in the scriptures. And it's very clear, it's very acceptable, it's very cool. You can accept it right away. It's a long story, you have to study it for awhile. But you can prove why, why if you harm somebody you will get suffering back. You can prove it; it's a question of the content.

So that the results and the, the causes and the results must be similar. They always will be similar. You can prove why.

If you study the nature of the continuum of the mind and the nature of the perceptual event of committing a bad deed. You can prove it. So the cause and the result must be similar. You don't get pleasure out of a, out of a harmful action.

So I'm in the diamond business, okay? Half the year I do diamond business. We do three million stones a year or something. Um, I don't own the company - I wish I did. [laughs] But it's very common in the diamond business that the dealer will come with a big package of diamonds, and he'll say, "I want three thousand dollars a carat." And you say, "No, I can only pay two thousand five hundred." It's a lie, okay, you know it's worth three thousand dollars. So you say, "No, my limit's two thousand five hundred. The boss will kill me if I pay three thousand." And he knows you're lying, but he has to play this game. So he says, "Okay, two thousand seven hundred." And you say, "No, two thousand six hundred is all I can pay. I won't tell my boss. I'll cover the hundred myself." You know, and uh, a lot of stories. We go back and forth, back and forth. Then suddenly he gives in to you. You've lied very persuasively. You've really given him a good story. And he gives in to you, and you make an extra hundred dollars. Okay. But, what was the cause? I mean, what did you do to get the hundred dollars. What did I do?

[student: You lied]

I lied. What was the result?

[student: [a hundred dollars]

I got another hundred dollars. So that's a bad cause, harmful cause, why? Bad deed. And the result is a hundred dollars extra. And that happens all the time. I swear. And I'm not lying. [laughs] It happens all the time. Are the. So does it break this law? Does it break the first law of karma?

[students: No, no]

[student, Drimay: I want to say yes, I want to hear the arguments.]

Well I'd say this.

[student: It would be in some situations [unclear]

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Drimay: I want to say that the hundred dollars was the direct result of the lie]

Yeah. Of the bad lie, of the lie, okay. Lets start with that one. Cause and effect means this. It's a very interesting thing. It's always the same. In a laboratory experiment we all know. It's a basis of science. It's a basis of western science. When we repeat all the steps of an experiment the same way, you always get the same result. That's the whole idea; you replicate your experiment. You know, somebody does an experiment in France.

They prove that you can do this with the AIDS virus, and somebody over in America does exactly the same steps and what happens? He gets exactly the same result. He must. If he doesn't, they say the French guy was crazy, that's not the reason. It's not the correct causes. It doesn't work that way. It's not scientific. It means if you collect the right conditions, if you follow the same steps, that's how recipes work. Supposed to come out the same, okay. That's the whole idea.

So suppose they had figured out how to make airplanes fly. But they weren't quite sure. So they tell you at the airport, "You have to sign this waiver, [laughter] because we think understand why airplanes fly, but we're not 100% sure, and every once in awhile they fall down, you know. It doesn't replicate. It doesn't always work the same way. You know. 99% of the time it works great, and 1% of the time, we just don't know why, it doesn't follow the same rules. It's not like that; it's really not like that. I mean something extraordinary could happen, the engine could fall out [unclear], but if all the causes are there, all the parts are there, properly, it has to fly. That's the rule. So now I ask you, and I know from experience. Did I get a hundred dollars profit every time I lied in a diamond deal?

[student, Drimay: Maybe it depended on how well you lied.]

I'm [unclear] the same lie I said, honest, [laughter], I'm very good at it. My boss taught me for fifteen years [laughs]. Same persuasive lying. It doesn't, it really doesn't. You know, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. You know that. In your heart you know that. You really do know that. You know, sometimes you repeat the same bad deed and you don't get what you wanted. You know. It backfires, and you actually get something bad. So are they cause and effect?

[student: I feel like this could be very long]

[student: unclear]

Nagarjuna says something interesting. Nagarjuna says it's all a big lie. He says it's all a big lie. He says the the the act of lying and the act of making a hundred dollars have nothing to do with each each other. You know. He's very adamant about it. In {Suhrllekha}, in the {she ting}, he says, Nagarjuna's letter, he says, he's adamant about it, there's no connection, no connection at all. The hundred dollars is coming from a previous event. A good previous event. And the lie can only cause you to lose your (cut)

Refuge - raw transcript

[students: unclear discussion]

[student Drimay: Um, like when you have a recipe, and you make a cake, you might get a different batch of flour or something, you're at a different elevation..]

That is not the same causes.

[student Drimay: so you're getting a different cake. Let's say the same recipe, different result.]

But different, not the same

[student, Drimay: No I'm saying the recipe was different the times you got different amounts of money.]

No different recipe, because a recipe, a good recipe will say don't use Pillsbury, use this one.

[student, Drimay: Okay, different ingredients following the recipe for example, for example, the person you're lying to, the weather, where you were that day,]

Yeah, no there are other factors, I admit, but what you're positing is, well, planes don't fly when one of the wings fell off. I agree, you know, if it's not all exactly the same, no, it's not replicated. But I'm postulating a case where everything's exactly the same. What I'm saying is like this, go read the New York Times business section. It's really funny. Forbes, we were in Forbes, okay? We made it to Forbes. And they said, "this company is really smart because they take risks." Three pages later it says, "This company failed. They're really stupid. They took a lot of risks, you know." There's no connection. If somebody in the millions of years that human beings have been around hasn't figured out how to make investments right, it's weird. It's kind of strange. You know, do you take risks or do you not take risks? I mean one's gotta be better and one's gotta be worse. It's, the fact is that it doesn't depend on that. It doesn't matter whether you take risks or you don't take risks, because it doesn't come from that. That's not the cause. There's a lot of evidence that things don't work the way they look. There's a lot of evidence, because people, I know business people go through their whole lives, generations of business people, millions of business people go through trying to figure out how to make money. And it just doesn't work half the time. And half the time it does, because it's not depending on that. It's an indication, I'm not saying a proof, okay. It's an indication that the causes are not what they appear to be. It doesn't matter how smart you are and how well capitalized you are and whether you take risks or you don't take risks, cause something else is happening. And that's causation. So anyway, it has to be similar. I think those are all indications. You have to say total proof. Seems to be an indication.

We'll do one more and then we'll stop. Uh, gets bigger, okay, and that's, that's very simple. There's one rule about cause and effect. It's always true. It's always true. The cause is always smaller than the effect. And not just a little smaller. I mean, take a look at an oak tree and an acorn. We have this oak tree near this temple.

Refuge - raw transcript

I live in a Mongolian temple, and one day this oak tree fell over on the temple. On top of the temple. It's a big temple, and the oak tree was much bigger. And uh, so they sent me up there with a chain saw, you know, "You cut it off." And I was sh, I don't like high places, and I was up there with this chain saw, and I had this very clear thought that I wish that I had met this oak tree when it was an acorn, and I would have taken the acorn and thrown it out on the street, and it never would have grown, and I wouldn't be up here, you know.
[laughs]

I had this very clear idea that if I could have been there when the acorn fell down, and thrown it out on the street, everything would be okay. Uh, and that's the way it goes. If you look at the the matter, the amount of matter in an acorn, and then the amount of matter in an oak tree, in a big oak tree, it's incredible. Or the parents' sperm and egg. It's incredible. It's like a few cells. And then they grow into a huge organism that lasts for a long time. That's something incredible. It's the, the ratio of cause to effect is I don't know what it is, it must be one to a couple million I think, if you look at the cells that your body produces through the whole course of your life being caused by only two or three cells. Uh, the causes are always infinitely smaller than the results. And in every case, if you think of any great thing you've done in your life, you know that there was that first moment. You met somebody.

Vajrapani, you know, it must have been somebody's thought. There must have been a couple of people sitting around a table one night, and somebody said, "Hey, what do you think about we do that?" you know. And here there's years, twenty years later, thousands of students later who've been in and out of this place, and it all came from a few sentences that somebody said. All things are like that. All causes are like that. All causes and results are like that.

So karma's the same way. What you get is this tiny, tiny little deed, a tiny thought, uh, and then you get a tremendous result. Uh, fourth chapter {Abhidharmakosha} opens with {le le jikten natsok kye} {de ni sempa dang de je}, which means uh, the universe comes from karma, and karma consists of, the essence of karma is {sempa}, which means, you know the word {sems}, which means mind. {Sempa} is totally different, and it's any time the mind shifts, so any time the mind goes from there to there, that's a {sempa}. That's the essence of karma. Karma is {sempa}. Uh, then physical and verbal deeds come later, but it starts with a shifting of the mind. How many {sempa}s do you have in a minute?

[student: It's action]

Yeah, it's a shifting of the mind, shifting of your thoughts. I mean according to Buddhism, I think it's sixty-four thousand in a (snaps fingers). I think sixteen or sixty four in a thumb snap, or something. {ke chik ta le} And that's how many {sempa}s you can have, okay And each one is a karma. Each one is a discrete cause for, for something else. And each one is gonna grow like an acorn. Okay, go ahead.

[student, Julia: I'm not sure [unclear]]

Refuge - raw transcript

That's why you're here [laughter]

[student, Julia: [unclear] the oak tree if there weren't all the other nutrients .. five hundred years down the line can you show me that oak tree ... I mean that's my one argument, and then p... if perhaps thirteen years later ...]

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well that's true, there have to be, there have to be conditions too. I, but you're right, you're right, there have to be conditions. There have to be the nutrients.

Also with the thought, you know, if you dwell on the thought, like they say do a perfect meditation on irritation at the coworker at work, you know, which means you go home at night, and you start thinking about what they said to you. It starts with one moment of irritation at work. You get a new job; you're thrilled; you've been trying to get a job. You finally get a job. You know. You're really happy the first day and the first month, and then slowly one person starts to irritate you, and it starts to build up in your mind, and then finally two years later when you leave the place, you're so relieved to leave the place. You know, that's a case where they say that mentally you have given it nutrition. You know mentally you have watered it, you have taken good care of it. Uh, and it's grown into this huge ugly thought. Um. But I admit that if you don't have the nutrients, you know if you have one frivolous thought and you don't follow up on it and you don't dwell on it, and you don't give it all the nutrition it needs, yeah, it won't cause it. And the same with an acorn. Uh, but the acorn oak tree, even though it doesn't get bigger, it does continue, and for it to continue is more mass, too. Ten minutes of oak tree is heavier than one minute of oak tree. Is what I mean to say. The cause had the power not only to create the mass of the oak tree, but to keep it going for another fifty years or something. That means the cause is incredibly powerful. The cause is very powerful.

So tomorrow we'll get into the implication that we got three and four to go to, uh we have to cover two more laws of karma, and then we want to know what the heck it has to do with going for refuge. All right. Do we have that - I think we have a closing prayer, right?

[student, Drimay: (something about the prayer)]

Day 2

[student: We have always the effect or sometimes we have always the effect?]

I think always.

[student: Always.]

Always. Yeah.

[student: And then, then, I really don't understand because in my mind it seems that so many things end up getting smaller or vanishing and others really don't in proportion to how I see them and when I don't really know...I was trying to make up an example, okay, um, I have a

[unclear]

Let's not look at how a rectangle got, when, how,... what's the resulting feeling. I don't even know what you feel resolve means, does it mean that I'll be, but why does someone die again, someone who's gonna be, much, someone else is gonna be much more happy or what? or

[laughter]

I know what you mean. Yeah, you're saying, ah, I think I have two examples that you're mentioning. One is, ah, what about things that decline, you know, things that like, ah, certain organizations, you know they start out nice and then they start to die out. What about that? And then, secondly, I think you're saying, ah, what about a moment of happiness; it doesn't necessarily get bigger all the time, sometimes it peters out. What about things that peter out and just diminish and get less and less. Um, The

[b: Abhidharmakosha]

In the chapter on karma which is the fourth chapter, ah, talks a lot about that and it divides things into result of karma and karma itself. So that happiness, for example, mental feeling which is good is mainly a result. The definition of karma, the definition of good karma, is any deed that results in a ripening of a feeling of pleasure, mental or physical pleasure. Happiness is a physical pleasure. And in the definition of bad karma, or bad deeds, is anything that results ultimately in a feeling of pain, suffering, mental suffering or physical pain. So that's actually a definition of karma which is very interesting, so anytime you have a happiness, any kind of good thing happen to you, it's a result, supposedly, you have to prove it, of good karma, of a good deed where you helped somebody else. And then anytime you have any kind of suffering, it's a result of a bad deed, something you did to hurt someone else. So really in the abhidharma system the pleasure and pain are mainly results. Then they get into feelings, feelings of unhappiness or feelings of happiness

[unclear]

To be good karma themselves and create more karma and they do. According to the

[b: Abhidharmakosha]

the only really, bad feelings, for example, are always bad karma, except in one case is where you have regret or having hurt somebody,

[student interjection, unclear]

Where you have regret about having done something bad to, to be upset that you've done something wrong is a good karma but normally in the abhidharma system every other kind of form of being upset or irritated or angry or any kind of negative, painful thought, is bad karma. So it wouldn't necessarily lead to immediate feeling of pain because the other thing about karma is that it takes time to ripen.

Nagarjuna said it's really bad luck that karma goes through this thing, in Sanskrit it's called {pechupay, in Tibetan it's called {nimba}, and it means that karma has to have time to ripen. It takes time to ripen. Nagarjuna says it's really bad luck because otherwise, ah, like people in New York are always asking me about killing roaches in their apartment, you know, 'cause, if you don't kill them then they take away your apartment. If you do kill them, it's bad karma. And Nagarjuna says it's really bad luck that when you crush a roach's sides, that your own ribs don't start to break at that moment. You know, if karma were immediate, you know, if karma worked that way, if the minute you said something harsh to a person you started to feel as bad as they do, immediately, then everything would be all right. We'd never do bad karma. You know, he says if when you cut somebody's skin open, your own skin opened up and started to bleed, then you would never do any bad karma. But there's this lousy gap, there's this lousy maturation trail between when you do it and when it ripens and it misleads you. It's a kind of illusion and it hurts, that causes a lot of our problems.

[unclear]

said yeah, a moment of pure good thought is gonna lead to a lot of other moments of happiness but not immediately. You won't notice it. You'll think it came from something else. That's the illusion.

[student: And will you say anything about why it gets bigger? That makes me

[unclear]

]

Someone else asked me that. I don't have much good explanation for that. It doesn't go into it very much. It compares it to the physical world and to all other causes that you can see.

Refuge - raw transcript

You know, all other causes, you know, all great enterprises come from tiny little causes. They saw you can see that. You know, building the Golden Gate bridge started with someone's idea and things like that. All great things come from a tiny seed and they say look at that in the physical world, look at it in the world of ideas, in the world of great, a, America, I mean, started by a few thoughts of several people and all around the world we see how causes are smaller than their results. But I don't know any, I, I think then we'd have to get into the function of ignorance on a seed, you know, when you have a seed and you water with a lot of ignorance, ah, of emptiness then it gets more and more powerful, but for that, we might get into that later today, we'll see. okay. So that's two principles of karma.

How did we get to karma? It was, ah, we were talking about suffering in this life as no big deal. I mean, you can see that there is suffering in this life and I think that you can see pretty obviously that there's no refuge in this life. There's no protection from it in this life. There's nothing in this life that can help you with the problems that you already have. There's nothing ultimately that you can do to keep yourself healthy. You will get sick and you will die and there is no refuge, physical refuge in this life. It's a lost cause. There's nothing you can do. People spend a lot of money to delay it. And you can live well and try to eat well and exercise but ultimately it's a lost cause. You might delay it for a while. Anything you've undertaken, even virtuous deeds, even great things will collapse eventually. The Buddha, himself, when he started teaching, he gave a limit to his teachings. The last words of the

[b: Abhidharmakosha]

outline, and the

[b: Diamondcuttersutra]

they outline how his own teachings are going to end. He understood, while he taught, that his own teachings would die in this world and he gave a date. He described how long it was going to take. He described what would happen during each period as it started to degenerate. Even good, nice things end and are destroyed, even creations of the Buddha are, go through this process, can't stop it. So any kind of happiness you have or any kind of good thing you have in this life is, ah, it's obvious you're going to lose it. You don't need philosophy to know that. If you're young, you don't want to pay attention to it, but as you get older, it forces itself on you.

[Laughs]

You know, and there's this kind of intelligence that young people can have. If while you're still healthy you can, you can just try to observe older people and imagine that you're going to be like that, you save a lot of time. But it's very difficult because it's fun to be young.

[Laughs]

Refuge - raw transcript

So I don't think, we don't need any big, ah, you know, proofs for suffering in this life. This life is a loss anyway. You can see that. You can't keep anything. Anything you build, any relationships you make, any money you collect, any health you have, any good looks you have, any reputation you have, it's all going to just end. And three or four years after you die, no one will remember you much, really. And you can see that, even very famous people, you know, just nobody remember you after a while. There's nobody left who was around when you were around. And then it's just a complete loss, so for this life it's obvious. Why did we get into karma? Well, we were trying to prove future lives and past lives. We went through our proof by

[unsure, possibly Karabjay]

Which is based on a proof by Dharmakirti, about twelve hundred years ago, and he's trying to prove that your mind, you might, the first moment of your mind in this life, the first thought you ever had, had to be, had to come from some material. There had to be some stuff that, the moment before that turned into the first thought of this life, the first conscious thought of this life. And we went through that proof and we proved that there had to be something, some kind of, material, called mind, that was there the millisecond before you had your first thought. And that provided the material for that first thought, not the content, but the existence of the mind itself. Okay. There was some kind of mind just before that and that had to be across that border called this life, there had to be some mind in some other life that provided the material, which turned into the mind of the first moment of life, there has to be. And we proved it. We talked about it yesterday. Just due to the similarity of causes and their effects.

There has to be some similar stuff that was there the moment before you had your first conscious thought. There had to be a mind before that. If there was a mind a millisecond before that, then you're stuck with past lives. Okay. And if you're stuck with one, you're stuck with endless past lives, beginningless past lives. Okay. And that's the basic proof. There is no other great proof in Buddhism and I don't think any other one is necessary. You know, they say on three levels you can perceive your past lives. In deep meditation, under certain circumstances you can perceive your past lives and your future lives directly and they say that's no good for teaching other people because you can't prove it. I can claim that I've seen my future lives, but I can't prove it to you. You know, you can't confirm it from what I say. I can sound very convincing but we know that that doesn't sometimes work. So you can't really depend on that. There's other, you know, well, people have memories of their past lives, so they have some kind of flashes from their past lives. Again, that's not something they can communicate to you. They can't prove to you that they saw their past lives. It's no good for convincing people of past lives. And it doesn't work up to now. And the third one is just reasoning; that's the one Buddhists prefer. It doesn't require any leaps of faith. It's just there. It's scientific. If you had a first moment of consciousness in this life, it had to come from someplace and we eliminated all the other possibilities. There must have been a moment before that, so then we establish past lives and future lives. I'm gonna give you

Refuge - raw transcript

[again unsure, Karabjay's]

proof, this is, ah, we did these, we have a five year course in New York which you're welcome to come to.

[Laughter]

It's free.

[Laughs]

And we go through the basic monastic course in five years. And ,ah, these are all from that. Saves time. I don't have to do it over each time. So we were on karma and we said there are four laws of karma. We were trying to see what's going to happen after you die. The first law of karma is that it's similar. Okay. Whatever the, if the cause is sweet, the result is sweet. If the cause is sour, the result is sour. It's very, very simple. And it applies to morality, moral things, as well as physical things. If a seed is defective, the result is defective. If the seed is really, really healthy, the result is healthy. If the seed, if the cause of an event, is morally harmful, if it hurts other people, the result can't be good. You can't get something good out of something bad. And it seems very simple but it's just true. There is no similarity between something nice happening to you and hurting somebody, there's no similarity. I mean, the content of those two experiences is totally different. Hurting someone, the content is bad. Getting something nice, the content is good. There can't be a cause and effect. It's very simple. It'd be like corn coming out of a watermelon seed. It can't. It won't. That's similarity. Bigger, in general, you can see that if seeds are properly treated, they always produce something, not just a little bit bigger, but tremendously bigger, like millions of times bigger or thousands of times bigger.

And we talked about your mother's egg, your father's sperm. You could talk about the acorn for an oak tree. You could talk about a single idea for an institution which is hundreds or thousands of people. Those are all seeds. and they always produce something much bigger. The other two rules of karma are pretty simple, I know you have to write them, if you commit an action, there must be a consequence. In other words, you can't set an action into motion and nothing will happen from it. It's the law of conservation of energy, you know, it's something, there's a pushing forth, something is gonna happen on the other side. There's no such thing as doing an action and nothing coming out of it. It's not accepted by any school of physics or any school of, Buddhist school of morality. If you do something there will be a result. And it will follow these two rules. You can't get out of it. We're gonna study later today why that's true as far as perception, you know, why does, what role does perception have in that happening, why is it when you do something, you have to get a result back from it and the big question is where does karma stay? You know, I mean, we all have this fuzzy idea that when we do something, there's this cosmic picture taken, in fact, the

[unclear, possibly Vibashiga]

school of Buddhism, the earliest school, they said that. They said when you do an action there's like a cosmic photograph taken and it was called {memorinche miyembe suk}. It's not accepted by any other school and it was some kind of form, physical matter that was created and it attaches itself to your body like an aura. Like when you make a prostration, you suddenly get this coating of virtue and that stays with you until you get the result back. So you've got all these coatings of all these karmas that you did and they stay on your body, an actual physical aura that you can't see. And that's how they explain karma got carried.

And then you get more and more refined into the mind only school and the Madhyamika schools, they explain, and I'll get into that in the afternoon, I think, it's really nice to hear it because then you can buy the idea of karma more easily, if you know how it's stored, otherwise, you know, what is it? You throw a cosmic boomerang, you know, and it comes back twenty years later and it hits you, you know, where does karma stay because according to Buddhism it can stay for thousands of years. It can be stored, put into storage, and then come out a thousand years later. Well, where does it stay? And how could it stay? What does it look like? You know, where, who locks it up? Is it God puts it in the closet and then slips it back to you later, you know?

[Laughs]

Where does it stay all that time? And I think if you don't get into that, then you can't really appreciate karma. If you can't appreciate karma, then you can't appreciate what's going to happen in your future life. And if you can't appreciate that, then you won't take refuge, and if you don't take refuge, you're not a Buddhist. As we said yesterday. So. The fourth law of karma is that if you don't do something then you won't get a result. Okay. And that's pretty obvious. If you can restrain from doing something, if you can stop yourself from doing something, you won't get a result, it's impossible. And that's, those are the four rules of karma.

Why did I get into that? What's that got to do with refuge? The point is this, we talk about taking refuge about the suffering of this life and then all the books in Buddhism say you have to take refuge because of what's going to happen after you die. And if you read the reading from last night, we'll get into it, the lowest form of refuge, the most primitive, selfish, form of refuge, the minimum refuge for being a Buddhist is to be worried about what happens to you the moment your breath stops. It's actually, if you have some kind of hope that Buddhism will help you in this life, it doesn't qualify as refuge, that's not refuge. The minimum form of refuge is to be concerned about what's going to happen the minute after you stop breathing. That's the minimum. We can't even accept that that moment exists unless you understand about that mind going on, you know, that mind is really severed from the body and when the body dies, stops moving, the mind goes on. You have no proof otherwise, okay. I gave some proofs to the opposite. But you can't give me any proof otherwise, there is no other proof. You can't prove to me that when the body stops flopping around, the mind doesn't go on, you just can't, you can't prove it. In fact, it's not true, it does go on.

Refuge - raw transcript

And because it goes on, you can't give me any decent proof why it should stop, it doesn't stop. It just goes on. It keeps going on. How it finds a new body and things like that you can understand by studying karma. But it will go on, so what happens then.

Then karma takes over and determines what happens to you after that. What's it going to be like? I mean is it, and then you get into the question, is there really a hell? Is there really hungry ghosts? You know Buddhism says there are five or six realms. It says that if you're not a good person, you do a lot of bad things in this life, after you die you'll have to go to a hell, or you'll have to become some kind of a spirit that's always suffering. And that's why you should take refuge, you know, and you can get up and you can give a lecture about refuge and say you know you're gonna probably go to hell. Buddhist books say that ninety-nine point nine percent of the people go down after they die. So they get up and they say that's why you should take refuge and you say yeah but prove it. You know I, I can't see hell. Nobody's ever seen hell, no one's come back from hell and said this is what hell looks like. A lot of popular ideas about hell taught by Buddhist teachers is that oh you just have to interpret it, it's just a psychological state in this life. You know, it's kind of when you're really bummed out; it feels like hell. You feel like hell and there's no hell, the idea of hell doesn't really, it's just a metaphor and there's no such thing as hell. That's not what the books say.

[Laughs]

The

[b: Abhidharmakosha]

, third chapter, second part, it describes hell in good detail and it's interesting that it's very similar to Dante's description. It's very similar, extremely similar to a description of hell found in other traditions. The question today, or you can see animals, that's a lower birth, and you can't see hungry spirits, I can't prove to you. And it's, in fact, in Buddhist logic, it's the prime example. I can't prove to you that this room might be filled with spirits of people who died, who are suffering horribly, all around us. You can't see them; you can't hear them, right now. Yeah, I can describe or go into hours of explanation about what it looks like according to scriptures, but can I prove it to you? You know, because if I could prove it to you, you would, you and me would all be very good people because we don't want that to happen. If I can't prove it to you, then you'll just say oh that was an interesting lecture, maybe it exists and maybe it doesn't exist, he doesn't know any better than me. He can't prove it to me. He can't take me there. And then you don't really take very good refuge because you can't see it, nobody can prove it to you, there's these books that are pretty good but you don't know for sure that it exists. So we have to talk about whether or not for example, a hell experience could exist, okay, if it's possible that after you stop breathing in this life something monstrous could happen. You know, like Freddy and all those guys could come out.

[Laughs]

Refuge - raw transcript

And Whether such a thing, isn't it possible? Are like monsters possible? Is it possible that after you die you'll meet monsters or you'll go to a place where it's all like Friday the thirteenth or something, you know, where those things really happen, all those things that the moviemakers imagine really happen. Is it possible? You know, are those such things possible or are they just fantasy, you know, I mean, is such things not possible? You know, horrible monsters slashing you and anything you ever saw in a movie come true, you know, is it really possible? According to everything we've said so far it's completely possible. okay. Your mind will continue, it will go on. We haven't, there's nothing we've said that indicates that your mind will stop, it won't stop. You know, that's why Hamlet didn't commit suicide,

[Laughs]

He says, "To be or not to be", which means should I commit suicide or not, and then he goes through a bunch of arguments to himself and finally he's so indecisive, but finally he decides not to kill himself because he says, it might go on, you know he says, ah but the

[unclear]

some kind of consciousness might continue, so he doesn't kill himself. You will have some kind of consciousness continue. What will it be like? You know, how will it be? That's where these two things come in. Every negative thought you had, every really harmful thought, every thought where you strongly were angry at someone else, jealous of someone else, or you had desire, will magnify itself and it will be of the same type, so you'll have a perception of something very negative and it will be infinitely more powerful than the thoughts you had because that's the nature of all seeds.

San Francisco bridge started with a few thoughts, Vrajapani Institute started with a few talks over dinner after a course, your whole body for fifty or forty or thirty years of life started with two cells from your parents, you know. The small tiny causes that are planted in your mind stream, they grow and they become infinitely larger and they get twisted. In other words, it's very, very, it's not crazy to say that little tiny, bad thoughts you had in this life could grow into huge twisted oak trees in your next life and you could see, you could be living in a place where there are Freddy's and monsters slashing you and killing you and things like that. It's very possible. According to all those ideas of karma, it's not impossible. It's very possible. In, we can't see it, I don't say we can see it, but Buddhism says that if you see something with logic, in other words, if you can think something over and perceive that it's possible, then it's as good as being there. There's no difference between logic and being there if the logic is good. You know, if I say, you know, how many fingers are there, three. Okay, that's direct perception and then I go like that, so how many fingers are there? I'll hit them one by one on the, you know, and you know there's three fingers there. You can't see it, your using logic, that's logic. That is seeing them as clearly as if I put them in front of your face, you still see three fingers. And that's, according to Buddhism, that's one kind of {pramina}, {jefoxhema}, you're seeing my fingers as good as if I stuck them in your face, so I say you can see your future life. You can the moment you die. It will happen that way.

Refuge - raw transcript

And the death process is supposedly as the elements that don't cause the mind but support the mind start to break down and you start to hallucinate and you start to go through these horrible hallucinations and that's just the beginning of your next life, you go through these horrible, it's like being injected with all these drugs and they effect your mind and you can't think straight anymore and you start to have horrible hallucinations. And then you start to perceive reality itself according to what you did in your past. How does that work, So we'll talk about that. I still don't want anyone to take refuge,

[laughs]

okay. You don't take refuge until you are worried about this possibility and that's why you take refuge. If you don't understand this possibility, or you don't perceive it, then I don't see how you can take refuge. So we'll talk about how these monsters are gonna exist in the next life. How could they? And for that you need to understand how karma is collected in the mind. So we're gonna go through that. okay. We're gonna take this, it's from the

[b: perfection of wisdom sutras]

and it's by a commentary by {Kadrubdomadoge}, who wrote the text books for my monastery, {Sera Mey}, in the sixteen hundreds, fifteen hundreds. These text books are slightly better than {Sera jey's}, no

[laughter]

whose teacher was from {Sera Jey}, so whenever we say that at the monastery they say, they remind us who his teacher was and we say well he improved on his teacher,

[laughter]

So we start with, this is very interesting, this is the process of how karma is collected. Right? It's very, very interesting. It has to do with emptiness also.

[student:

[unclear]

already]

[laughter]

No I'll do it, I'll do it

[laughter]

Refuge – raw transcript

let's do it, let's do it differently. thank-you. This is called {bhachak}. Say {bhachak}.

[students: {bhachak}]

{Bhachak}

[students:{bhachak}]

]

Say it loud. {Bhachak}

[students: {bhachak}]

Okay

[laughs]

I like that word, it sticks in people's minds. {Bhachak} is a seed, mental seed. {Bhachak} means a mental seed, all right. So this is how the whole process starts, this is how samsara starts, this is how suffering starts, this is how this world came into being. It started with {bhachak}. {Bhachak} is a seed inside your mind, a mental seed. In this case the seed is for ignorance. What is ignorance? We'll get into it. Okay. This is the seed for ignorance, {bhachak}, okay, {bhachak}. When you're born you have {bhachak} in your mind, they came from your past lives, they came from the ignorance you had in your past life; they're called {bhachak}. So that's how the trouble starts. Say {dunzun}.

[students: {dunzun}]

{dunzun}

[students: {dunzun}]

Okay. {Dunzun} means the, it means grasping to truth or grasping to real existence. It's a kind of tendency that we all have to believe that things have some inherent existence, that they have any nature of their own. So think about what I said, the word inherent existence is thrown around, you know, we all got used to the word and I think that sometimes we don't think about what it means. I'll say it differently. I'll say that you don't have any nature or any quality of your own. Okay. Nothing about you is your own. You don't have any nature of your own. Okay. Is that all right.

[Laughter]

Refuge - raw transcript

Okay. I mean, you're not pretty or handsome or ugly or lazy or tall or short or happy or sad or old or young or anything, not anything.

[student: Who do we belong to?]

We'll get into it, okay. You don't have any quality of your own, okay. I guess it's a radical statement, it should just say come on don't be silly, of course I have some qualities. I've got this bald spot on my head, all this stuff. This is mine. It belongs to me. These are all my nature. {Dunzun} believes that. That these belong to you. That you have some nature of your own. That you have any quality of, any characteristic of your own. That it belongs to you. That you have a characteristic of your own. {Dunzun} believes that. And that starts to assert itself immediately.

According to Buddhism, in all living creatures, bugs, worms, amoebas, Einstein's, they all have {dunzun}. From the moment they start thinking in this life, every perception they have is colored by {dunzun}, it's like everybody puts on rose colored glasses when they're born and you have it from the first moment of your life and you never lose it, unless you are some kind of incredible Buddhist practitioner until the day you die, you still have it. That's {dunzun}. It comes from the {bhachak}. You carry the seed, the mental seed, from your past life and then {dunzun} starts to assert itself immediately in this life. You start to have {dunzun}.

[long pause, probably writing]

Say {yeechay}

[students:{yeechay}]

{Chinlop}

[students: {Chinlop}]

{Yeechay}

[students:{yeechay}]

{Chinlop}

[students:{chinlop}]

And this means a {yeechaychinchilopa}. Say, {chinchilopa}

[students: {chinchilopa}]

{Lopa}

[students: {lopa}]

Sounds like a new potato chip or something.

[laughter]

All right. {Chinchilopa}.

[Students: {chinchilopa}]

{Chinchilopa}

[Students: {chinchilopa}]

Okay. {Yeechaychinchilopa} means you start to misperceive things, you start to make mental accidents, mental mistakes, you start to misperceive things. Okay. You start to misperceive things. This all a process. It starts with the feeding your mind, then this tendency to think that things have their own nature starts, any nature of their own, then {yeechaychinchilopa} starts. {Yeechaychinchilopa} means you start to misperceive things. What does that mean? We'll take the case form last night of the diamond dealer who lied and got an extra hundred dollars, okay. So for him a hundred dollars is something good, it's something desirable. He's gonna make a hundred dollars extra profit. He looks on that hundred dollars as having some kind of existence that it doesn't have. He sees it as desirable, everybody likes an extra hundred dollars, mostly. He sees it as something desirable, but as he's looking on it, as he perceives it, he misperceives where it came from. Where does he think it came from?

[student: lies]

He thinks it came from his talent of lying and that's very common in that business, okay.

[Laughs]

I guess in all business, you know. He really thinks, everyone says boy he's really clever. You know, he knows how to say things, he knows how to present things, he's very persuasive, he lies a little bit and the guy gives him the stone. It's underpriced. He made a hundred dollars. So he, that's {chinchilopa}. {Yeechaychinchilopa} means he truly believes that. He believes that he got the hundred dollars extra from lying. He believes that. It's {chinchilopa}. {Chinchilopa} means assbackwards. It's the best translation, okay.

[laughter]

It doesn't mean just mistaken. There are other words for that, {trungpa}, and {bopa} and things like that. {Chinchilopa} means, {chinchilopa} has all these meanings of complete, totally, opposite, wrong. You know, completely reverse of what's real.

Refuge - raw transcript

He sees the money as coming from the lie but that's a totally reverse of what's the real case. It's totally the opposite. It had nothing to do with the lie. The causes are totally different. Because he has {dunzun}. Because he has this grasping to, to this nature, he believes that. That the money has that kind of nature. That the profit has that kind of nature of coming from this lie. So that is called {yeechaychinchilopa}. If you have {yeechaychinchilopa}, what will happen?

[long pause]

This is called {laysapba}. Say {lay}

[students: {lay}]

{Sapba}

[students: {sapba}]

{Laysapba}

[students: {laysapba}]

{Laysapba}

[students:

[laysapba]]

{Laysapba} means you collect karma. Okay, {lay} means karma. Karma means, we talked about it last night, we'll get into it. {Sapba} means to collect. Collecting karma just means to do bad stuff and good stuff, okay, but ignorantly based on those other things. So based on the idea that the money comes from a lie, what will he do?

[students: he'll lie more]

He'll lie more. Okay,

[laughs]

very good. Will it work?

[student: not every time]

Not every time. And that's the lousy thing. It's not the cause. That's why it doesn't work every time. That's why sometimes you get caught lying and it backfires, cause it's not the cause. If it was the cause, you'd get money every time you lied. It doesn't work.

Refuge - raw transcript

It obviously doesn't work, it's obviously not the cause. It's just silly to keep lying, but we keep doing it because we have {yeechaychinchilopa}, because we have {dunzun}, because we are {bhachaks}

[Laughs]

[student: can you go over the English of each one?]

Yeah, the first one up there, {bhachak} doesn't have much of a

[unclear]

there's no word, the syllables don't mean much, it means a formation, a mental formation. So {bhachak} means a seed that grows in the mind. {Dunzun} -- {Dun} means grasping and {zun} means something truly existing as your own quality, so {zun} means true. {Yeechaychin}--{yeechay} is a mental function, one of the classic mental functions.

In different schools there are fifty or fortysomething mental functions. It's the function which directs the mind to think about something in a certain way. {Chinchilopa} means totally backwards. So it means looking at things totally backwards. Considering things in a backwards way. And then {laysapba}. {Lay} means karma and {sapba} means to collect karma, you choose this verb around and it becomes sat which means what? An assembly or a gathering or things. It's the same verbal word. {Sat} means to collect things, so it means to collect karma. SO {laysapba} means you start to collect karma and then what happens?

[long pause with sporadic talking and laughing]

Say {corwacor}.

[students: {corwacor}]

{corwa}

[students: {corwa}]

{cor}

[students: {cor}]

{Corwa}

[students: {corwa}]

{Cor}

Refuge - raw transcript

[students: {cor}]

Okay. {Corwa} means samsara, okay. Samsara's defined pretty much as the condition of having physical parts and mental parts which are gonna deteriorate and die. Pretty much that's the definition of samsara. {Corwa} means, so samsara's not a place, per se. The place that we live in includes that but you know people say living in samsara and it's a little bit of a misnomer. If you got away from samsara you would actually be getting away from your own body and mind. Okay, so {corwa} in samsara.

{Corwa} is the verb to circle around in the circle. Samsara in Tibet is called the circle, the circle of life. And {cor} means to keep circling. It means to circle in a circle. To go around and around. And that's what happens, that's how it occurs, that's how karma is collected. That's why ignorance is necessary for karma to be collected. If you didn't perceive the money the wrong way, you wouldn't do the karma. If the moment you took the hundred dollars from the guy's hand, a hundred dollars was accidentally and permanently deducted from your bank account, you would stop doing it.

[Laughs]

It just takes time. And that would be cool. If life was like that we'd all be very saintly.

[Laughs]

If karma didn't take time to ripen but you can't see it so, that's the process, that's how ignorance causes it. When you misperceive anything. So anytime you have a pleasure because of yeechaychinchilopa, your tendency is to try to hold onto it. And what do you do to hold onto it? I mean, what do you do to keep a pleasure normally? I don't know, I mean, say. I know people that work, you know, and they have reached a high position and they're trying to hold onto it and they start to get shaky, you know. They start to get old, they start to lose their influence or you know times change. Their ideas which were good when they became the vice-president are no longer so good. And then they start to get shaky and they start to lose their position but what do they do to hang onto it? I mean, typical things. You know if you work in an office you know

[laughs]

they'll start to protect themselves. They'll start to make sure nobody can get into their territory. They'll do all sorts of things to, it's actually they start hurting other people. They start doing bad things to keep other people away so they can stay in their position. That's ignorance. That's not understanding how the position came to them in the first place. The minute you start to, the tendency when you want to keep something nice is eventually to hurt someone to keep it. You will do things that you wouldn't do before, in order to keep it. And that's just ignorance. And it's the same with things that you don't like. When something keeps happening that you don't like. For example, at work there's a person that you don't like and they keep saying things to you that you don't like to hear.

Refuge - raw transcript

Then the tendency is to try and avoid it, but how? It's to try to harm them, I mean, you want, if it gets down to it, you will do something to, I don't mean you're going to stab them in the heart. But you would do things to make sure that other people in the office don't like them or the boss thinks they're not so great or, you would start to do things like that because you want to get away from them. You don't like them anymore.

That's how, {yeechaychinchilopa} misunderstands pleasure and pain. It basically misunderstands pleasure and pain. Good things it tries to hold onto but it doesn't understand where they comes from. They come from being good, but it doesn't understand that. And it wants to hold onto things by hurting other people and then same with other things that you don't like. In order to get away from them you will do, if it gets down to it, if it really gets down to something personal, I used to be proud of Americans because they didn't fight in the gas stations like the Indians do, you know.

Like in India, if there's any gas in town, you know, if the gas truck comes into town which everyone's been waiting for for five weeks or something. The only gas truck comes into town and there's a riot. You know everybody's trying to get gas. And everyone's fighting each other and I used to be proud of America because we didn't do that. Then we had the oil crisis and I remember I was in a line in Hawaii and there was this long line of cars and people were actually pulling out guns and things and I said you know when it comes down to it, when you really need it, we're all the same. And when it comes down to really needing something bad, you would act just like the Indians, you know. You would crawl over the

[unclear]

to get on the last bus out of Dharmasala. People do. It's the only way to get on the bus. And when it comes down to it you do the same thing. When it comes down to it, you will do the same things to hurt people that everyone else will do. When it really gets personal, you will react the same. And it's {yeechaychinchilopa}, it's the wrong concept. So we'll take a little bit, I'd like to take a , what time is it?

[student: ten to eleven]

Okay, we go to what time?

[student: twelve]

Do you still have those goodies that we bought?

[Laughter]

I'd like to take a little break and when we get back we'll do

[cut]

[pause and sporadic conversations]

[CUT]

Onto how was measurements of space and time, where do they come from? What are they? It goes down to subatomic particles and then it makes explanations up to light years. It gives different names to numbers up to ten to the sixtieth power. Ten was sixty, zero's a hundred. It has different names for each number. And then it explains how the world was created and how it will be destroyed. The third chapter gives all that and then at the end it explains how our sun is a supernova, how it will melt the earth, how the earth will be destroyed. You know, the whole thing. Very interesting. Then it starts the fourth chapter and the fourth chapter teaches about karma and it's the best presentation of karma in the ancient scriptures. That's it.

All the {lam rim} presentations of karma are mostly based on that, so what you're really getting is where the {lam rim} came from. In {Tsongkapa's} time, people were called {kachupas}. {Kachupa} means people who have mastered the ten ancient scriptures of India. Later on they shortened it to five and that's what the {Geshe} program is based on. But {Tsongkapa} was a master of thousands of scriptures and he collected from all the scriptures the most important points and designed the lam rim. He based the {lam rim} on a very, very rare book called the

[b: Tenyin]

which was written three hundred years before him. And that was recently rediscovered. And we now have it. It's a thousand pages long, it's the same size as the

[b: lobsangchemro]

and it's very interesting. Excuse me?

[student: who wrote it?]

{Geshe Trorungpa} and he was a {Kadampa} who lived around eleven hundred. And the {Kadampa's} didn't leave much of anything, they were meditators mostly. But, and they left the lochong texts which are usually one or two pages long and it's a great discovery. His Holiness found one copy in Siberia. And we found a copy in Southern India. So now it'll be put out. But he based the {lam rim} on that. That's another story.

So {lam rim} means from karma. The first {la} means karma, the second {la} means from. Different words. {Chikdemnaso} means all the planets of the universe. It describes planet systems. There's a {domchipo} which is a thousand planets, a {domparma} which is thousand, thousand planet systems, and a {tongchimpo} which is a thousand systems of a thousand systems of a thousand planets each. So it goes into the structure of the galaxies and different universes around them, hanging around, okay.

Refuge - raw transcript

And all of these worlds, everything in those worlds, all beings in those worlds, down to the slightest thought that you ever have come from karma, they all come from karma. What is karma? Then he says, well what is karma? By the way, he mentions all those planets because he's just finished this long chapter about the world and measurement and all those things. Then he says, what is karma? {Denasambadonggencha}. {Densamba}, {samba} is that movement of the mind, it's the shifting of the mind. Any time the mind shifts a little, it goes from here to here, anytime you have the slightest activity in your mind, okay. The slightest thought, any slight movement of the thought is called {samba}. Don't confuse it with sempa. {Sem} means mind, {sempa} is a mental function. {Donggencha} and whatever that, whatever those shiftings of your mind, what's the word in English? What's that word when something makes you do something?

[various answers]

What urges you to do it? Yeah that's pretty good.

[unclear]

So {donggencha} means anything that slightly

[unclear]

Your mind makes you do what? Verbally or physically. Okay. So you have a slight movement of the mind, meaning the slightest thought occurs, that is karma. {Denasamba} means la is karma. Karma is whenever your mind shifts, that is karma. The essence of karma is when your mind moves, anytime your mind moves, that's real karma, that's the most, that's the essence of karma, that's the material of karma, is when you think. Yeah.

[student: so it's not just only the action?]

Right.

[student: It's the intention and the action?]

We're gettin to there.

[Laughs]

Okay. {Donggencha} means what it inspires you to do, what it motivates you to do, causes you to do. You know when you have a thought, that's the driver, your intentions are the driver. And then you move your lips or you move your arms or you move your legs. So the driver's up there turning the gears, that's {samba}, that's the movement of the thought. And that inspires you to open your mouth and say something or to move your fingers and grab something that you're not supposed to take or, you know, it's moving the machine. {Samba}, but the essence of karma, the karma that always proceeds the other two karmas is mental.

Refuge - raw transcript

Physical and verbal are results of the mental karma. So the real essence of karma is mind. Is the mental part and that's why motivation is so important. It's even possible to have a good motivation and commit a very bad deed and the deed from the side of motivation can have very beneficial results, for example mercy killing, okay, euthanasia. It's noted in the

[b: Abhidharmakosha]

, there's an example given of someone out of good intents, seeing their mother or father suffer, assists them in dying and it's a great sin, it's a very, very bad deed and it's a mistake. It's a mistaken idea that you're helping them, why? From what I've said in the last day and a half

[laughter]

it's a mistaken idea, why?

[student: cause suffering's not a big deal]

Well,

[laughter]

[student: cause you don't know the impact

[unclear]

]

Not that. Are you helping them? My father was dying of lung cancer. We had a family meeting. He was in great pain and they said let's get the doctor to put him out of his misery and I said, can't, why?

[student: because of karma]

Where do ninety-nine point nine percent of the people go the minute after?

[student: more suffering]

Much more intense suffering. Infinitely more intense suffering, the moment after. You're throwing them out of the frying pan, into the fire. You're not helping anybody. That's one good argument against euthanasia. If the scriptures say and they do, that nine out of ten people will go down after they die. Then,

[student: how do they know that?]

Refuge - raw transcript

You can't perceive it. We're trying to prove it today and yesterday. We're trying indicate that, I'm not saying proof, I'm not saying that I can prove it to you, but all I'm saying, there's two kinds of, three kinds of

[laughter]

There's three kinds of doubt, three kinds of doubt in Buddhism, {dimnibudhaketsum} and {dingedtiketsum} are two of them. {Dingedtiketsum} means where you're undecided, I should say two kinds of indecision. Undecided about something but you're swayed towards the truth.

Then there's the kind where you're undecided about something and you're swaying towards the wrong thing. So I'm just trying to sway you from, I can't make you have {tetchopa}, which means I can't make you, you're not gonna walk out of here and say yeah there's hell and I am definitely on and the odds are very good that I'm gonna go to hell, go to hell by ways. To have an experience of hell that's a different thing. I don't believe that's gonna happen from this class, but I'm trying to sway you from {dimnibudhaketsum} and {dingedtiketsum}. To get into the suspicion of your mind that maybe this is possible and maybe that it's logically possible. Not just out of some persuasive person, some great person, the Dalai Lama comes here and persuasively says there might be a hell, but just logically as an American person. You know, the mind does go on, has to go on, no evidence that it doesn't go on, lots of evidence that it might go on, and then you'll study the principles of karma. We're up to that point. {Denasambadonggencha}, this is the highest karma planted.

How does karma occur? It's very much connected, we were talking about euthanasia, another example is the Asian scriptures, non-Buddhist saints, like Jains and people like that who, there was a practice, they believed you could reach nirvana if you meditated your whole life and then you got to this point and you put this trident out, you stuck it into the ground very firmly and it had three points like that. And you were supposed to jump off this little platform and if one of the points went into your forehead and the other two went into here just right, with the right motivation, at that moment of suicide that you would reach nirvana. So it's murder, it's a kind of murder. The first bad deed of the ten. But from the point of view of motivation it was considered a virtue. The Buddhist books say from the point of view of motivation it was a virtue, from the point of view of the commission of the deed, which is one of the four elements in a karma, it was a great bad deed and they got a bad result, from the deed point of view they got a bad result. From the motivation point of view they didn't get nirvana but they will have a pleasant result from that.

[student:

[unclear]

when you have the motivation but not the skillful means to]

Similar, very similar.

[student: the desired outcome]

Long story, long story, Basically four elements have to be present when you commit a karma. There's the undertaking of it, {joyra}, {joyramushititu}, and the, you have to have the {sambajoyramushititu}, {samba} means what motivation you go into the thing with. {Joyra} means how do you undertake the thing. {mushi} means how does the actual thing go on, the actual deed. And then {titu]

means how do you feel about it afterwards. All four have to be there for what we call, {lodiram} which is a path of karma. To have a perfect karma, all four have to be there. If you want to have a perfect bad karma, you have to have a lousy motivation, you have to intend to kill the person, you have to actually undertake, kill the person and then afterwards you have to say, oh man I killed him, I did it. You know for a perfect karma you have to have all four there. If any one is missing or if any one of them is virtuous and the others are non-virtuous, you'll get a mixed result. It's called {karmadenbenba}, it means there is, like if you, we had the case of the person whose killing himself. His motivation is good. He wants to get out of all suffering and then everything else is lousy. This part will create a good karma, it is a good karma, he will have a good result from it. And the other three, he'll have a really horrible result, so complete karma has to have all four.

[students: can you say which is stronger? Is the motivation]

I'm getting there.

[Laughs]

The {samba},

[laughs]

it's good though, if it's going on long, people, the dots come in your mind, the questions should come in your mind. {Samba} is the most important. {Samba} is the motivation. The motivation is paramount. The motivation is ninety percent of the deed. Why? Now that's why we came to this subject. How is karma planted? What is it that plants the karma in your mind stream? And it's very interesting. It's the perception of yourself doing it. Okay. It's very interesting. Watching yourself hurt someone is the main thing that plants the karma in your mind. The karma is transmitted into the future along your mind stream. But what puts it in your mind stream, what plants it in your mind stream, is the perception of yourself doing it. Which is very interesting. If your perception is mixed up with some kind of good motivation, the seed that's planted is going to have a strong, good element in it. But that's paramount. So it's very interesting. As you see yourself commit a karma, the karma is implanted into your mind stream. That's what

Refuge - raw transcript

[student:

[unclear]

what about those people who are unaware?]

That's why it's only one of the four, but it's the main one. Like if you step on a bug and you never intended to and you never knew it and you killed him and you never were aware of it. You don't have the first element. You have a perception of yourself stepping, you don't have a perception of yourself stepping on a bug. So it's almost, it greatly reduces the power of the karma. It's not a totally powerful karma. For pure karma, you have to have those, intention. There's also a moment of recognition. You have to recognize the object. If you go to kill one person and there's this lump under the covers in the room and you stab it and run away, really he just put pillows under the blanket, there's no recognition. There's no factor of correct identification of the object, which means, you thought you were killing Joe. All you did was stab a bunch of pillows. It's not a complete karma. You do get the motivation. You did get the thought that you've committed it and you're happy about it.

[student: let's say you don't have the awareness that you're hurting someone, does that mean since you don't have the motivation to hurt someone, you're off the hook?]

No. But it's much less, the karmic power is much, much less. The {samba}, the motivation has to be there for it to be a totally strong karma and the ones that are planted the most firmly and have the strongest results are the ones that occur through recognition of what you're doing. And with motivation and intention of what you're doing. That's why it's so, it's actually, for a monk there's a kind of bad deed called {chusala}, when you don't, you commit a bad deed knowingly and you think, what the hell, this is a stupid rule, right. You know? Unlike all the monk's vows, this one is stupid, you know?, and that's a special kind of bad deed where you just, you just flaunt it. You know it's wrong and you don't think it's such a great vow so you just break it. That's a special bad deed. More powerful, much more powerful. So it's the perception of yourself doing the bad deed which helps plant it in your mind stream. And that starts it into your mind stream. It replicates in your mind stream. That's an important thing. It's called replication. In the study of karma.

Replication means that that seed stays in your mind. It can stay in your mind for millions of years. It was a big deal in Buddhist philosophy to try and explain how a seed could stay in your mind for a million years, okay. It's called replication. So if your mind is, according to Buddhism, it's a stream of instants. It's actually {kachikyachikyachingchungichu} which means it's being destroyed instant by instant. Your mind is growing. It's mental events that are each ending in a microsecond, are just tied in a string like that.

So the big question in Buddhism was, where does the karma stay? If the mind is being destroyed millisecond by millisecond, if it's just a long string of mental events that end, begin and end, discreetly, how can the karma stay? It's replicated in the mind.

Refuge - raw transcript

It's carried on through, as each instant ends, it replicates into the beginning of the next instant, so the seed keeps going like that also. The seed carries on. The seed of the karma. And then it comes out as a perception. It comes out as another perception. If the perception that was planted was bad, of harming someone, then the perception that comes out is of being harmed and it's much greater. And that's how karma is transmitted. So what do we have so far? By the way, in the, what time is the afternoon thing, it starts in the evening?

[Student: Well we have an afternoon session from three thirty to five thirty but there's also a discussion group. I don't know if you want to do a question and answers from two to three?]

It's up to you guys.

[student: well, it's kind of up to you.]

[laughs]

No I don't mind. So we'll have discussion from two to three.

[student: a question answer session]

And then from three-thirty to five thirty, we'll have another talk. But what I'll do at three-thirty to five-thirty, I'll cover what we call waterfall. There's a study, when you reach about your fourteenth year of studies in the monastery, it's called waterfall. It comes from {Chandrakirti} whose not the same as {Dharmakirti}. And he wrote the root texts we study in the monastery, actually the commentary, it's called, it's

[b: Madhyamika]

, it's called

[b: Entering Madhyamika]

, Entering the Middleway. And that's the highest school of Buddhism. They have a subject in there called waterfall and it's a very, very beautiful subject. It describes how the karma comes out, describes how the karma actually ripens and if you understand that, I mean, why am I spending like a day and a half on karma when we're supposed to be talking about refuge? Refuge requires two things. What were they, do you remember?

[students:

[unclear answers]

]

Refuge - raw transcript

The very first thing I said last night. What's the most basic kind of refuge? What was the first refuge you ever took in your life? You went to mom, okay.

[laughs]

Your brother punched you and you ran to mom, you know. I mean, it has to be two things. It's very, very basic. It's so simple that you almost miss it. There has to be a problem, there has to be something you are afraid of, there has to be some kind of pain or suffering. And then there has to be someone that you believe can help. Those are the two essential elements. There has to be something dangerous or something hurting and then there has to be someone who can grab you in their arms and say, it's okay

[unclear]

You know, there has to be those two things. You gotta have someone you believe can help and you gotta have some problem. Those are the two elements of going for refuge. Otherwise you don't have good refuge.

Why spend all this time on karma? I don't have to convince you that this life is a big problem, you know, we didn't take more than a half an hour on that. Why? It doesn't take a genius to see that we're getting old and that you lose everything nice that you ever get. Everything nice that you get screws up, even dharma things, even the good teachers that you have, the true relationships that you have in the dharma. Somebody dies, somebody gets old, you get separated, you know, the play stops. It'll happen. It always happens. Even the sweet things all go bad. And that's the nature of samsara. That's our nature. It doesn't take a big deal to see that. Being afraid of that and going for refuge or practicing Buddhism to solve the problems of this life, doesn't qualify as refuge. That's not in any of the three kinds of refuge, you know, check the sheet I gave you last night. It doesn't fit any of the five kinds of refuge. There isn't any refuge there that says for problems of this life you should take refuge in the three, the three {ratnas}. There's no description like that in there. If you do take refuge properly, which we'll get to tomorrow, this life will also straighten out, as a side effect. But it's not supposed to be the motivation, as a matter of fact, this life will become quite as nice as it can be and actually some great things can happen. This life can straighten out. But it's not the motivation.

The minimum motivation has to be some concern about what's going to happen after you die. That's the lowest kind of refuge. So we've been talking about karma for the, and the point is and we'll stop with that, is that your mind must go on, we proved it, your mind must go on. There's many indications that it could go on and there's no proof that it doesn't go on. It's true that the body stops moving, gets cold, the person stops talking, but what if it's just a malfunction of his apparatus and not his mind stopping, you know, the mouth stopped. I mean the mouth, the muscles are dead. He can't talk anymore. He's standing there, trying to talk and the body's not working anymore. How do you know that that's not true? How do you know his mind is still not there? He's struggling to say something to you, he's trying to wave to you and the body won't work anymore.

Refuge - raw transcript

You know, that's very possible. There's nothing to prove that it's not true. And what decides what that person's going to see in the future, you know, where did your experiences come from in this life? Why do all kinds of people have all kinds of experiences, you know, where did they come from?

We had this thing in New York City, it was very bad. Three of the pitchers on the baseball team, it wasn't the New York Mets or somebody, they're riding in a body at night. They're all sitting in the front row together. Three famous baseball players and they're all drunk. They're having a good time. And the boat goes under a dock. They didn't see the dock. Two of them got their heads cut off. One of them leaned over the second before they went under the dock and he's fine, he's pitching nowadays.

So the question is why does one person get, why does one person lean over at the last minute? And why do two people get decapitated, why? You know, it's a question you used to ask your mother, you know, why did those two guys get killed and that guy leaned over at the last minute, why? You know, and you can say, you know, he dropped his beer bottle or something and he leaned over, that's not the answer, you know. It's what, why did he drop his beer bottle and lean over, you know, why was it him that leaned over and the other two didn't, you know? Everything has to have a cause. There has to be an explanation of why one person experienced that event as a close call and two people experienced that event as death. You know why, why? Why does one person experience it one way, and two people experience it as something else? We'll cover that at three-thirty. And then what is it, two to three?

[student: that's discussion.]

Boy that's a long time to go for, I'm okay. Okay

[laughs]

So we'll start at two o'clock.

[student: yes]

Okay.

[student: could it have a bad

[unclear]

]

[laughter]

Refuge - raw transcript

Not, well, according to laws of karma, it's very interesting. It's interesting, I like this. Morality and Buddhism is very simply defined. It's not, it's the right thing to do. It's not, it's a thing which pleases a Supreme Being. It's not anything except if you do that, it will hurt you. And if you don't do it, it'll help you.

You know, the definition of good karma isn't anything except that which gives you pleasure, physical or mental later. And the definition of bad karma is {can't spell} which means it'll produce a karmic result which is painful to you, so, I mean, the basic reason, it sounds kind of selfish but it's {tumowa} which means, even {mahayana} practitioners accept it and live on it, act on it. You're just helping yourself. When you're moral, the reason, the main reason to be moral, the basic reason, the most compelling reason is that anytime you hurt someone, you will experience infinitely more suffering from that than anyone else will. It's just an ignorant thing to do. For your own interest.

The Dalai Lama calls it, enlightened self interest. It's not the ultimate reason to be moral but basically the definition of good karma is something which brings you pleasure in the future and the definition of bad karma is the opposite, so. In the evening we'll talk about why, how that works? And that's tied up with the, that's tied up with emptiness, the study of emptiness and the study of perception. The study of perception comes from the mind only school and the study of emptiness coming from the higher Middleway school. They come together, everyone agrees at the end, you know, that those come together. Yeah?

[student: enlightened self interest]

Yeah

[student: okay I just wasn't quite clear. okay.]

Meaning

[unclear]

Buddhist don't lose it. When Buddhas become Buddhas and they reach the highest evolution of the human mind, they never stop taking refuge. Buddhas go for refuge. In {Tesheta} heaven, Buddhas go for refuge. Why? They have no more pain, no reason to run to mommy, nobody's punching them. What it means is that even a Buddha retains the lowest Buddhist motivation which is trying to keep his rear end out of hell. He never loses that motivation.

There's no Buddha in the universe who would like to go hell and suffer there, just for the sake of suffering. It's called {tumowa}. {Tumowa} means they don't give up that motivation, they incorporate it into a higher motivation. No Buddha gets to stay where he, he doesn't want to stay out of hell, he wants to stay out of hell, you know, he'd be willing to go there for others, but that's another story. And he won't experience it as hell but in fact he can't go there. I mean he can show himself there but he can't experience hell.

Refuge - raw transcript

He's incapable of experiencing hell but he doesn't want to go there. If you asked the Buddha Shakyamuni, would you like to go to hell?, he'd say no of course not, you know. He still has going for refuge. You never lose that. Yeah?

[student: Is it a mistranslation then in the refuge prayer, I go for refuge until I am enlightened to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha?]

Yeah technically.

[student: It is]

[other student:

[general clamor]

]

Yeah. There's a big debate about it, you know, like who do they go to refuge to, themselves? What are they trying to stay out of, something they could never experience again? But it says that they still have.

[student: So what's the word that's being mistranslated?]

It's not a mistranslation, it does say that. It says {sangye bardu dakni kyabsu chi} you know, until I become a Buddha. But it's, they do, they still, it's a big debate. I mean, we debate it in the monastery a lot. They have no fear.

[student: {rentzin}]

[Laughs]

I'm in the

[unclear]

[laughter]

Not the last time we do it, but, they generally, that's the {patchamble}, there's different twists on that with a slight changing of the wording, you can say they don't need to take refuge. They don't have refuge in the sense of needing to take refuge but they do take refuge in the sense that they have absolutely no desire and no intention of ever doing anything again that will lead them to going to hell. They are quite interested in staying out of hell, staying out of the lower realms. They never lose that motivation. It's part of {mahayana} motivation.

Refuge - raw transcript

It's the basis of {mahayana} motivation, you build on it. You don't give it up. {Hinayana} motivation is part of {mahayana} motivation, it's incorporated. You don't give it up, you just enhance it. It isn't that you get to a point where you say I don't care if I go to hell anymore, you know.

There's three levels of motivation, right? One is you want to keep yourself out of the lower realms. I don't like to talk much about the lower realms because we just barely proved them right? Freddy and those monsters, it's not a joke. You know, I mean, if karma is true, if your mind goes on, if minor thoughts planted in this life can twist like a huge redwood tree into this horrible twisted grotesque result of a million years of living with these monsters in some dark place, that is conceivable. Given all that we've said, it's totally conceivable. I don't say that you have to believe it. But you can't deny it. You can't give me any reason why it might not be true. You know, a small twisted cause. Painful. Of hurting someone, could result according to everything we know, in the experience of many years in a horrible place surrounded by grotesque monsters trying to hurt you, you know, it's conceivable. There's no reason why it couldn't be true. If that's all true then, you'd wanna, that's the lowest motivation.

Second motivation is to want to get out of life altogether. I mean, this kind of suffering life which means the world where every good thing that you ever get, you lose. I mean, you would like to not live in a world like that. There's this big debate in Buddhism, are those things pleasure or not? You know, to have a nice child, to hug your child, is it a nice thing or not? Is it a nice thing or not?

[students: yeah]

Is it suffering?

[students: yes, could be, yeah it is, but if you're not clinging it doesn't work for the joy of the little kid]

That's, we should, we'll talk about that someday. That's not it means not to cling, but we'll get into that someday. But of course it's nice. It's nice to see, you know, it's good to see. It is a beautiful thing. Is it a suffering right at this moment? Not at this, I mean, I don't think you can argue that right at this moment when the child is healthy, the mother is hugging the child, they're loving each other. that that's an ugly thing, or a terrible thing. It's not. I mean when you think of Nirvana or Buddhahood or Buddhaparadise, you imagine that people have that emotion there, that there's love going on there. It has a different nature. It doesn't have that nature of turning into something bad later on. But it, this event must be very similar, it must be very similar,

I mean, in {Teshida} paradise, the people are loving each other that way. It's just that there's no attachment on the back of it. There's no final separation of these two which will happen. Or the death of each of them. Or getting old of each of them. Those things are not attached to that pleasure. But the pleasure is very similar in content, I think.

Refuge - raw transcript

You know the loving of people, of each other in {Teshida} paradise must be very similar. So there is a, I mean, when you think of trying to reach a Buddhaparadise you'd like to be in a place where people are all loving each other like that. But you just don't want to be in a place where they have to be ripped apart or one of them has to die or something like that. So that's, the content of heaven is probably quite similar to the current, so anyway the second motivation is not to be in a place where that happens. And then the third motivation is to, is to think of other people and to think that, I always tell people in New York, we're on the subway. The subway's a very bad experience in New York

[Laughs]

You know, you have to use it and it's dirty and it stinks and there's drunks and there's violent people and you just get on and it's like a trip in hell for five minutes while you're going somewhere. And every person in the subway is suffering, you know, when you go down the line of people on each side, sitting on each of the side, they're all suffering, whether they know it or not, they're all going through the same thing that you're going to go through. Everybody on the subway car will get cancer or something. Everybody on the subway car will get old. Everybody that's so concerned with these major business deals in New York City is going to die and be forgotten and the business deal will be forgotten too. And they're all in the same boat, they're all in the same subway car.

[laughs]

And some cars you get some sort of sympathy for everybody. That's the highest motivation. So that, you would take refuge for that. To try to help all of those people. But that's, those are the, we're gonna talk about that tomorrow actually. So we'll come back at what two o'clock?

[student: yeah]

Okay. you wanna?

[student: wanna break now?]

yeah

[student: do, should we just do the short mandala or dedication?]

I think both.

[student: short mandala]

[prayer: short mandala]

[cut]

Day 2 - afternoon

[laughs] Really, seriously okay? It's a subject called {chum buk}, which means "waterfall", and it derives from a, a quotation in a work by Chandrakirti where it says, "Pretas", okay? "Hungry ghosts", can't see them, I can't prove that they exist. Supposedly there are beings around us who are spirits and they have problems because in their last life they were very attached to money, greedy. In this life they can't get anything so they, or they were gluttons in their past life, they, they didn't eat carefully and they just used food for, like, desire instead of just to keep themselves healthy...so they, they're born as hungry spirits and then hungry spirits, everything they see, like if they see a glass of water and they run up to it, it turns into pus or blood the minute they reach it. And they're supposedly a being like this. You can believe it or not, it doesn't matter. But they, Chandra...there's a quotation in Chandrakirti where it says, "They look at a river of water, crystal clear water, and when they run up to the bank of it it's just this ugly, disgusting pus and rotten blood and things like that, because of the karma of their past, of their past life, being attached to food or misusing food."

So...then there's a famous discussion about it, and they posit the following: You put a round table in a room, you sit down a preta, a hungry ghost on one side, human being on the other side, and then you throw in a, a deva. A deva is like a, a kind of birth you get to if you're very, very good in this life but ignorantly, you don't...you're, you're a good person, but you don't really understand what you're doing. And that would lead you to a birth called a deva, a deva is like...I like to call them pleasure beings, they live in these realms that we can't see, they live very, very blissful lives. They have beautiful fountains, beautiful parks, the boy deva and the girl devas are always having fun together and it's like this temporary paradise heaven. Then that karma wears out and they, they always fall down to hell, okay? This is according to the scriptures okay?

But suppose there are such beings, and you put around the table one preta, one hungry ghost, one human and one deva, one pleasure being. And then you bring in a glass of water...this is really good, I dunno know who put this here but [laughter] [unclear] okay? Always remember this glass of water okay? If you don't remember anything else...so they come in and they put that, you put that glass of water down. The three beings have three different experiences of the glass of water, okay? The human sees it as a glass of water. The preta sees it as a glass of disgusting rotten blood and pus. The deva sees it as what they call {amurta}, which means "the nectar", you know nectar of the gods, ambrosia. Okay? At the same time. Okay. They all have the same perception, they all have different perceptions, all three perceptions are what we call {tsema} or {pra man}, they're all {pramana}, they're all correct perceptions. Okay? Three different beings seeing the same thing as three different things at once, and in buddhism, according to buddhism each one is having a, a correct perception. It's a valid perception. Okay? No one's mistaken in the room.

So what's going on okay? [laughs] That's used to prove the emptiness of the water. Okay. That's used to prove the emptiness of the liquid more properly, alright?

Refuge - raw transcript

You can't even assume it's water, it's water to us, but it may not be water to somebody else, it's a liquid and three different people, three different beings are seeing it validly, in three completely different ways. Is it possible, for one glass of stuff to actually be disgusting blood and pus and water and the ambrosia of the gods all at once? I ask you that first. Is it possible for one object to have three contradictory characteristics? Can something be purely red, and purely blue? Can something be all red and all blue at the same time.

[student: [unclear]]

Don't ask me that. [laughs]

[student: [unclear] on any object? I mean 'cause, 'cause my mind often [unclear] things that would seem to be completely [unclear] in, within it, so I would say yes because I can imagine that, if I can imagine it then [unclear] to be true.]

Well can

[student: [unclear] about the hell realms?]

Can one thing

[student: [unclear] piece of paper can be all blue [unclear] but isn't it kind of [unclear]]

[laughs] I'm talking from the piece of paper's side. I'm talking from the piece of paper's side

[student: [unclear]]

Can be all red and all blue at the same time.

[student: [unclear] blue and red coming from?]

I'm gonna hit you with this pen, I love that answer. [laughter] [laughs] I love those [unclear] one you know? I say I got these [unclear] "Come here, I got a dental drill" you know, I'm gonna use this empty dental drill, and when I hit your empty dental nerve I wanta see it happen. [laughs] I like that one. Ah, okay, that's not what emptiness means, okay? Okay. But, it's a very serious point, you know, but the point is one thing can't be both at once, it cannot be. I mean, I mean talking normal terms, I'm not talking...it's no zen trick, okay? And I love zen by the way I'm not, I'm not talking bad about zen but, but it's, it's not a trick, I mean one thing can't be two things at once...two different things, two contradictory things at once, okay?

[student: Michael explain [unclear] human being and that person having three best friends since childhood come over and someone ask to meet that person [unclear] most despicable person they've ever met]

Refuge - raw transcript

I love it, I love it, okay?

[student: Someone who doesn't even feel anything, I mean that's [unclear]]

I love it, I love the question and I always use the, the lady at work, the guy or the lady at work, okay? Let's say the lady at work. Let's...and I, I work in a big office, anybody who's worked anywhere, unless you're...unless you haven't been on the planet okay? I mean in any office there's good people, there's bad people, there's nice people, there's lousy people you know, you know, and you know there's difficult people in your office so, you can take anybody in my office, I can think of a lady in my office, okay? And, and to me she looks fine, I feel neutral towards her. I don't feel...when I look at her I think about I don't think that she's a good person, a bad person, I just...I don't think about her that much.

And, and I have people who come up to me and try to convince me how bad she is, you know they say she's really a bad person, she's really a hateful, despicable bad person, okay? And then I have other people come up to me and explain to me how what a wonderful person she is and how nice she is okay? And, and is it possible for her to be both? You know, can she have the qualities simultaneously of being a good person and a bad person, at the same time? Is...aren't those...I'm talking contradictory qualities, I'm not talking sometimes nice sometimes bad, I'm talking one object, at the same moment, put in front of three different beings, three contradictory qualities, you know like totally cold and totally hot, or totally tall and totally short, and totally hard and totally soft can something be both at the same time? Can the lady at work be really despicable and really nice at the same time?

[student: [unclear] your view.]

[student: Yeah, if the [unclear] were defective, [unclear]]

I'm talking from her, from her side.

[student: From her side? Oh, from her side [unclear] it's like bees see infrared and they don't see that purple flower, they see some glowing trippy thing where all the pollen, you know, radiating and stuff, it's just...]

[laughs] That's the whole point of the glass of water, okay? And, and I'm gonna give it to you, ah, this is, this is the actual discussion and you can read it at your leisure. I, I took it out of a larger thing, it was like too long to print so it's...you only start on page two, alright? And it doesn't stop at the end but...you can read it.

This is Chandrakirti's [laughter], this is Chandrakirti's discussion but the bottom line is that, the bottom line is, that's a proof for the emptiness of the lady at work. That's a classical Chandrakirti proof for the emptiness of the lady at work and that's what her emptiness means. That, that's what emptiness means, it doesn't mean any of the other weird things you might ever heard, okay? Her emptiness is that because she can't from her side have two opposite qualities, they're not her qualities. They don't belong to her.

Refuge - raw transcript

They're not qualities that belong to her, being nice or being bad, being very sweet and being very despicable, insofar as they are opposite and contradictory qualities, cannot both be hers, at the same time. It's impossible. It's just impossible, one object can't be blood and water and ambrosia at the same time, it's impossible. So that's not a quality of that object, it doesn't belong to that object, it's not a quality which...exists from its side. Okay? There's a clue. So why, why does it ha...why does it appear to have those qualities? Contradictory qualities. Where is it coming from? Where is the appearance of, of a nasty lady and a, and a sweet lady?

[students: [unclear] karma [unclear]]

It's coming from...by the way that's, that's just the very simple, clear, true and, and as you will see by the end of this stuff, useful truth about her emptiness. She doesn't have any of those qualities, none of those qualities are her qualities. They, they are coming from your side. Okay?

[student: Part, partly coming from that other side?]

There, there are...it's a good question, and it's a very, very classic question, is there any data coming from her side which would suggest badness or goodness, you know? Isn't it true that her face is all screwed up, or isn't it true that she's smiling warmly, that I could have some data that I could interpret as, that she's a nice person and a, or a good person. It's a difficult question. Ultimately not. But, but you...it's a long, long story.

When you focus on her niceness, and you think you see niceness coming from her, it's because you perceive a smile, that's true, and you really do perceive a smile from her side. There is a smile coming to your eyes from her side. When you change the level of your focus and you focus on her smile...that's again your interpretation and it's based on two points and some red. And when you go deeper than that and, and look into the red there's a left side of the red and a right side of the red, being presented to your eyes. And so you can keep going down, into different levels, and you'll never find the smile. And that's the classic...that's one of the exercises for perceiving her emptiness...but it's too, it's too much right now. There is sense data coming to you, which you properly interpret as, as a smile, and that she's nice, but that too is your own projection, ultimately. Okay.

So, so she's your projection. There's...she doesn't have any qualities of her own, she is your projection, it's proved by the fact that two different people who are not crazy, they're not unreasonable people, see her as having totally contradictory qualities, two qualities that one person cannot embody at the same time and yet they see it. That's a, that is a kind of proof of her emptiness and you can read it from Chandrakirti, in this, in this reading so...

[student: [unclear]]

That's another...ultimately, no ultimately it's a...I always tell the people in New York it's...we'll get to it before the end of the five years, you know? [laughs][laughter]

Refuge - raw transcript

I don't have that, that opportunity here. But let's, let's talk about...so that's her, that's her emptiness. What's the nature of, of your projection? You are projecting something, you, you believe that she's nice, let's talk about that projection. Once you understand it's a projection, okay? Once you've established that it's a projection, we did it very lightly here, this is like Bud Light, you know? How much can you do in three days, okay? Once you've established it's a projection, I ask you a question: Can you go to the office tomorrow, and the next time she's obnoxious to you, can you just say to yourself, "Oh it's just a projection" and can you leave it at that? Will, will she no longer be obnoxious? Can you go to the office tomorrow...lemme rephrase it, I'll start over. Can you go to the office tomorrow and say, "I understood from that talk yesterday that this is only my projection, that I see her as being so obnoxious. From now on I'm going to perceive her as a nice person"? Can you do that?

[student: No.]

[student: What if, what if when you walk in the office, she said, "Fuck you"?]

[laughs] And she probably will by the way, [laughter] you know. You know, what I mean to say is you know, and I know, you know in your heart, you can go ahead and confirm it on Monday, okay? I mean go in the office, decide that you're gonna have a nice projection. Or next time you go to the dentist, you know? Say, "I'm gonna perceive this drill as a flower. You know, I, I understand that the drill is empty. I understand that it's ability to cause me intense pain is, is only a projection. Therefore, I choose to have a different projection today, and it will feel like cotton candy today to me." Can you do that? Do you expect that it will work?

[students No.]

No, it just doesn't work, it's not the nature of the...whether...it tells you something about the nature of those projections. Are they voluntary or not?

[student: [unclear] I have a question about this. If, it seems like there has to be a, a base for the projection to rest in.]

I, I...that's her question again, it's called {[unclear] tseway se me bay aitcho}, it's a very famous debate. {[Unclear]}means "when you look for the thing that you were labeling onto, the basis of your projection" I, I admit that I, that my interpretation of her as a ice lady is a projection. But isn't there really a smile there, on which I'm projecting my interpretation? I mean there is some essence there, and then I'm interpreting onto it. And, and Madhyamika {[unclear]} the highest [unclear] no. {[Unclear]}, when you look for the thing, which was given the label, or the projection, you will never find, ultimately you'll never find it. If she smiles at me and I say, "Oh she likes me" and then...and, and I say, "No, no, that's my projection", let's look at the smile, and then I see the, the smile consists of a left side and a right side. It's reasonable that I called it a smile 'cause there were two points lifted up.

Refuge - raw transcript

Then I go into the nature of the left side and the right side, you'll never find, ultimately you, you'll keep going down to the levels of things that you were interpreting and you never find anything. Ultimately there is nothing. Nominally, there is something.

[student: [unclear]]

Nominally there is something, nominally the thing hurts like hell when you get a drill in your tooth okay? So what I'm saying is go back to my question, is it voluntary or not?

[student: No.]

It's not, it's absolutely not voluntary, okay, the projection is not voluntary, the projection is forced upon you, okay. You can understand it's a projection, you can understand that this lady at work from her own side is not inherently nice or, or evil. And you can understand that anytime she appears to be nice to you, it's your own projection, but can you do anything about it? Is it going to make her any less nice or, or, or evil to you?

[student: It helps to not to react so much.]

It acts...it's a very good answer, okay? We'll get into that. That's a great, that's a great answer.

[student: You don't think it's [unclear]]

But she is. If she isn't she intends to.

[student: She is.]

She is and she intends to, and she does. [laughs] And that's the point, the dentist...it hurts you, I mean it hurts you. It really does hurt, you can understand that it's a projection...by the way, is anything inherently anything? Isn't a dentist drill always inherently painful? Is there anyone who takes pleasure out of your tooth getting drilled down to the nerve? Is there, is there anyone in that situation who's, who could possibly take any pleasure out of it?

[student: Don Rinpoche.]

[laughs] Go to India, I don't know if you've ever been, [unclear] the dentists in [unclear] Circle, they will drill the wrong tooth on purpose...so that you have to come back in about a week, and you get double the fee, you know? So as they're drilling, to them it's the greatest thing in the world, here's a big fat farmer, gon' pay me two hundred dollars to fix one tooth, you know, it's, it's possible, every event can be interpreted by two different people in totally different ways, therefore they're all empty, okay? That's your projection. Can you voluntarily change the projection? I mean aside from the pr...from the reaction part, in other words which was a great point, you know, how do you respond to it, how do you react to it? Is there anything you can do about the event itself at that moment?

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: At that moment?]

Yeah, can you change the projection on will? At will? You cannot.

[student: [unclear] but you can get more information.]

You can, you can understand it more deeply but it, it's still gonna hurt. The dentist's drill's still gonna hurt. I promise you, next time you go remember. [laughs]

[student: What exactly, what exactly is happening with a, I think of two, two [unclear] his holiness the Karmapa, sixteenth Karmapa, and also [unclear], both of them have very critical point of [unclear] and both of them, they should know [unclear].]

We'll talk about it, I'll get to it.

[student: Isn't that]

It's not on willpower though, it's, it's not on willpower. Not for anybody. It's not a, it's not an act of will.

[student, Yulia?: But isn't it [unclear] levels why the one that it involves the physic...something physical pain more physical then...[unclear] I mean that is very easy when you go down [unclear] "Oh yeah I don't want this" I mean that's, that's very you can change that very fast.]

Ah, okay. But if you ate it, could you make it...but the basic principle though we accept now, right? I mean the next time you go to the dentist check it out. Can you, I mean as a normal person, and even as an extraordinary person but we'll get to that, can you by willpower...you understand it's a projection, you understand that someone could be taking great pleasure out of this event, like who? Like a greedy dentist, okay?

And you understand also that you're having great pain and you understand that therefore, it's neither good...it's neither painful nor pleasant necessarily, from its own side. It is a projection, it really is a projection. Okay? You're projecting it as painful, he's projecting it as another hundred dollars, okay? The, the, the drilling of your tooth is empty, therefore...so...I mean I used to sweat about this, I used to, it used to drive me crazy, what good is understanding emptiness? So what the hell, you know, who cares?

You know, the thing is empty, according to Nagarjuna it still works, it still function, even though the drill is empty it still hurts. It's absolutely true, Nagarjuna...is, is adamant about it, Tsongkhapa is adamant about it, you know, the drill is empty and the drill hurts you. So what's the use of seeing its emptiness? I, I just couldn't get it, you know, I didn't see any big di...[laughter] it's, it's reaction, it's exactly what she said, okay?

Refuge - raw transcript

It's reaction. It's reaction, okay? What it means is, when you understand its emptiness...the first thing to do when something, I wanted to say a bad word but um, lousy happens, okay? [laughs] To you, what do you normally do? I mean when a lady at work screams at you what do you normally do? What's the normal reaction? Any human being, I mean almost any. You, you, you do something back. You, you get back...I don't get mad I get even right? That's what they say. I mean it's the natural reaction, it's the most natural reaction. If you understood the emptiness of it, if you understood the emptiness of this yelling lady...where does she come from? What's her nature first of all? What's the nature of her yelling, of her ir...of her...what-d'you-call-it?

[student: Irritability?]

Yeah, there's a better word...anyway, her ugliness at that moment, where is it coming from?

[student: Karma.]

Karma, which means from whom? From whose side?

[student: Her side.]

[student: [unclear] put yourself in all over the place and you can't be anything either, sir.]

Don't mean it like that, I don't mean it like that, I mean

[student: [unclear]]

Not that, not that either, I'm saying totally...forget mahayana stuff, okay? [laughs] [unclear] [laughter] other stuff. She is...she's screaming at you, okay? And that, that screaming at you, is it coming from her side or your side? Ultimately, I mean is she at...first of all, we're trying to figure out if emptiness is gonna do any good at the office on Monday alright? I don't have to go, you probably have to go, some of you, okay? I have to go maybe the week after or something, but

[student: It seems like it's easier if it's not a person that we're up against, like if it's um, you know]

Like stubbing your toe or something like that. That's...that's, that...but what if a lady comes up to you at work and starts screaming at you, what good does it underst...does it do to understand her emptiness? And I, and I...in terms of reaction

[student: You don't do anything to react to it [unclear]]

Why not?

[students: [unclear]]

Refuge - raw transcript

If there's a different...the reason she's screaming at you is because you screamed at somebody. What's gonna happen if you scream back?

[students: [unclear] scream again [unclear]]

It's the, it's the last thing you'd want to do if you're an educated buddhist, if you're an educated buddhist.

[student: Oooh!]

The last thing in the universe, that you'd want to do to someone screaming would be to show any kind of bad reaction to that person, 'cause that's where they came from.

[student: [unclear]]

You tell me now.

[student: I would say thank them.]

No, not the...they are really doing a bad thing. They really are doing a bad thing. It is really bad...but are you going to scream back at them in anger, I'm not talking out of compassion or something. We could maybe get to a point where could add [laughter][laughs]

[student: [unclear]]

No, but, but what would be the...any kind of negative reaction is gonna cause what? {Sempa...lo le jikten nasa de ne sempa, sempa}, a movement of the mind. If you let the mind move to a, a bad thought at that moment what is it?

[student: To try to keep it from [unclear]]

It's bad karma. It's bad karma...it's already bad karma, even if you hold your tongue, it's already bad karma just to have a, a thought that you hate her, or not hate her but you just, "Eeiw, go away", you know? That thought in itself is already a karma, and what will it cause? On another empty woman in the future, okay? On another blank screen in the future, you'll have to see this thing again, exactly the same woman coming back. You, you'll be forced...you, you can sit there all day and say it's a projection, but it's loud, and it's red, and it's not fun [laughs] you know, and you know that. You know that it's not...that's the whole essence, that's exactly the essence of buddhism really, that's her emptiness, the, the reaction time, what she said, you know, the, the, the [unclear] thing that emptiness helps about is in the reaction...it's too late to do anything about the lady, it's too late. She's coming because you made a cause a long time ago. You can't change it. There's nothing in the universe you can do right then, you can understand it.

Refuge - raw transcript

If you've got certain karmic seeds, you can even...take it as a kind of a...the way a bodhisattva would, like a Karmapa would. You know, you can do that. That's also a result of karma. If you happen to be able to transform it into a [unclear] the classical instance is when Mara shoots the arrows at the Buddha sitting under the bodhi tree and what happens? They turn into flowers, I mean that's how miracles can occur...miracles can occur.

I mean according to the theory of emptiness and karma, miracles are totally okay, they're possible because...because of the karma...anything can happen. If things are empty, anything can happen. If things don't have a nature of their own, and if they depend on your projections, and if your projections are dictated, forced upon you by your past deeds, then anything can happen. But if you want to...all you can do in a lousy situation at our level, is what? I mean at minimum not react, but at maximum, I mean what'd be the most intelligent thing to do?

[student: See emptiness.]

After you see emptiness [laughs]. She's empty...I, I know that, I know that yelling looks very real. By the way it is real. That's as real as anything ever gets. Okay? Just don't respond that way, I mean if...it's not even just patience if you respond with some kind of positive energy, happy energy, helpful energy, you know this lady's screaming 'cause you messed up on something or...normally. She's not totally crazy, okay. And you just try to help, you just do anything you can to help her, whatever she wants you supply, as long as it's not immoral or something like that. But, whatever it is that she needs you, you happily...supply it, that's the best thing you do...what's that? That's a {semba}. It's another {semba}, but it's a good {semba}, and it's gonna create what?

In the future you'll see...you'll meet another empty object, and you'll see the thing as...as something beautiful. You know, you'll meet the same lady, because she's a tabula rasa, because she's empty, because she's a blank screen, you, you'll see her as a nice person. It, it...if the objects in the universe, were not just blank screens, then all of this morality and stuff wouldn't work at all, there'd be no point to it.

[student: Blank screen]

Blank screens meaning, any object here you bump into me, this room, this country, your friends, your cat, okay, is blank. Empty...emptiness, I, I don't like the word emptiness, I mean the tibetan word is more like blank, and the sanskrit word is more like blank {shoonya}. {Shoonya} came into latin as, with a hard 'k', 's-h' in sanskrit changes to 'k' in latin, so it came in as 'koo'. And in its strengthened form is 'cow' and the 'u' changes to 'v', and when it hits english and it becomes 'cavity'. 'Cav', the word 'cavity' comes from...'cav' comes directly from {shoonya}, {shunya}. But what it means is "blank". Just blank, things are blank...imagine everything you run into as being blank. And then you project something onto it. And that's how things work, that's how

[student: [unclear] I have a question about]

Yeah.

[student: [unclear] doing very clearly, really good. But my question is that we don't have the same reaction, to everything, and so I thought of having Mel read my mind [unclear] with buddhist psychology and emptiness and it seems like after I've explained to [unclear] maybe I'm incorrect, that, you know, some people are very projective to, so their projections reduces our [unclear] that my projection hooks into a certain way so I meet one person and I feel very pleased with them, and I meet another person and I feel very displeased with them, someone else would have a reversed reaction, but this...it seems to me that it is void but it's not really blank, there's, there's, there's basis in projecting and archetype that I can put in, so I sound like I'm making a statement but I'm really making a question.]

No I like it and it means this, it goes back to her question, it's a difficult...it'll come up again and again, and you have to think about it, any good presentation of emptiness like Pabongkha's presentation in that little Tsongkhapa book, okay? It's really, really...excellent, and, and he says there is data presented to your eyes, no one said there wasn't any data presented to your eyes. In a case of the glass of water, if you read that, there's a huge debate, 'what is the data presented to your eyes?' Ultimately they have to come down to some kind of liquid, they don't say water. They never say, "The glass of water seems to be blood to the preta." Can't say that. The liquid seems to be blood to the preta. There is a basis, there is sense data, there is something out there being presented to you, and that's a liquid. And then three different beings interpret it as three different things. That's true, that really is true, there really is something being presented to you.

It may be an archetype in your mind, what we call {dun chi}. That's a whole 'nother subject, I won't get into it, but it actually is. It's not even out there. Ultimately it's in your mind, that's another point, that's a long story, okay? [laughs] Don't want to get into it right now. But, there is data being presented to you. But...when you focus on the data...okay? When you're looking at the liquid...and not the water...then it's wet and flowing, the definition of liquid in buddhism. Okay? You're focusing on wetness and fluidity and you are interpreting it as a liquid. And when you focus on the wetness, then you see it's endless. There is data being presented to you but each level you drop down and try to focus on that data it becomes another projection on the data behind that. And it's endless, and when you, when you struggle to find something that's really there, you never find anything. And that's an exercise for perceiving emptiness, that's a really classical exercise. It, it's called looking for the thing you gave the name, and never finding it. And, and you can do that. Doesn't mean you can do anything you want, does, does anything I said about blankness today imply...did, did anything I say lead anybody in the room to think you can do whatever the hell you want now, because nothing matters?

[students: No...no...no.]

Refuge - raw transcript

I, I don't like your answer. You should be saying quite the opposite please, right? Quite the opposite...okay? Quite the opposite.

[student: [unclear] she has nothing from her own side so there'll be nothing there to talk about]

Yeah but because, but, I said something different, I said the lady is blank. But the projection is coming from where? Being forced on you by what? Your karma. It's by your karma. It's being forced on you by your karma, so last thing you'd want to do, the last thing you'd want to be doing...if things are empty, if it's true that no objects have their own natures, the last thing in the universe you'd want to be doing is what? Bad karma! I mean it'd be ridiculous. You know. And it's a good test when you get a teaching on emptiness, see if the teacher brings up karma within the next ten minutes, okay? [laughter] Really. Seriously. Because if not, then it's, it's not valid, it's...they're not really getting to the point.

Why did the Buddha teach...half his life devoted to teaching morality? And then in the other breath talk about emptiness, what's the deal? You know, there must be some connection between the two. You know why would a person spend fifty one years teaching morality and emptiness at the same time if, if emptiness means anything, then something intimately connected with morality. If, if you are empty, if things are empty the, the last thing you want to do in the world is collect any bad karma because empty means blank and blank means if you got bad karma in your mind, forcing you to have a projection of something evil, I mean that's the last thing you'd want to do would be to do anything bad...if you really understood karma it would be like that thing about the roaches, you know where if you, when you start to squeeze 'em to kill 'em that your own ribs start to break, I mean if you really understood emptiness it'd be the last thing you'd want to do would be to do anything bad. And so in effect, here's the punchline...maybe I can go home tonight. [laughs] In a sense that's your best protection, isn't it? I mean that knowledge is your best protection.

That, that simple understanding, that single understanding is, is your best protection. I almost said projection, it's projection too. [laughs] But it's your protection, that's your best protection, you can't find protection better than that.

[student: Does this that mean we can change our karma by changing our reaction?]

And only [unclear]. And only by that, you know? And, it, it, it cannot change an event once it's happened and you go through life being frustrated 'cause you can't, and you know that. You don't know...need me to tell you that, you can confirm that personally, you know, the min...you're in a very bad situation like you're sitting on the dental chair, or I was in a plane that they said was going to crash, you know, and I'm praying to the lamas praying to the buddhas and, and praying that it wouldn't hurt anymore...and it's too late. Okay, it's, it's the result has already come out, it's, it's too late to change that...there's nobody in the world...Lord Buddha, can't keep you from being cut out by a soldier standing next to you...him, it's, it's too late I mean you will have a projection of this guy cutting you.

Refuge - raw transcript

It's too late to do anything, he can't do anything, no one in the universe can change that, you know, too late yeah.

[student: [unclear] the Buddha [unclear] good karma at all?]

It's a big debate and we, we had a...I, I teach these courses they go on for six weeks in New York, we collect questions like that, then I go to the monastery and I ask all the great lamas in the monastery, so that was one of them on the last course. And we went to all these great lamas and we asked them this question, you know, "If, according to what anyone ever says, then the act of taking on someone else's suffering doesn't make much sense at all" you know, but according to...you know, we all know that there's stories of great lamas taking on people's sufferings...generally speaking

[student: [unclear]]

I mean there's stories of great lamas coming up and sucking the, the suffering out of somebody, you know and, and that they get sick, but the other person gets cured, like, almost like...what do you call that in... 's there some kind of ritual thing, you cast out the spirits on someone...exorcism, like an exorcism, I mean there's some, there's stories like that.

[student: But there's miracles. Let, let me go back to something [unclear]. You're saying knowledge is the best protection]

Let me answer her question first. One second. Aaah, what he said, what the lama said was under extraordinary circumstances, due to an extraordinary close karmic relation between a student and a teacher, and, and other karmic things going on, without breaking the laws of karma and emptiness...it, it happens. But normally, impossible. If it were possible to take the slightest sliver of another person's karma onto yourself the Buddha, being all compassionate would have taken ours long ago. The fact that we are still here is proof that he can't. It's classic proof in buddhism. We're still here suffering, therefore the Buddha can't do it. If he could've done it why the hell would he wait? [laughs] You know, is he sadistic or something? You know letting us go through life like this? Can't do it, he cannot take our suffering.

[student: Most of the time [unclear]]

Yeah ninety-nine nine nine nine, I mean...for as much of the time as [unclear] he can't do it. [laughs] Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead.

[student: Oh, okay, you say knowledge is the best protection.]

I, I'm about to say it's the only one, but [laughs]

[student: Okay [unclear] you're equating one that I go for refuge to [unclear] Maybe because they're the font of knowledge?]

Refuge - raw transcript

We're gonna talk about it, I was gonna save it for tomorrow but maybe we'll do it now, if you want.

[student: Okay because you know...[unclear]]

I understand, no, I like it.

[student: [unclear] refuge, but you say knowledge is the best protection [unclear]]

Yeah yeah. What time, what time do you have?

[students: [unclear]...an hour...another hour before]

Okay, I, I'll give a short answer then we'll, then we'll break 'cause I know that it's, it's really good to break when it's kind of interesting. [laughter] No I didn't mean it the sound the way it down you know. With...to answer that you have to get in what is the nature of the three ratnas, okay? What is the nature of the three gems...okay? And, and I'll do it, okay I was gonna hold it 'til tomorrow, but, but when you take refuge, you're taking refuge in the three jewels. You know, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. You're taking refuge in those three things, so the question is...there's two questions, I mean, what are you afraid of, that you're taking refuge? And then what can they do...for you, okay?

So first I ask you, I mean when we talked about refuge during the discussion period, I heard...when I'm in a tight...I remember when I was in a plane, that's when you really find out what religion you are when a plane starts to go down? You know what [laughs]...you start going 'dzun-dzun-dzun-dzun-dzun-dzun-dzun' you know [laughs] [laughter] and you try and the thing comes back you know and...and it's, it's true, you start taking refuge, you start taking refuge 'cause nothing else will help you, it's at the point where nothing else can help is when you start taking refuge, spiritual refuge, religious refuge, so...they think it's their own god or you know, stuff like that, "My god", famous last words on all the cockpit recorders you know? It's, it's, it's...that's a real state of mind of refuge, that is a real refuge mind, that's what we're supposed to have all the time, the mind in that pilot's...that, that state of mind in the pilot at the last moment is that. That's true refuge. That's real refuge, he really believes that he's in trouble, and he really believes that no other force in the universe can help him at that moment. He truly has those two requirements for refuge.

So, the question is, what are you, are you afraid of? And what do you...who do you think can help when you take buddhist refuge? So first question to you, before I can answer your question I want to clarify...it's one of the three ways in which we're allowed to answer a question in debate, you know? Clarify your question, you know, what do you mean by refuge, what are you afraid of in the first place? What are you taking refuge from? What are you running away from? Did your brother punch you?

[student: Oh maybe god.]

Refuge - raw transcript

No we're talking...I don't know if you were here last night, we didn't...refuge...technically speaking, running to your Mommy 'cause your brother punched you when you're five years old is, is an act of refuge. It's not buddhist refuge, but it's an act of refuge. It fits a definition of an act of refuge. It's...{yu shen la, pu en la shambrey shemba}. What

[student: [unclear]]

In buddhist refuge, what are you trying to escape?

[student: Non-truth.]

You mean lies or do you mean things that aren't ultimate truth or? Things that aren't ultimate truth.

[student: Yeah.]

Okay. There's two truths in buddhism, ultimate truth and, and relative truth. Relative reality, for example, is what's going on in this room right now, what you perceive in this room right now, if you're a normal person, which I can't confirm, okay? [laughs] I mean if you're not a buddha, okay? Which I can't confirm.

But if, if what you're...if you're a normal person then what the events in this room at this moment are what we call relative, truth which I don't like the translation. It's, it's deceptive reality is, is the real meaning of the word. It's, it's a reality. It really does exist, it affects you, it...it's all valid...and it's deceptive, at every perception you have in this room at this time you are making a kind of subtle error all the time. So in that sense it's deceptive reality, but it's valid...and, and there's no reason to run away from it...the Buddha's own mind is deceptive reality.

The Buddha's own nirmanakaya, his own body, his two rupakayas, his nirmanakaya, the one that he sends to planet Earth, and the paradise body that he has are both deceptive reality so...you don't want to run away from those, I don't think. There not ultimate reality. His mind is also deceptive reality, his jnanadharmakaya. The only thing about him which is not deceptive reality is, is his, is his dharmakaya...his...the emptiness of his mind. And that's all. So...you've got to clarify more for me, what are, what are you afraid of when you're taking buddhist refuge? What are you trying to get away from? Why are you [unclear]?

[student: Well, I, I don't know if exactly if I was trying to get away from in a sense I know what I wanted, in, in as far as a spiritual teacher, and so that, the Dalai Lama met that criteria, so that's why I became a buddhist.]

But what do you seek out of your buddhism? What do you want?

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: I have read a lot of books that were talking about masters of old and masters of [unclear] who could do this and who could do that and who had reached the level of development, and I looked around and I saw a lot of people calling themselves master and I said no, no, no, no, no. [unclear] existed a long time ago there must at least one around who exists today, and if there is I want to meet that master and become that master's student.]

For what purpose?

[student: Because they said they had some kind of spiritual attainment, the masters of old, and so I wanted that spiritual attainment.]

So it's more of a positive thing, you're more seeking out some great goal, yeah. That's not refuge.

[student: I don't know because they said in order to do this now I had to take refuge.]

[laughs] [laughter] No, it's true, it is true. It is, it is ultimately is true. [unclear] [laughs]

[students: [unclear]]

Yeah, by the way the reading will distinguish if you read it, the one that we gave out last night, [unclear] between verbal refuge and real refuge. Okay there's verbal refuge is the one where you do the refuge prayer, and that's, that's the act of verbally taking refuge, but, but taking refuge is a mental state.

[student: Oh I know but even, you know halfway around the world [unclear] you know, I feel like there is, that kind of...protection of my own mind at that moment in time. I have no]

Certain protection from what? That's what I'm try...what is the thing we wanted, [unclear]? What are you trying to get away from?

[students: [unclear]]

[end side one of tape]

Ultimately you want to avoid that...kind of existence where every nice thing in the world is always attached to a lousy ending, you know. That's really what you want to avoid I, I mean that's, that's the minimum really, it's...this is...samsara means, suffering means that every single nice thing in our life is always attached to a lousy ending, and you...that's really what refuge means, you want to get out of that...you want to reach a world, where things don't act like that, where, where objects are not such that they are either outright suffering or when they're nice they're always attached to a suffering at the end.

Refuge - raw transcript

You, you don't want that anymore, the point of buddhism...it's, it's very interesting, it's not to reach some kind of, you know, centered state where nothing disturbs you anymore. And it's not to learn to put up with a shitty world, okay? And it's not to get old but gracefully, okay? It's...and it's not to be calm in the face of chaos in the world. It's to actually live in a world where those things don't happen anymore, and where there's not even a word for those things.

[student: But that's not [unclear] time.]

I did say it's [unclear]

[student: Because when I was thinking of this in, in doing this a long time ago, I was thinking I wanted peace of mind, I knew that they, you know, all the philosophers and everybody else talk about harmony, they talk about beauty, they talk about states of mind that can see these kind of conditions. And, I wanted that.]

Well what's the use of peace, I mean I knew, I, I stayed in a, a temple, I won't say what tradition it was, okay? And...they said the master's coming, from overseas he's gonna arrive on a jet. This guy sat in the snow for three days and didn't budge his meditation, he's incredible. And I said, oh yeah, okay I'm waiting, you know. We get to the airport, here comes this old man, you know off the plane you know, I'm like, ew, I don't wanna get like that you know, I, I don't care if he sat in the snow for three days, you know [laughs] [laughter] you know, you know, and, and after that he died, he died shortly after that. I mean the goal is, we asked her what the goal was, we were talking about it before, no, it's a totally different thing...the goal of buddhist practice, at a minimum, is to, is to go to a world where things don't work that way.

[student: Oh, right, a better world, but not this one.]

Now you tell me, is this world empty or not?

[student: [unclear]]

Do we have to change women at work for her to ever become nice? Do I have...does she have to go home and another lady comes?]

[student: See I don't...you're saying it's just from the perceiver's side, I'm not so sure about that thought and, and, and it goes against the whole thing of emptiness if you're using emptiness as blank then...because...it somehow has to be from that, her side too.]

There has to be some existence, there has to be something coming from her side.

[student: Right, it can't be blank.]

Refuge - raw transcript

You are a Madhyamika {Swatantrika}. There are only school number two. They couldn't get over that bump, they never made it to {pra sem gi ka}, you know? [laughs] [laughter] It's a classic, it's classic, no, it's, its a, I mean you're in good company, you know, {Buv a gu gay ka} great scholars like that, you know, they said, "Things, I can agree that things have no self. But they must be {rang ay druppa}, there must be something coming from their side." They, they, they demand it, they insist it, that emptiness did not include not coming from its own side, and Chadrakirti and Nagarjuna and Tsongkhapa said, "Wrong." You know, that's...it's better, it's so, it's such a classic error that it is the final error, that a person can make. It's what distinguishes you from lower Madhyamika to higher Madhyamika, that's the main point. Wait, we'll take a break. [laughter] Yeah okay just a brief one 'cause I don't want anybody fall asleep on that.

[student: [unclear]]

Okay, go ahead, go ahead.

[student: If that were true then, how could that person like tell it, then how could they have the mind to carry on from day to day and they have their own set of promises. Ah, [unclear] existing in this realm?]

I, I, I'll answer very briefly and then, and then cook it. My, my lama would have cut it off a minute ago and said, "Oh just cook it", you know?

[student: Just cook it.]

That's his answer when he doesn't want to answer you know. Just cook it...I mean just think about it more but, but this is it: her mind, to herself, as she hears herself thinking, is also blank. It's also a projection. Your mind, your own awareness of your own thoughts is also a projection onto a blank screen...as is every object in the universe, okay? Cook that.

[student: [unclear] have two emptinesses]

Yeah, yeah, to her...I didn't say anything about what's going on in her mind. You know, she se...how she sees herself god knows. That's another thing going on, we're talking from your point of view. She perceives...how she perceives herself, is also, she is also empty to herself, the results of that are being presented to her. It's also a blank screen being presented to her, and she also is interpreting that blank screen in her own way. Break! [laughs] [laughter] We'll come back in one [cut]

[unclear] about it, you know, so those are the three possibilities. What is it about Buddha, Dharma, Sangha that's of any use, to use? How...what...when you go for refuge, okay, when you try to do refuge, what, what use could it be to you?

Refuge - raw transcript

You know, what you...how could it ever give you, from the, from what we're running away from...what we're running away from is suffering, and, and I would say specifically the kind of life where every nice thing that ever happens is always attached to a lousy ending, that's, I mean to me that's the essence of suffering, it's a second kind of suffering. Obviously pain is suffering, I don't have to talk about that, and obviously we're gonna get old and die. But just the fact that every nice thing in this room...is, is always attached to some kind of horrible ending, that to me is dissatisfactory, that's something to take refuge away from, you know, that's something to try to avoid.

So how can Buddha, Dharma, Sangha can ever give you any help for that problem, I mean what's...I mean if they can't, then there's no use to take refuge, I don't see any big use to it, you know, if they can't help with that problem, then there's no big thing about going for refuge. Everybody in the room takes refuge in their own way but does it work? Did it ever help you? Did you ever get any concrete result from it, you know, did it ever prevent a single problem that you had? That's what we have to look into. Otherwise it's voodoo, you know, otherwise it's might as well be, I don't take it lightly but the idea that many people have of god, you know it's, it's praying to this thing that may or may not ever help you, according to his wishes. You know? Might as well do that, if that's all that refuge is.

Is the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha any different from that? You know, and that's, that's the big question so, what is the quality of the Buddha...and the Dharma and the Sangha? I think you have to start with, when they discuss the Three Jewels, in...in, in the [b: Perfection of Wisdom] and I gave it to you last night, they distinguish between real Three Jewels and apparent Three Jewels. There's an apparent Sangha, there's something that appears to be Sangha, and there's something that appears to be Dharma, Buddha is Buddha, that are not real...Sangha and Dharma.

So what is the real Dharma and what is the apparent Dharma, and what is the real Sangha and what's the apparent Sangha? The apparent Sangha is, is people who wear robes. Okay? People who have taken vows, ordination. That's what we call the, the apparent Sangha. I mean when you talk about Sangha normally you, you think about the community of ordained people. That's the meaning of Sangha. But that's not the...that's not the meaning of the refuge Sangha, that's not the meaning of the Sangha which is one of the Three Jewels. It doesn't mean that. It's not what you're taking refuge in. The real Sangha, the ultimate Sangha is aryas, arya means a person who has seen emptiness directly. The moment you perceive emptiness directly, for the first time, which is a big point in your lives, okay?

There comes a day on which you sit down, after much training, you go into a deep meditation, you perceive emptiness directly. From that moment on you're no longer a normal person, you are a totally different type of being. You are called {gyen shu po} which is "stream enterer" and there is a reason, 'cause from that point on you're on your way out. You're on the conveyer belt, and it's going, and sooner or later it's gonna drop you off at nirvana, and Buddhahood. But...and you're not on that, in other words there's a fixed limit to the point at which you're gonna achieve nirvana and Buddhahood. After you perceive emptiness directly for the first moment, your, your lifetimes are fixed, your future is set.

Refuge - raw transcript

It's all over...cer...within a certain amount of time you're gonna be a buddha. It's, it's all over, just perceive emptiness directly that's it. That's why it's called stream enterer. That's the real Sangha...the community of people, who have seen emptiness directly are the Sangha. That is the Sangha to whom you are going for refuge. That's the meaning of, of the Sangha Jewel.

The, the people who are running around in red robes, are, are...represent those people, they are metaphors for those people but there has...there's no connection. You know, they could be wearing robes or not wearing robes, there's...is not a...I mean you don't have to be ordained to see emptiness directly there is no connection, well, it's, it's helpful but, there's no...it's not necessary at all...to be ordained to see emptiness directly, not, not necessarily at all. So you become the...what makes you the Sangha that you go to refuge to...and not the Sangha that the vinaya describes, okay? These are different things. The Sangha to whom you are going for refuge are is anyone who's seen emptiness directly, period. Okay?

[student: For a moment or continuous [unclear]?]

In th...good question, okay? On the first occurrence of your experience of emptiness directly it takes maybe twenty minutes...okay. It's all over in about twenty minutes something like that, then you come out of it and, and then you're seeing relative existence again. And, and until you reach Buddhahood you can't perceive both at the same time. They are two completely different objects. You can't perceive emptiness unless if, if you're a non-buddha, okay, non-buddha {sure shock} in a debate we say, we start our debate with, "Okay listen, I'm not talking about buddhas okay?" Buddha {sang gya mai ear sure shock}, okay? It means [laughter] forget the buddhas, they complicate stuff, forget buddhas, normal people, non-buddhas...it's impossible to perceive emptiness directly while you are having other experiences, impossible.

For one thing, emptiness is a negative object, and, and this world, on...for the whole is a positive object. That's just one simple distinction, you can't perceive the two things at one time, impossible. It's a relative...these are relative objects and emptiness is an ultimate object, unless you're a buddha you cannot perceive the two at the same time, impossible. And it doesn't go on for very long. When you come out of it you have all these other experiences. The path of seeing, which is the whole...event of seeing emptiness directly has two parts. The first part is the direct perception of emptiness. The second part is, for the rest of the day say if you saw emptiness in mid-morning, up until the end of the day you have a lot of other ancillary accompanying realizations, and that's when you perceive the four noble truths. That's the first time that you ever see the four noble truths...directly. Noble is a bad translation of what?

[student: Arya.]

Arya. Why is it called arya? Why are they arya truths?

[students: [unclear]]

Refuge - raw transcript

You don't see them 'til you're an arya. [laughs] Okay? You see emptiness directly

[student: What's an arya?]

An arya is anybody who's seen emptiness directly, Hitler misused it, okay? Forget that. Forget the people who attacked northern India in five hundred...arya means {pakpa}, in buddhism it means anyone who's seen emptiness directly period. That's a definition. [b: Abhidharmakosha] second chapter, okay?

The moment you see emptiness directly you are an arya, that's what an arya is. And when you come out of and then perceive the four noble truths, arya truths directly, that's why they're arya truths and that happens for the rest of that day. Then you have a long stretch to go until of nirvana because the whole rest...what's the definition of nirvana? {Nyun duk ma lu pa ta may sa su tango}, {nyun duk}, say, it's good luck, okay, {nyun duk}[repeat], {ma lu pam bay}[repeat], {so sa tango}[repeat], {nyun duk} means "bad thoughts". Okay? The obstructions caused by your bad thoughts, {nyun duk}, {ma lu pa} means "in, in their entirety", "every single one". {Pam bay} means "you eliminated them". {So sa tangok} is "cessation", with a little word {so sor} on it. Okay? Doesn't mean so-so, okay? It's the {sosor} in {sosor takpa}, which is prati, okay? Pratimoksha...and by what it means is one by one, what does it mean one by one? It means based on your perception of the four arya truths one by one you're able to eliminate your bad thoughts, okay?

You can't see the four arya truths directly until you see emptiness directly. Based on your understanding of the four arya truths you're able to eliminate your bad thoughts. The process of getting rid of your bad thoughts, because you finally saw emptiness directly, takes a hell of a long time. [laughs] And, and that's called {gom lam}, it's the fourth path and it's a long, it's a long story. And at one by one you get rid of your bad thoughts based on your understanding of emptiness, okay. What's that got to do with refuge, okay.

[student: Are, are you being [unclear] to ordinary beings because they've perceived emptiness directly? They're still separate.]

Yeah. I...they don't collect any new causes, there's a big debate whether they collect any new causes for suffering. They are still suffering. Absolutely. But, but arya means "a person who has seen emptiness directly"...when you go for refuge, you're going to the, to the Sangha and the Sangha is any person who's seen emptiness directly, that's all. {Pakpa}, and arya mean the same...{pakpa} means "elevated", and it means anyone who's...I mean there's only two kinds of beings in the world, I would say it's like virginity okay? [laughs]

I mean, there's a time in your life when you have your first sexual experience, after that you're no longer a virgin. I mean you're either a virgin or you're not a virgin. There's no other possibility every person, every normal human in the universe is, is one or the other, and there's a point in your life it happens and you either lose it or you don't lose it and after that you're, you're not that...you're a different kind of being after that. And that's, that's the way it is with an arya, the whole universe divides into aryas and non-aryas.

Refuge - raw transcript

You either saw emptiness directly or you didn't. And, and once you do you're a totally different kind of person, you're, you're totally...superior and that's the meaning of arya, and even in tibetan, and even in sanskrit. But not superior in the sense of racially superior, superior in the sense that you're on your way out. You're a stream enterer...what you saw is gonna enable you to eliminate your mental afflictions. And, and nothing else can.

No, no tricks in the world, nothing, no nothing in the universe aside from perceiving emptiness directly can, can permanently remove your bad thoughts. It's, it's very interesting, you know, all the things in Shantideva's [b: Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life], I mean up to the ninth chapter, they're all useless until you see emptiness directly, they're all just band-aids. You know, they work for a while, they can work under certain circumstances, they cannot remove your bad thoughts permanently.

Nagarjuna does the same thing in, in his writings, he, he presents all the things you need to stay out of trouble, out of big trouble until the point that you see emptiness directly, but the only thing that can remove your bad thoughts permanently is to see emptiness directly, that's why nirvana is defined as a cessation of your bad thoughts permanently, and in their entirety, due to your understanding of emptiness, due to your direct perception of emptiness.

Okay that's the definition of nirvana. Okay. So, what's that got to do with refuge? One of the Three Jewels is people who've seen emptiness directly, that's all. Sangha...don't forget it now, whenever you take refuge that's really what you're taking refuge to, it's not to the people walking around in robes...it's to any being layman or, or ordained who has seen emptiness directly...yeah.

[student: But then how, where is it I mean like today all this [unclear]]

You can't say, you know, I mean one thing the texts all agree on is you shouldn't try to judge other people {la dung nya ma in ba , sheng gye [unclear] nyampar gyur tare} it's the first thing a kid has to learn in the debate ground. You know, if you're not a buddha don't try to judge other people you will mess up. Okay? [laughs] Quotation from the Buddha. Who knows...by the way there's a...I found the story in the computer okay? Where he said that, and a, actually he had criticized another monk for his behavior and, a thousand lifetimes ago, and then he had taken a thousand lifetimes as some horrible hell being or...the Buddha himself, in a former life. So, first of all I say I can't say for sure. For all I know you're all buddhas, I really can't say for sure.

[student: [unclear]]

Cannot.

[student: Cannot?]

Yeah. But, but

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Do they all know that they are?]

Excuse me?

[student: Do they know that they are?]

Absolutely. One of the

[student: [unclear] each other?]

No, one of the [laughter]...no, one of the things about the experience is that you know it's really happened. I mean you have absolutely no doubt about it, there's a side perception, there's a side pramana, a side {tsema}, a side...correct perception that you know you did it. So if you have any doubts, if you think you almost say shunyata, or kind of think you saw shunyata, or you had some kind of experience and you wonder if you saw shunyata, then you didn't, okay? You know. You know, you have no doubts, you will see your future lives, you will see buddhas, if you didn't see those you didn't see shunyata. Okay?

[student: What do you mean you can't say something?]

It's just a...it's a, it's an unwritten code, you know that they don't, they don't say that directly but it's extremely rare. It's extremely rare and there are certain signs of a person who did that. Okay?

[student: You say they've seen buddhas, what does that mean?]

They directly...I'll get into it. It's coming, it will come today. [laughs] They see the dharmakaya of the Buddha directly. Okay?

[student: If...are you gonna discuss at anytime during this weekend what the course of study is and isn't, you know, a general overview?]

In Manhattan? [laughs]

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah yeah yeah.

[student: [unclear]]

[student: We can see you coming back.]

Refuge - raw transcript

[laughs] It's a beautiful course, it's the course...it was designed pretty much by Tsongkhapa, and it's in the five great classics of buddhism, and I spoke about it a little last night but it's [b: Perfection of Wisdom], twelve years, four years in Madhyamika, two years in Abhidharma, two years in vinaya, every winter for three months we have to debate {Mad dhu}. The short form, in five years [laughs] is like twenty-five six week courses on those, twice a night, two, two nights a week. Something like that.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, yeah.

[student: If someone could take the kind of body they had then the perception of emptiness?]

It's a good question okay? To perceive emptiness directly...by the way you've perceived emptiness intellectually today. Okay? It's not the same thing. When we talked about the lady at work you perceived her emptiness, I think everyone in the room got some kind of intellectual understanding of how she didn't have inherently any either a nature of being good or bad. But to perceive it directly is a much more difficult, and to perceive emptiness directly you must be...your mind must be in the form realm.

There's three realms: desire realm, form realm, formless realm. Your mind cannot be in the desire realm and still see emptiness directly, it's very interesting. You must be in deep meditation to see emptiness directly. There's a, a support...which is what you call calm abiding, on which that perception of emptiness has to rest. Without that support it, it can't occur, it'll never occur, to reach that state of meditation is not perceiving emptiness directly but it's required atmosphere, what do you call it? Ambiance, for the, for the perception to happen. You must be able to get to that realm mentally. Your mind has to be able to...while your body is sitting here in the desire realm, you're, you're mind has to reach a, a level called {sam ten dam bu nyer chok mi chok may} which is, it's a certain level of the form realm where have really perfect concentration and your mind's not even in this realm any more. And, and based on that quietude, or calm abiding, you, you have a chance to see emptiness directly if you have the knowledge of how to start.

And an interesting thing, and no I didn't want to get into all this, is, is that the same day, prior to seeing emptiness directly, you reach the highest stages of the second path which is called {jor lam}, path of preparation, the highest state of that path is called {chu chok} which means "highest state" and at that state you see for the first time directly, relative truth. What it is to be relative truth, that's very interesting, you perceive directly how you are actually projecting everything. You know?

And, and that's called, sometimes called heat, suddenly you're getting hot, sometimes it's called {chu chok}, the ultimate state in, in, in pre-arya life, and, and you directly perceive the fact that you are projecting everything.

Refuge - raw transcript

And, and until that you don't perceive even that. You know I can explain to you that you're projecting to the lady at work, but it's a different thing to directly perceive yourself projecting it and realizing that that lady's not even there. Y'know that's a...that in itself is a deep realization and it's not the realization of emptiness, it's just the realization of, of how you've really been doing everything all along. Emptiness is the opposite of that, that's a long story. [laughs]

So anyway, when you take refuge, it's in the community of people who have seen perceived emptiness directly. Arya...the Buddha is an arya, you don't lose arya when you reach arhat, there's this thing of arya, arhat, buddha, there's plain people, which is called {so su kye wo, pro tect jana}, there's normal people, there's people who've seen emptiness directly, and inside of people who've seen emptiness directly there's aryas, arhats and buddhas. And...and you're either one or the other, you've either seen emptiness directly or, or you haven't seen emptiness directly. The people who have seen it directly are, are refuge. They are the refuge, they are your protection. That's the first of the Three Jewels.

That's very interesting, see I don't know what fuzzy ideas we had about what Sangha was. That's what Sangha is, defined by Maitreya okay? Maitreya's a buddha, he should know. Okay? [laughs]

What's the Dharma jewel, okay? It's...the cessations and perception of emptiness, okay? The, the, the nominal Dharma, the apparent Dharma is all the books. Okay? {Lun dok ay chu}, either the books or the, or the teachings going on verbally, that's Dharma, I mean that's not what you go to refuge to. It's not the real Dharma.

[student: [unclear] apparent Dharma.]

It's called apparent Dharma {kun jok, kun jok ay jup coin jok}. That's the same word that's used for deceptive reality. {Kun dzok} means "fake"...and there's a big debate in the monastery about how can you have fake reality. What does fake truth mean? What does fake real have mean...what are you talking about!/? You know long story okay?

But anyway, apparent Dharma or the Dharma that, you know, represents Dharma is the books and the teachings, it's not, it's not the Dharma you go for refuge to. The...that Dharma, ultimate Dharma, the refuge of Dharma is the perception of emptiness directly, period. That's the Dharma. And that you can read it in the reading from the first night, that is the Dharma Jewel. That's the...it's not the Dharma, but it's the Dharma Jewel. The real Dharma Jewel that you're going for refuge to is, is the perception of emptiness.

[student: When you die [unclear] perception that's something that is always going on all the time?]

Yeah, you never...it's a good question it comes up a lot, you know, so you reborn, are you always...are you reborn or not? There's four...kinds of people who perceived emptiness directly.

Refuge - raw transcript

There's {gin shuk} which means "stream enterer", {cheriong} which means "has to come back, one time", {cherio} which means "doesn't have to come back" and there's {da chombo} which means "arhat". So there's...to answer your question there's four possibilities. If in one life you can get up to arhat, you won't be reborn into samsara that way again, okay? If you don't make it that far you might have to come back to the desire realm once. If you make it pretty far you, you have to be reborn but never again in the desire realm.

By the way any body who perceives emptiness directly, will never have a lousy life again period. You know you'll always be comfortable, you'll always be surrounded by lamas and you'll al...you'll be born in a, in a situation where there's Vajrapanis in every town, you know and [laughs] [laughter] and that's the way your life will be, it, it...and you perceive that. You know, it's like knowing all the lottery numbers, so...you know who cares anymore? You, you'll always live that way, so anyway that's the, that's the Dharma, that's what you take refuge to, it's actually the direct perception of emptiness. It's the only thing that can help you.

Okay Buddha...what's Buddha got to do with all this? If you read in the {ten rim} which is "mother of the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo]" three hundred years before, when he gets to this section he says, "Obviously there's no fake Buddha", I mean you're either Buddha or you're not the Buddha. It's not, you can't say there's a parallel with the Buddha Jewel, with the Buddha Ratna, but when we talk about the Buddha Ratna to which you go for refuge, the Buddha Jewel to which you go for refuge, we're speaking mainly of the dharmakaya. That's the emptiness of the Buddha. It's the emptiness of his other three bodies. Okay? It's very interesting.

So you're actually going for refuge to the emptiness which is perceived by those people. So what's this all Three Jewels stuff? It's either a perception of emptiness, or that emptiness itself. In every case. It's all, it's all focused on perceiving emptiness directly, that's what you're going for refuge to. Nobody else can help you. You know, nothing else can help you. That's the ultimate refuge, the Buddha can communicate it to you...and that's his main function, the reason for a buddha to be around...is not even so much as physical or his mental activity, it's his verbal activity.

The only way a buddha can help you is to talk to you, that's the only communication, that's the only use a buddha is to you. [unclear] what good is it to me, you know? The only use of having a buddha around the universe is that he can say something to us, you know, that's, and that's classic, first Dalai Lama opening pages, [b: Abhidharmakosha] commentary, {tar lam tsel jay}, he says, "The Buddha", he quotes this famous sutra that says, "Buddha doesn't help you by putting his hand on your head, Buddha doesn't help you by pouring holy water on your face...all the Buddha can do is talk to you." That's the only way he can help you, he can just tell you about Dharma, and then you based on that, you can practice and, and perceive those things yourself. That's all he can do, he's powerless otherwise. He, he has no power otherwise, there's nothing he can do. Yeah?

[student: [unclear] somehow I got the idea that [unclear]]

We talked about it during the break with {Ge long la}...that's a, that's a good question, okay? It's called {sung dep}. {Sung dep, sung dep} means "supplication, requesting, a blessing" and, and of all of Tsongkhapa's activities, frankly, I think he spent the most time on that. You know if you read his biography, there's a huge biography called [b: Nam Tha Chenmo], the whole thing is he...it almost gets boring, you know? 'Cause he spent his whole life supplicating to the lama you know...you say, "Oh what's the big deal" you know? "If they can't do anything for you what's the use of supplicating to them?" Ultimately it's the karma of the, of the supplication. Okay? Alright? What's the...for example, what's the use of offering flowers on an altar, I mean, what, does the Buddha come down and smell them? Does he come down and sip the water, you know?

I remember when, when I saw my Dad eating that Santa Claus cookies that we had put out you know. [laughs] Big disappointment you know. [laughter] I mean...you know you need it, you know the Buddha he, he doesn't need it. He can't even do it, you know, I mean the point is it's for you, it's, it's the, the karma of supplicating, in, in faith. The faith...the karma of the faith makes things happen. It changes your karma. It's very interesting, you know, and that's also the...one of the great anchors of the secret teachings is that and that's another subject, you know. But that's a lot of the...reason they work is that...it's sort of a, it's sort of an accelerated karmic payback, due to the intense feelings of devotion and faith, and it's real and it works. And it's, it's for real, it will work.

You know Tsongkhapa spent...I mean, otherwise he wouldn't have spent all that time doing it, right? There's a famous supplication he did...this is kind of an advertisement, okay? He went to {Rodring} monastery, which is where Atisha and his main disciple {Dom ten shay} had...used to hang out a lot. And there was a statue of Atisha there. And Je Tsongkhapa went there and he, he made a prayer, he made a supplication like you said, {tsung dep}. And he, he did a {tsun dep} to the lamas of the lineage. And he went into a, a vision and it lasted on and off for a month. And at the end of the vision Atisha came to him and put his hand on his head and said, "Okay now I want you to do something great for people, okay. Do something great." And he, then he went and wrote the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] in one shot, okay? And he, he sat down and wrote the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo], it doesn't take more than a year of his biography, you know, and...that supplication he made is called {Nyer day shu guma}. It's actual...that's the essence of it, which is a...it's a supplication to the lamas of the lineage. And, I'm gonna teach that at Medicine Buddha next weekend, so that supplication, it's a very powerful supplication.

In the middle of the supplication Tsongkhapa puts a whole Lam Rim. It's the shortest Lam Rim around. And he packs it into the middle of the supplication, it's very beautiful. But that was the supplication he did and he spent his whole life making supplications like that, so anyway, those are the Three Jewels. That's the essence of the Three Jewels. It all revolves around the perception of emptiness directly. And that's, that's your protection, why? I mean even an intellectual understanding of emptiness what can it do for you? Can it stop a disaster in your life?

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Yes.]

I mean that's the whole point of taking refuge, some kind of protection.

[student: [unclear] it would, it, it, it]

[student: It would change the future which means your reaction to it.]

Yeah nice. Nice nice nice, yeah. That's about, I mean mainly that's the material you have to work with which is the future. The past...the present is already a result, you, you can't turn a result...I remember going {Goinka} came to Dharmasala and taught twenty years ago and he taught a story of a...of the guy was crying 'cause his father was sick or something and, and he said, "Co..."...the, the Buddha's master said, "Come with me" and he put him in a rowboat and they rowed out in the middle of the lake and he took a pot and he filled it up with something and they threw it overboard. And then he gave the guy a long stick, he said, "Break the pot" you know, and he, he can't reach this thing, it's too late you know, it's too late to change it, by the time that result occurs you can't change it. You know, by the time you are having a bad time, by the time your plane's going down or your car is in a wreck or you're having a divorce or whatever it is, okay? It's too late. The, the result is coming out. Buddhism doesn't...buddhism is all...why is buddhism so obsessed with causes and results? With dependent origination? It, it's too late then, there's nothing to do then, you can...how...once the lady is screaming at you at work it's too late to do anything. Any kind of wishful thinking in the world is not gonna make her go away, and you know that 'cause you've tried. [laughs] It's, it's not making it happen again. Okay?

[student: Is it possible though if you make a prayer, you're creating the cause and you could experience the result right then?]

Very...it, it does happen because of the intensity of the faith. Because of the good deed of the faith, and that again that's a...one of the principles of the higher teachings, of the secret teachings, that's, that's one of the reasons why they work. But it's, it doesn't break the laws of karma. If it broke the laws of karma it would be invalid. It wouldn't...it couldn't happen, if it broke the laws of karma. Okay I think we'll stop th...

[student: May I ask a, a definition of the Buddha Jewel?]

{Du me ta chen bay, ta may ta tup} which means..."according to {Dra mum ba}", okay, in the [b: Tendrum Chenmo], "the emptiness of the Buddha". The emptiness of the Buddha is his dharmakaya. Okay? {Svabhabakaya}. It's his, it's his essence body. Buddha has four bodies, two physical, two non-physical. He has his...what I like to call his movie body, it's the body he shows on Earth, okay? For the benefit of people...like the Dalai Lama maybe. And then there's the, the form body that exists in his paradise. Those are his two physical forms.

Refuge - raw transcript

Body is a bad word I think, I like...I think {Thupten Jinpa} the Dalai Lama's translator stopped using 'body' it's...the word is 'body' but it means its part of him, I mean there's two physical parts, one mental part and one other part. The two physical parts are the body he shows on this planet, or on countless other planets, the body he enjoys the use of in his paradise, and then he has a mental part, which is his mind...his omniscience, and then he has one more part, what is that part? It's called {subhodhakaya}, that's his essence body. That's the emptiness of his other three bodies.

[student: [unclear]]

The two physical bodies and the one mental body. The emptiness of them, is his fourth body. And that's a difficult question, okay? Is the emptiness of his mind, by the way, will your mind turn into a buddha's mind? [cut] Every mind in this room if it's not already a buddha will become a buddha's mind, it will. That's why you're here, okay? [laughs] Right, what's that? [laughter] Aah, will become a buddha's mind. Is your, is your mind, no, it's your ultimate evolution, of every living being.

[student: [unclear] Buddha evolved.]

Yeah, every, every mind in the universe will become a buddha's mind.

[student: That's a guarantee.]

Absolutely, yeah.

[student: [unclear]]

Uh, it just might take a little bit longer. [laughter] Sooner or later. [laughs]

[students: [unclear]]

I didn't, I said Buddha is Buddha okay? I'm not really getting into apparent Buddha Jewel. You can say the images, okay? You can say the pictures of Shakyamuni and things like that. But...but the ultimate Buddha is the, is the empt...oh so what I wanted to say was, is your present mind empty? In the sense of, in the sense of [laughter] not having its own nature yes okay? Because it's an object, every object in the universe has that. Emptiness itself is empty, okay? Every object in the universe has its own emptiness. In that sense part of you, you already have a part of the Buddha with you. Okay?

The buddha that you are going to become...you'll have a mind. That buddha's mind, her mind, will have an emptiness. That emptiness is no different from the emptiness of your mind now, so in a sense isn't it true that you already have a component of you the buddha, okay? That's what buddha nature means. That's the only buddha nature you have. [laughs] [laughter] And that's no big deal, okay?

Refuge - raw transcript

It's not that you're a buddha inside and you just gotta peel the off skin and find it, it's a big mistake to think that, that's a whole another subject you have to study, is buddha nature...that's the meaning, ultimately of buddha nature, what they call the buddha seed inside of everyone or something like that. That's no big shakes, doesn't help you much, okay? It just doesn't...it happens to be a certain [unclear] that's gonna be them, which is just the emptiness of your mind. And that's another story, so Three Jewels that you go for refuge to, one is...[unclear] which is what?

[students: [unclear]]

Yeah anyone who's seen emptiness directly. It could be all...a lot of people around us we don't know. By the way one little detail about your question, what happens when you die, and you're born, do you remember that you're an arya? No. Okay? No, no, you don't remember, but you're called {bak tak sepa}, it means "quickly, it, it comes up", like before you're fifteen or twenty you already remember, but not as an infant, not like that. Okay. That's the {paviar geovatto}

[student: Do you have a realization of emptiness at that point?]

[unclear] period from the first direct perception of emptiness until the day you reach nirvana or Buddhahood but you, you are either having either direct perception of emptiness or you are basing your actions on your, on your remembering what you saw. And mainly remembering what you saw. That's...but you, you can repeat it, but that whole period can be very long, you would, you could, yeah

[student: [unclear] a child up to the age of fifteen or whatever]

Wouldn't see emptiness, I don't

[student: And they go see that.]

They go through a...they start to study dharma, they will always have a dharma teacher, a good dharma teacher at a very early age, and, and quickly the seed will, will just ripen like that, if you look at the present Pabongkha Rinpoche it's like, he was a real goofball, frankly, during his early years and then there is some, you know thing happened and now he's, he's great, you know, so it's like they have a thing called {bak chak sepa} the seed in their mind just suddenly...comes up, that's the idea of a {tulku}, of Lama {Russo}, okay? Yeah.

[student: [unclear] does after the first direct perception of emptiness, whenever that [unclear]]

Does he see d...no, it's still difficult to do. Doesn't happen all the time. You know. He...it'd be nice, [laughs] but it's difficult. But he never forget...obviously you never forget.

Refuge - raw transcript

It...what he sees...is very sim...I mean, there's a lot to say about it but it's...there's a metaphor of the diamond, the metaphor of the diamond is very important at that point. But that's another story. Okay I think that's a good time to stop. Okay? See you tomor[cut]

[end of side two of tape]

Day 3 - morning

[laughs] after all that time. And then we go back to the first reading, I dunno if you have it but it's the one that [unclear] from the presentation on the Three Ratnas, that was...we gave that out on Friday night, I don't think we have anymore, right? I mean

[student: [unclear]]

It starts out from the presentation...I don't know if you still have any.

[students: I don't...mine doesn't...[unclear]]

[laughs] Okay, you, you can really xerox it later, [unclear] get one.

[students: [unclear]]

[student: [unclear] go over it?]

Well...just the ideas, we're not gonna go page by page or anything like that. So, there are basically five kinds of taking refuge outlined there, there...the meaning of refuge we said before and you have to have two things, one is some kind of fear, and then one is some kind of belief that someone can help you. So the...actually the definition of refuge in the [b: Perfection of Wisdom] is say {yu shin la}[repeat], oh man, sleepy! [laughs] [laughter] Say {yu shin la}[repeat], {rang top key}[repeat], {pun yen du}[repeat], {rel la}[repeat], {cha way}[repeat], {tsenbar}[repeat]. {Tsenbar} you remember right? It's just the movement of the mind, okay? {Yu shin la} means "to some object outside of yourself", okay? {Yu, yu} means "a place" and {shen} means "some other place" {la} means "to that other place" {yu shen la}. {Rang top key} means "of its own power, on its own power, by its own accord".

It's used with...it's a long story but mental functions are two types, some, some types of mental functions depend on other mental functions to operate, and some don't, this is the kind that runs on its own accord. {Pun yen du, pun yen du} really means "shoulder". {Yen} means "a friend or relative". {Pun yen} means "someone you can lean on", okay? Meaning, someone close that you can lean on {pun yen du}. {Rel la cha wa} is a very rare verb, {rel la cha wa} means "to put all your hopes onto something, to put all your dreams, all your hopes into that object" {rel la cha way}. And then {tsenba} is a...a thought, any, any, any time your mind shifts a little bit and you have some kind of a tiny thought that's a {tsenba}.

So it's a tiny little thought that puts all its hopes, on its own accord, into some other object as someone you can lean on, okay? Meaning, someone who can protect you. And then there are three kinds: Buddha Jewel, Dharma Jewel, Sangha Jewel but...Buddha Jewel is a little bit different from Buddha in general, and Dharma Jewel is a little bit different from Dharma in general, we spoke about that yesterday.

Refuge - raw transcript

Especially Dharma, when you think of Dharma, you think of the teachings, verbal, written, and in this case we're talking about the perfection of wisdom. Perfection of wisdom can be a lot of different kinds. Not the perfection of...definition of perfection of wisdom is?

[student: [unclear]]

Good! [laughs] Pretty much. The perfection of wisdom is the perception of emptiness under the influence of boddhichitta, okay? You gotta have those two. {Tay chi sem aye [unclear] topay doe} which is...the perfection of emptiness, it doesn't say direct, okay? So we can have perfection of wisdom and we don't have to be an arya. {Tay chi sem gay du semba} means "under the influence of boddhichitta", under the influence means you can't have boddhichitta directly in your thoughts in certain periods of your dharma career, for example when you see emptiness directly. Why?

[student: 'Cause you can't do anything else for the period [unclear]]

You can't, and it's focused on what, what is, what is boddhichitta focused on?

[student: On other people [unclear]]

Yeah {sem chen tam chay la mu may}, that's a...beginning of that definition. {Rang aye [unclear] surpa}, anyway...focus on other sentient beings, so you can't focus on other sentient beings while you're perceiving emptiness. Other sentient beings are, are relative object. They also require that process of projection. When you are perceiving emptiness directly you can't, you can't focus on those subjects. So does that mean that boddhisattvas in the highest moment of their life while they're perceiving emptiness directly, don't have perfection of wisdom? No, that's why they say {tai chi sem gay gi semba} which means "you're under the influence of boddhichitta", it's in your mind, your, your mind is soaked on it but it's not, it's not manifest at that moment, you have it but it's not in your, in your conscious thoughts at that moment.

So that's the definition of the perfection of wisdom and, when you go for you're actually going for refuge to, to the Buddha in the formal...a person who, who has completed the perfection of wisdom...perfection has two meanings. By the way, are you practicing the perfection of giving for example? Do you try? Can you...before you're a boddhisattva? Yeah, no, you can, and you do, after you take {domba sum kay}, after you take your boddhisattva vows, then you're, you're supposed to...try to do the six perfections. So at that point are they perfections? No, they're called perfections {para tcha timba, parameta} which means "gone to the other side" but at that point you haven't...gone to the other side. When you get to the other side, when you're getting Buddhahood they're real perfections, until then they're really technically {para tu chen} which means "things that make you perfect", we're practicing the six things that make us perfect, and not the six perfections.

Refuge - raw transcript

A, a buddha is the opposite of that, the quality of a buddha is that he has {parol tu chin che, parol tu chin pa} which means he's perfected the six perfections, he has the highest form of the six perfections. He has...the definition of the Buddha Jewel is that, is any being who has the two...who has accomplished the two goals. What do you guess they are? Well when you go for refuge this is who you're supposed to go for refuge to, anyone who's accomplished two goals. What's that?

[student: [unclear] truth?]

[unclear] [laughs] Ah, it's {lam den zhin sopa shen den du}, {lam den zhin sop} means "he's accomplished everything he needs for himself", and then {shen den puntsop} means "he's accomplished everything he needs for...everything everyone else needs", and that's the definition of the Buddha Jewel, the Buddha Jewel...the short definition, there's a long definition but...has accomplished two goals, he's accomplished everything he needs, and he's accomplished everything everybody else needs. And you can think of that in terms of his four bodies. He's got four bodies, what are they do you remember? [unclear]? Any one of them.

[student: [unclear]]

Huh?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, that's called the nirmanakaya, okay, the body he sends down to, to this planet.

[students: [unclear]]

The body that he has in his own paradise, okay? He's omniscient, his mind. The emptiness of the other three, okay? That's his...called his essence body, {subodakaya}. So he has those, those four bodies. Which of the bodies do you think...I'll give you a clue, two of them relate to...perfecting others needs, and two of them relate to having perfected his own needs, so, what do you guess? How 'bout the body he sends down to Earth and other planets?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, that re...that shows that he's achieved the culmination of other peoples benefit. That, that body is incredible. That...the nature of that body is called {hlun drup}, which means it's totally spontaneous, the Buddha never has a conscious thought that he would like to appear on Earth five hundred bee cee and help people. The minute there's enough people who have enough good karma to see him, his nirmanakaya appears there, and that's a result, it's a direct result of his doing...three countless aeons of virtue...a countless...an aeon in buddhism is almost can't be measured in years, it's...there's no measurement of an, a kalpa or an aeon in buddhism in years.

Refuge - raw transcript

There's a discussion of all the kalpas in the [b: Abhidharma] in the third chapter when they discuss atoms and other things, but it's basically the period of time in which a whole planet goes through a whole evolution of people being of a certain age, people going through ethical moral training, lifespans going up to some huge length and then shrinking down again, and that whole process I don't know, some...

{Buton} Rinpoche tried to estimate it at millions of years. The Buddha practiced virtue for ten to the sixtieth power times that, three times. [laughs] And, because of that virtue, he's able...he doesn't have to see to appear on planet Earth, because of the good deed he did, it's automatic it's called {tun drup}. They say it's like the moon doesn't have to decide it's going to appear in every body of water on the Earth on a clear night, it just does it reflects in a teardrop, it reflects in a puddle, it reflects in the Pacific Ocean, but it doesn't have to...the moon doesn't think, "Oh I think I'll go down to the Pacific tonight and reflect there", you know it's just natural, and it's just natural when the Buddha appears on this planet but, people have to have the virtue to see him.

Only people who have special kinds of virtue can meet that body, in its [unclear] form. It can come in a lot of other forms, it can be the person sitting next to you. You have no way to know that it's not. Buddhas are very patient you know, they could...wait up there for a long time and if it would help you for thirty seconds they can come on a bus and sit next to you and say something to you. Very, very possible, that's very typical of what they do. Time doesn't have any much meaning for them, they perceive all objects in all times at one...in one moment, so it doesn't mean much to them, they can wait a thousand years to...say something to you on a bus, okay? [laughs] [unclear] nirmanakaya. What about the {sambhodakaya} which is presumed...is the, is the form body up in his own paradise, what do you think?

[student: [unclear] other people?]

What do you

[students : [unclear] attributes?]

Generally it is, I think it is because it's, that's defined as having, it's the body that has five characteristics, five definite characteristics 'n one of them is that it's always surrounded by bodhisattva aryas of a high level so...which means that...there are people who can go to those paradises and learn from those buddhas, and so in that case that body is, is helping them.

Another characteristic of that body is that it doesn't go away until the end of samsara, until, until the last sentient being becomes a buddha that body will stay there. So that implies that it's there for somebody else's benefit I guess. How 'bout the omniscience? That's mainly his own...that's his own, for his own benefit I mean it, it helps him to know the minds of his students perfectly I mean he knows, he knows what you're gonna do exactly twenty-three years from now on the three hours after midnight and that helps to know what to teach you now.

Refuge - raw transcript

So that's, that's also for other benefit but mainly it's his own realizations he's, he's gained the highest realizations he can. How 'bout the emptiness of his mind? I'm sorry go ahead.

[student: [unclear] this question is I'm sorry at time. Is the Buddha still a Buddha?]

I'm sorry I'm just saying that [laughs]. He or she. Actually at that point you're sexless, I mean, you don't have a sex at that point. Some of your bodies look like a man and some of your bodies look like a woman but it doesn't have the...you know the, this twenty-one powers that a human body and

[student: So what you're saying here, you're still, you're talking about the [unclear]]

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I'm talking about the Buddha in general, the four bodies taken together, and I, as I said yesterday the, the word body is a little tricky because...it's, it's not four separate bodies running around, it's one being and, and these bodies are, are different aspects of one being. Did you have a question?

[student, Yulia: Yeah, that is always be like a miracle to me, say [unclear] omniscient buddha and she can see the minds of her people perfectly well and people [unclear] but then if I teach her won't I change, her mind now and the subsequent twenty-three years or can I see what see [unclear] twenty-three years from now and...including the effect of my teaching [unclear] my question?]

Ah...who's the person you want to know about, the Buddha himse...him or herself?

[student, Yulia: [unclear] the vision of the future [unclear] the vision that includes or excludes the effect what I as the Buddha will be doing.]

Oh yeah, there's a big debate in the [b: Abhidharmakosha] and...it's, the debate there is, can the Buddha perceive...is he, is he or she, I'm gonna say he, 'cause it's a little easier for me, is he/she

[student: How about they, do we have more than one buddha?]

Is this [unclear] [laughs]!

[student: They?]

Okay. Is this

[student: [unclear]]

[laughs]

[students: [unclear-he/she debate]]

Is she

[students: verbal melee]

[student: [unclear] he came in the form of a Nepalese prince [unclear]]

I'll say she...I, I [unclear]. Let's say she...now I lost my train of thought. [laughs] There's a debate in the [b: Abhidharmakosha], they say can, can she...does she really perceive the...future or does she extrapolate the future? In other words does she, does she look at the present, and based on some kind of incredible intelligence, figure out what has to happen in twenty-three years from now, or does she actually directly perceive the future and the answer is directly perceives. The, the Buddha directly perceives in, in every instant, every single object in the universe that ever was, ever will be and is now. And that's the nature of her omniscience, okay? That's...so the answer is, is...the answer in the scriptures is that you reach a point where you can do that.

[student, Yulia: So if I were [unclear] student as the Buddha and I see her future then I know what I have to teach her now so I that that can come true basically, so if I also know what I'm supposed...which role I'm supposed to have right now [unclear]]

If you...if the person were a buddha, if the teacher was a buddha yeah, yeah. So those are the qualities of the, of the Buddha refuge, and you could, you could take another, I mean to go from your question, there're two aspects of refuge...one is you can take refuge in the buddhas that are here now. And that's what you mostly think of when you take refuge you're normally taking refuge in the buddhas who exist at this time, that's called cause refuge, and depending on what level of motivation you have you can have three kinds of cause refuge.

Cause refuge means you're still not a buddha, and you're still working on the causes to become a buddha, so you could focus on three different goals. One would be...that you just don't want to suffer anymore, you don't want to go to the three lower realms after you die. That would be the minimum one, that you, you understand what we said yesterday about karma, you...that it's possible, that if the mind goes on...does the mind go on first of all, I ask you? I mean...fairly well established okay? Don't have to say you believe it but...let's say that based on what we said the mind goes on.

Let's say you cannot destroy mind, let's say it's true, that the mind is a totally different material than the body, and that the mind destroyed by any, by any physical thing...which is pretty much, pretty acceptable. You can't see your mind, your, your awareness is your mind. The body stops moving, that doesn't prove that the mind stops. Or maybe the body just got tired, ran out of juice, maybe the mind is very frustrated and wants to keep moving but the body won't...cooperate. Maybe the mind is still there, quite possible.

Refuge - raw transcript

Then there's this, this rules of karma that we talked about, I mean, you know what happens when you, you build a huge building and you make a small defect in the, in the foundation. I, I have a friend who's a builder he, he makes the concrete a little bit wrong, put too much sand in it...so you, you, you make the foundation bad by a small mistake, then you build like five, six stories it takes you all summer, and then by the time winter comes the whole foundation crumbles and the, and the house collapses, I mean one tiny defect in the, in the foundation of something or the seed of something, as the thing grows can become a grotesque mistake, a huge mistake and the same with natural plants.

One small defect in the seed, a redwood tree grows for I don't know how many years, and then the whole tree is twisted, a huge twisted mistake from a defective seed. So it's the same with mental seeds. You can't...you can see it from, I mean like now-a-days in the treatment of people with, with different kinds of self-esteem problems or things like that, and they finally trace it back to some small incident that happened as a child, I mean a very traumatic incident, somebody did some...abused them in some way or somebody said something, and from that one three minute period in their, in their childhood then the whole lifetime is, is, is wasted. It's...and that's a mental event, you know that's, that's an example of a small mental event that twenty, thirty years later has, has grown into something that ruins the person's mind. It's the same with karma, you plant a seed...after your death, it's quite possible that there are places called hell, and, and that all those movies like Freddy I keep using that example but they really are very good, you know you killed a thing, you kill it, kill it, kill it, it, it lays down and you think you're okay and then it starts to get up again, you know?

And that's exactly the description of the, of the lightest hell. You, you go there, there are all these monsters there...things are slashing at you, things are ripping at you, you finally have the good fortune to die and then you just...I mean you go unconscious but then because of your karma you, your consciousness comes right back again, and, and you keep going through this process of falling down unconscious and then getting back up again and then they rip you up again and then you fall down again. I mean that's...you can't see it, I can't prove it to you, I haven't seen it but we can assume logically that it's possible, based...if the mind goes on, and there's some twisted seed is put in the mind now, we can, we can say that it's possible.

The lowest kind of refuge, cause refuge, would be I, I hope that doesn't happen to me, I'm gonna make sure that I don't put those seeds in my mind. Or if by some accident I do that I purify them...before I die. Yeah?

[student: Well, I was really struck yesterday by your talking about hell 'cause I didn't know that buddhists believe in hell, so I went and I read the [b: Lam Rim] last night about it, and it didn't have specific hells but [unclear]]

Sixteen. [laughs] Two of them [unclear] extra one.

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: [unclear] So I was wondered if that's the Buddha talking about the hell or if, or like there's just this logical progression, I mean does the Buddha say there's a hell realm?]

Yeah the Buddha saw it directly. The Buddha's omniscient...by the way we have this computer project we put, we put in the scriptures in India, we have sixty, seventy monks typing all day, and so they're putting in all the ancient scriptures, we put in like fifty thousand pages or something, and you can search it for these things, you can find the day that he said it, and you can prove that he said it and it's very nice, you know, you don't have to say I think he said it, because he said it on this day in this scripture on this page, he described the hells.

And it's...even the, the things you would think came from tibetan lamas like the {jor tcha}, you know the, the preliminary practices, things like that, they were spoken directly by the Buddha, there are sutras called "The Preliminary Practices" and, and things like that. You can go all the way back and, and find them there, there's very...I don't think there's anything in the [b: Lam Rim] that doesn't come from the indian...commentators, and there's nothing in there that didn't come from the sutras and you can just show it to people, anything...we had a big argument in my class, in New York, we had a, a celebration and we pulled out some alcohol-less wine, and we poured it out and everybody was ready to drink and somebody noticed that it wasn't really alcohol free, it was zero point five percent. [laughs] And...so I said you have to throw it out, and everybody said, "No, come on, you know, zero point five percent". [laughter] And, so I...you can show it's in the [b: Abhidharmakosha] quotes the sutra, the Buddha, he, he's sitting in a class like this and he, he take...picks a piece of grass like that and says, "Anybody who drinks enough alcohol that you could put on the tip of this blade of grass, or who gives it to another person, don't call yourself a buddhist, you're not my follower, I'm not interested on you." Okay? It's very...clear.

And you can just show it to someone...so actually he did describe the hells, they're not like a metaphor, they're not like a psychological state in this life. The heaviest pain of being burnt in this life is supposed to be nothing compared to the lightest moment in hell. And time moves more slowly there. Time in the deva realms moves very slow, time in the hells moves much slower than that. And that's in the [b: Abhidharma] too, third chapter, it describes exactly how time appears to move for those beings. So the lowest...excuse me.

[student: I'm sorry. What, what are the reasons though for anything alcohol that you can't call yourself a buddhist?]

This is a...there's two kinds of bad deeds. One is called {rang shigi kama ma towa}and one is called {chepay kama ma towa}, {rang shingi kama ma towa} means "a bad deed by nature, natural bad deed" killing, stealing, lying. Obviously they hurt other people directly. Those are called natural misdeeds, natural bad deeds.

Refuge - raw transcript

Drinking alcohol is not a natural bad deed, it's called a {chepay kama ma towa}. {Chepay kama ma towa} means there is some incident occurred, during the Buddha's lifetime, that required him to make that rule, he, he, it was not a natural rule and then at some point during his career on this Earth he...there was an incident, normally it was this monk called {Charka}, who was always getting into [laughter][laughs]...he, he's responsible for all these limitations on us. But he would screw up somehow, and then the Buddha would have to make a rule against it. Somebody got drunk and did something bad, and then the Buddha thought about it and then he said, "Okay look, drinking itself is not bad. I mean maybe of you drink way too much it hurts your body. In, in and of itself it's not bad, but it lowers your inhibitions...and anything that lowers your inhibitions is, is gonna lead you to other problems."

So really the only reason that alcohol is not allowed in...for buddhists is that it just, it lowers your inhibitions, and, and you could say, "Well I could control the lowering of my inhibitions you know", but Buddha, I mean he...about, about morality which could be a whole course in itself, about how karma works, some of the things are not obvious to a, a normal person, you have to be, you have to be able to see the future to, to be able to know exactly why moral...some points of morality are that way. Long story but in briefly, in, in Dharmakirti [b: Pramana Vartica], there are three levels of reality. One is called {mun sum} which means "these colors". For you they are {mun sum}, in other words anybody can see these colors you don't have to be a genius to see these colors. It's a...it's something you can perceive directly, without any kind of intellect or anything. The second level of reality is called, is called {kok kyur}, {kok kyur} means "hidden" or "deep".

[student: [unclear]]

Excuse me?

[student: [unclear]]

Aaah, {kok kyur} means...ah, the classic example is emptiness itself. In other words it's so deep, that a normal person can only perceive it through logic. It's only through discussing emptiness together that you can have any kind of clear understanding of emptiness, it's so deep that a normal person can't just sit here and say, "Oh ye...oh emptiness, I see it."

I mean, as we said yesterday in a deep state of meditation after much training you can see it directly. But for a normal person, no training, regular old guy, or girl, you can see...you can only see emptiness by, by logic or by reasoning, by thinking about it. And it...and then that way that is not as direct.

Then there's called...there's this thing called {shin du kok kyur}. {Shin du kok kyur} means "very, very, very deep" [laughs], okay? It's the third level of reality. And the only object, one, one of the only objects there is the workings of karma. In other words, why, why is this corner of this blackboard shaped just like that? Why is there a little...you can't see it there's a little dent here, you know? Where'd that dent come from? Karmically. You know?

Refuge - raw transcript

I mean you know something hit it, why did something hit this corner on this blackboard to have this tiny little dent in it? What karmic event a thousand years ago, a million years ago, occurred that this blackboard corner should have a, a, a tiny millimeter of a dent in it...what, what happened you know? It's something you can only perceive if you're the Buddha, basically. We can only perceive it by, by some kind of...it...on...what do you [unclear] it?

Educated belief in the Buddha, based on all his other great statements that we can confirm, we accept what he said about this, even though we can't confirm it with our own senses. That's the third level of reality, very, very deep level of reality. All the workings of karma are there. All the reasons why we can't do certain things morally, ethically in buddhism to, to see all the ramifications, to see the ultimate consequences of any deed you could do, it's beyond us. I mean it...and the Buddha frankly said that. He said, "Generally you have to test what I say, you can't just accept what I say you have to reason it out. You have to perceive it yourself." But the very deep workings of karma...you know why, if you take one teaspoon of alcohol today, a thousand years from now it could give you a very bad result. Can't show you. You know, can't...I can explain to you

[student: [unclear] like that, 'cause you can't [unclear]]

This is another subject, [laughs] but you can, you can confirm it and that's a...it's also in Dharmakirti, Dharmakirti was the great buddhist logician and he...what you do is you, you try to investigate the logic behind him saying that and the odds of him wanting to lie at that point. You know. It's, it's really that kind of a, a logic and it takes a while. You can study it. But, it's, it's investigating...it's called {tsema gyurpa}.

{Tsema gyurpa} means investigating the odds that the Buddha would have wanted to lie at that point, and what advantage would have there been for him to lie on that point, you know was it that he owned stock in Coca-Cola or something [laughs] you know, a non-alcoholic drink, you know what...you know it's like that, you, you go into a logic like that but try to establish that the Buddha, in that particular case, given what you know he taught in other cases, had any particular reason or, or likelihood of, of not telling the truth. Or of not knowing what he was talking about.

[student: [unclear] drink alcohol.]

Ah...that's what the Buddha said [laughs], in the sutra. I'm not aware of any sutra where he ever said you could drink alcohol. Okay. I'm not aware of any buddhist texts that...and I don't think you find it in a buddhist text. Yeah?

[student: But Brandy's point there where your stories that [unclear] the Buddha taught the existence of a self.]

Aaah...that's another study and there's a, there's a subject...it's a beautiful subject it's called {tang nyay}. {Tang nyay} means "the art of interpretation". In fact the great...a great commentary is written by a Sera Je abbot, [laughter] and, and we edited it.

Refuge - raw transcript

We edited it and printed it, and he's passed away about twenty years ago but they had some tapes left and it's been printed now, it's a great book, it's a small great book {lo sang wang chup}and, {trang way} means "the art of interpretation"...how do you know when the Buddha was speaking literally and how do you know when he was just speaking figuratively, what are the ground rules for determining when you should accept something literally and when should you say, "Oh the Buddha was just...he was in an AA meeting that night, and he said, "Don't drink a single drop of alcohol" [unclear]" But then it was the right thing to say. In general he didn't mean it, that everyone should practice that.

That's a whole different study, the...it's a, it's a beautiful subject, it's a...you have t...we study it for about six months in the monastery. Tsongkhapa wrote the greatest book about it. [b: Trang Le Lek Shay Nimbo] In the monas...it's two hundred thirty pages long, if you memorize it in the monastery you get an award. I didn't get it. [laughs] [laughter] Alright.

[student: How about [unclear] Middle Way, [unclear] moderation, I mean it's..is there any way? Or?]

Well, I don't want to get into, into that per se but I mean, what I want to say and what I want you to remember from...'cause you...the grey areas you can debate like crazy, you know whether or not a, a glass of wine at dinner is okay...or, or things like that you can debate like crazy but I always, I always like to say as far as buddhist morality, it's not the grey areas that trip us up, you know it's not the grey areas that are gonna, are gonna send you to the hells in your next life, it's the, it's the areas where you know very well that you're not doing the right thing and you can't stop yourself.

You know, it's like when you get really angry at someone and scream, I mean, when you talk about keeping your morality, I, I don't know...if, if you study it for a long time, like vinaya, you have to read all the exceptions, you have to know all the rules. You have to know every little detail of every little exception. But in general when we talk about going for refuge and what's going to help you or protect you, you know the things you do that are bad, and you know...they're not questionable. It's...not, not talking about the, the borderline things like certain sexual practices or, or certain kinds of wine or things like that, those are not the main thing, you know very well what you do that hurts other people all the time..and work on those. If you work on those, you'll keep out of a...when you get them all cleaned up we can debate the grey points [laughs] [laughter] but I may not be there 'cause I don't have [unclear] either. You know, yeah.

[student: [unclear] purification practices and]

It would be nice, I'll try, I'll try a little bit. [unclear] back to going for refuge. The Buddha has...the Buddha is that, so when you take cause refuge in its lowest form, you are interested in staying out of hell realm, animal realm, and the hungry ghost realm and all of buddhist philosophy says I cannot show you the hell realm and the hungry ghost realm, I admit it.

Refuge - raw transcript

If I said I could I'd be a liar. If I said I know they exist I'd be a liar, except for, for by logic...and I know that the Buddha said it and the Dalai Lama said it and people that I can believe but otherwise...you just have to try to consider the possibility of it knowing that the mind does go on, and knowing that tiny seeds create a huge grotesque bizarre results and that you know that. So it's a, it's a, it's a possibility.

The second level of cause refuge is where you just want to get out of this kind of existence in general and I think, you know that's the easiest one for me to focus on, I have trouble like you do, much thinking about five minutes after I die and fighting off Freddy's in hell, you know, I...it's hard for me to concentrate on, it's hard for me to motivate my practice...with only that in mind but the second level I think is pretty much...and that's where you just don't want any to be in a world like this. You don't want to be in a world where every nice thing is attached to a suffering, you know. And that, that's just...that doesn't...that's just as you get older or as you get more mature and you see more horrible things of parents losing their children or, really nice people getting killed or, you're friends getting AIDS or, or things like as you get...go through life and you see all these things that are just heart breaking that you, you naturally you, you'd would like to prevent that in the world, you know that you, you would like to see a world where that didn't happen, where every nice thing...every time a nice thing happens, somebody has a child, [unclear] to lose that child or every time someone is healthy or pretty or anything that they eventually they're losing it, they...you just don't wanna be in a world like that anymore. Or you don't...you want to stop that, you'd like to be in a world where that doesn't exist.

And that's really the goal of buddhist practices, sometimes I think we get hung up on...whether or not we feel...calm at a particular period in our...in, in, at work or, whether or not we feel bright and happy today or whether or not we feel devotion today or we feel dry today, or all these things but...the ultimate goal is that, just to be in a world where, where they don't exist.

I have a Christian friend who said, "That's very selfish, you know, you're gonna leave all these people in this world and go to a world where it doesn't exist" and there are other friends who say, "Oh that would be boring". You know, that's despite the life when things go bad and, if it were, if we were happy all the time it wouldn't be much fun. I, then I say, "Could I drill your teeth?" you know? [laughs] [laughter] And a...it wouldn't be...it wouldn't be boring. It...I wouldn't be like that, it would just be people...happy, you know, and people not having the, the separation and the sufferings, especially the mental sufferings that we have.

And then the, the highest level of cause refuge is, is where you just wish that for everybody, and I think that's natural, I think it'd be very weird to wish that you could be in a world where...nothing...where the good things were really good and they weren't always mixed up with some kind of suffering. And then everybody else was in, in a world where there was suffering that, that would be a kind of a strange existence I think, you wouldn't want that.

Refuge - raw transcript

And that's, that's where your refuge is mixed up with boddhichitta, where you really...you, you would like to be in a world where the nice things aren't mixed up with suffering and, and you obviously you wish it for everybody else as well, and you really do wish that for everybody else.

So that's...those are the three kinds of cause refuge, and, and there are supposedly like three different kinds of buddhist practioners: the {shravakas}, that are called listeners...they are people who, if they could just get to nirvana, that would be enough and when they go for refuge they just think about nirvana. Nirvana is a state where you yourself no longer have that kind of suffering that we talked about. You, you don't have that any more. Yeah?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, when you achieve nirvana, and when you achieve foe destroyer, and the permanent cessation of your bad thoughts...the permanent ending in your heart of jealousy, anger, desire...that's, that's nirvana. That is nirvana, you could achieve nirvana tonight or not?

[student: No, probably not.]

[laughs] [laughter] No, no, is it possible?

[student: [unclear]]

It's possible. Would you look any different to us tomorrow, like if we had a class tomorrow morning...I, I'll give you the definition again, it's just the permanent

[student: [unclear]]

[laughter] [laughs] It's, it's the permanent cessation of your bad thoughts. It can happen at...I mean, in theory it could happen at any time in your life and you wouldn't look any different. You would certainly act differently. Or, or, and, and, and your own perception of the world would be totally different than how we see the world. But, but you wouldn't necessarily...your face and things wouldn't change. You, you still have a body which was created by your past karma...you know? That...and that body is...the lower schools say {hlok chay}, it's left-over. You...it'll go through a process of aging and dying but you, you're free, you're already free.

That's {tak pa}, that's {moksha}, liberation, freedom, {mam dul}? All those words are synonyms. Stopping your bad thoughts permanently, reaching nirvana, reaching freedom, reaching liberation...reaching arhat, foe destroyer it's all the same thing. So they're only looking...they're taking refuge 'cause they wanna reach that. When they think of what they're taking refuge in they think of someone who has reached that. And then when a, when a mahayana person thinks about refuge they think about...they think about reaching a place, a point where...or, or going for refuge to a being who is, who is a full buddha, fully enlightened buddha, who can help other beings...perfectly.

Refuge - raw transcript

And that's, that's, those are cause refuge. There's a really neat refuge called result refuge. What do you guess that is? [silence] Jack? [laughs] How 'bout a

[student, Jack: [unclear]]

Aah, it's when you take refuge in your own Buddhahood. It's where you take refuge in yourself when you become a buddha, it's very beautiful. You know, so you're actually taking refuge in, in yourself...in the future. It's called result refuge, and, and that's a very useful thing sometimes to...sometimes when they teach Lam Rim they start from the back, and, and they teach you what it would be like to be a buddha, and they spend days and days and days on trying to imagine yourself as a, as a being who...who could help every other being in the universe spontaneously, and then who had more love for every being in the universe then, then anyone has for anyone.

All at the same time, and they, and they take you through this exercise where you, you try to imagine it so result refuge is where you take refuge in your future Buddhahood...and when you go for refuge you're actually going for refuge in your own future Buddhahood. And that's, that's another kind of refuge, there's really five kinds. There's those three different types of practitioner: one wants to...he's going for refuge to the, to the concept of not going to the lower realms. The other one's going for refuge in the concept of not living in a world where every good thing is mixed up with a painful ending. The third one is going for refuge into the...in the concept of, of a being who can really help everyone achieve that. Those are all a kind of a causal refuge and then there's a result refuge where, where you're taking...you're actually imaging how it is when you'll be a buddha and you're taking a refuge in him or her. Okay?

And that's, and that's an interesting kind of refuge and those are the five kinds of refuge. What does it mean in a practical sense? You know, how do you take refuge day to day? Is it only in the morning when you do your practices or, or when do you take refuge...we, we talked about refuge yesterday going for refuge, and everybody gave a different idea. We've established the pain that you want to get away from, those are all the different varieties of suffering that you'd like to get away from. But, but what would you...what do you take refuge in? When you get in a tight spot at work, which is when I usually take refuge, I mean when someone's screaming in my face, okay?

When the lady at work, and you know who she is 'cause you have one at your office, and she's in your face, and, and she's screaming at you, and she's saying something bad to you and, and, and what ha...if you took refuge what would it be like? How would it help? What good would it do? If refuge has a function, then it's a, it's a thing. If it doesn't do anything it's not a thing. That's classic buddhist logic [laughter] you know, if it's not doing anything it doesn't...it's not a thing. {[unclear] yinpay chir} he said that the performing a function is the definition of a thing. What are you gonna do? How do you...what does it mean to take refuge at that moment?

[student: [unclear] not create more bad karma for yourself.]

Refuge - raw transcript

I, I would say this: focus on her emptiness first. Okay?

[student: [unclear]]

No, focus on her emptiness first. Doesn't mean she's not there. That's disproving by {tsema pramana}, by your direct valid perception she is there. And she is yelling in your face. And she is irritating, you know, she is, she is a...she is...it's a {tsema}. {Tsema} means, very important study in buddhist logic.

You are perceiving her, you're not drunk, you're not crazy, you're not influenced by any other things like any other strong emotions that might make you misperceive the event, she really is there, she's yelling at you and your {tsema} or your {pramana} confirms it therefore it exists that's the definition of existence in buddhism {tsemay dupa ye pay tsempay yuppa tsemay}. If you can perceive her and you're not crazy and you're not drunk and you're not on LSD and everything else, she exists and she's real. So she's yelling at you. What does it mean to see her emptiness? It doesn't mean to pr[cut]

[end side one of tape 51]

and everybody else is, where would she be? She wouldn't be. [unclear] It, it's independent of my projections. She doesn't exist. And when you study {gakja} which means "a self existent thing" there's this, there's a whole exercise of trying to identify a self existent thing. It's hard to do 'cause they don't exist.

But you do...you can imagine self existent thing, it would be a lady at work, who was irritating independent of my projections. Without me to project it, she would be irritating. You know, that's, that doesn't exist. That's a self existent thing. Okay?

So the first thing to do is just look at her and think...I mean you usually don't have time right? You get angry right away, so...but you think she's...I think what's very useful, and why did the Buddha spend all those years teaching emptiness it must be important. Just, just remember she's empty, I mean if you don't remember anything else from this weekend, when you take refuge, at that moment taking refuge starts with she's empty...she's empty, okay? Doesn't mean she's not there, and it, it doesn't mean that she's not yelling at you. And it doesn't mean that the yelling is not irritating. It means that...if my projections weren't...here, she wouldn't be irritating at this moment. What's the next natural thought? We...would it comes into your mind, okay she's empty but where did this come from?

[students: [unclear]]

Yeah. Where did this appearance come from, [laughs] okay? It, it really is a mental overlay. It really is a projection. I mean you can't perceive that at that moment, it's very difficult, you can't notice yourself projecting. But you, but you have to study it and you have to contemplate on it, you have to meditate on it, it is your projection.

Refuge - raw transcript

It is a mental projection. It is a mental overlay...on a, on something that's not that way...and, and you have to recognize where it's coming from. So you...so far you have two thoughts going on in the microseconds as you start to respond to her. [laughs] She's empty...yeah, right, sure. That's, that's why you have to practice. [laughs] [laughter] You probably remember by a half hour later, after you scream at her. She's empty, it's a projection coming from my side...is the projection voluntary or is it forced upon you?
[student: [unclear]]

It's forced upon you.

[student: When you say forced upon you though]

I, I mean...I did mean that. I do mean that. I do mean that. What I mean is that, it's not like you have any choice at that moment, you can't say I...I choose not to have this projection, you know? I choose to shift my projection, I understand that there's just a lady out there neither good nor bad by herself. I choose to project a nice lady. Y'can't do it, go try. [laughs]

You know go try, you know go try close your eyes and reach to the third [unclear][laughter] you know and, she won't change. You'll open your eyes and she'll be screaming at you for closing your eyes, you know. She'll still be there. And, you can't do it, it, it is forced on you, it really...obviously, 'cause you can't...that's why the, the idea of...that's why this whole idea of refuge as, "Oh oh, I wish it wasn't like that! I wish it wasn't like that! I wish it wasn't like that!" You know you open your eyes and it's still there you know, it just doesn't...that's not the idea, refuge doesn't work that way. It never will, it cannot. It just won't work.

You know, you tried...there's been tight times in your life you're about to die or something, or you got this tremendous headache or something you just say, "Oh I wish I didn't have it" you know...and it won't go away, it won't stop, it doesn't help. It's forced on you, by your past karma.

[student: Is that why I could remedy something though, [unclear]]

We'll talk, we'll talk about it in about thirty seconds...actually maybe now. What do you do next? I mean, you see your emptiness, okay? Just remember her emptiness...if you don't get anything else out of this today, going for refuge at that moment is remembering her...that she's empt...just remember that she's empty. That's very easy 'cause you've struggled with emptiness for many years, you're wondering what emptiness is.

Okay she's empty so big deal how does that help me? Why do all these lamas run around teaching emptiness you know? Okay, it's nice idea...but what can I use it for? She's empty, which means what? Dependently originationally speaking, she's my projection. What does that mean? I'm being forced to have this projection of this irritating lady due to my past karma. What kind of karma was it? That to, to have somebody screaming in your face? It's that you, you, you spoke harshly to someone, you said something harsh to someone. Just by the laws of all causes and effects they must be similar.

Refuge - raw transcript

You can't remember, you can't see it, you can, you can deduce it...by logic, you yelled at somebody. Then all that you have and [unclear] right? So what's the last thing you want to do her?

[students: Yell [unclear]]

Yell back, it'd be insane! It'd be crazy! It would be psychopathic! [laughs] To a, to yell back at her, and that's exactly what we do, we yell back and, and that's a, that's why the wheel of life is shaped like a wheel. It really is self-perpetuating. Your, your natural reaction perpetuates suffering. It's...that's the key to the wheel of life. Your natural reaction to suffering, which is to hurt someone to get out of it...brings it right back to you, again, and then what's gonna happen to you next time it comes there?

[student: [unclear]]

You know [unclear]. You'll respond again, with hatred or you'll say something bad and then it'll start...it'll, it'll start into motion another wheel of, of dependent...of, of the wheel of life, the twelve links. And that's, that's exactly how the twelve links work.

{Dunpa ma rikpa}, the first of the twelve links is ignorance, it's required {nyi pa duchay kyile}. The second link is creating karma due to your ignorance. You don't understand her nature, you don't understand she's empty, you don't understand that she's your projection, you don't understand that your projection was forced on you by your past karma so you're doing the same karma again. And then you start the wheel, it's like a roulette wheel and you spin it, you start it again. And then sooner or later you have to go through the end of the wheel.

So that's the whole thing, I think when you take refuge...that's what you're taking refuge in. Refuge has to be intimately related to emptiness. Because three...all three of the refuge's objects are either emptiness, or the perception of emptiness or someone who has perceived emptiness. So it must be related, emptiness must be related to taking refuge. Morality is, is totally linked to emptiness. You can't talk about emptiness and not talk about karma in the next moment...because something has to be filling in the empty.

There's a blank screen, somebody has to be painting on it, that's karma. And that's, that's why the buddhas always...I mean people like Tsongkhapa and Nagarjuna they're, they're obsessed with emptiness and karma. They never talk about emptiness without talking about karma. First moment of taking refuge with a screaming lady you, you remember her emptiness. Second moment you remember who's painting the picture. And the third moment it's me...and, and I did some...I screamed at someone, you know. Fourth moment, take refuge. You take refuge...how do you take refuge? What can protect you from having screaming ladies in your future? Restrain! [laughs] Restrain from yelling, you know, don't yell back. You know...that, that's refuge. That's the only refuge.

Refuge - raw transcript

There's, there's two points about that refuge: one is...it's the only refuge you're ever gonna have. Okay? You can pray to visualizations of certain colored things and, and, and a, it...you know it, it won't necessarily work. I don't mean the great faith that you feel which is a good karma and fits into the other karma refuge...that's real taking refuge. But the refuge of, of responding correctly and understanding the emptiness of the thing, that's wisdom. That's the sixth perfection.

There's nothing more to buddhism than that. You, you are taking refuge in knowledge and you don't respond, and then slowly you use up all those...those karmas that you have. It wouldn't be fair to end it though and not explain how you could...use up those karmas a little bit ahead of time so you wouldn't have to wait for all the irritating ladies in the world to show up [laughs] you know? I mean ten minutes sorta like the process, could you just have the Mom come in the room today and yell and then get over [laughs] [laughter] and you know? And not respond, right? And then that would be, that's actually {deep med}, that's getting rid of your {douppa}s then there wouldn't be any more obstacles and you'd, and you would start perceiving this room as a paradise.

[student: [unclear]]

Excuse me?

[student: What do you call that?]

{Durp}

[student: {Dip}?]

{Dhup, dhup pa meh ba}

[student: [unclear] accelerated [unclear]?]

Oh no, that's an obstacle but we'll talk about it. So...you had a question there bef...I'm...so I'm gonna go into just a brief thing on how could you accelerate all those {bak chak}s, how could you get all those mental seeds for karmas to, to ripen quickly without having your car blow up [laughs], and a, and get them over with, you know, I mean there's two sides to reaching your own paradise and the [b: Diamond Cutter Sutra] is very clear about it.

There's two things that have to go on for you to reach your own paradise. You, you must remove your past karmas, you know you must remove the seeds you have in your karmic pocket, you know your...the karmic pocket is very deep. It's not like our wallets which are usually empty...it's very deep and it's got millions of years of seeds sitting there, they're waiting in priority to come up next and they will. And that's why our world continues, that's why we have a perception of time. They're sitting there waiting and they pop up one by one. So you have to clean out all your old karmas. What's obviously the second part?

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Not create new ones.]

Not create new ones under any circumstances, okay? The...taking refuge as we've just described it, will prevent you from creating new ones. That is protection. That's the best protection. It's the only protection...and by the way, I, I wanted to say at some point you ain't got no choice either. You know? There isn't...you have to take refuge. You know?

What's your choice? You know, what are you gonna do? Are you gonna stay like this? You know, it's not like a question of you have to go home and debate it, you know, am I gonna become a buddhist or not? You know...when you take refuge you're already a buddhist. You see it's very interesting, we didn't have any weird guy with a bump on his head and long ears and...and any golden colored body or anything. When you take refuge like I just described it you are a true buddhist, and it doesn't matter what you call yourself.

[student: [unclear]]

[laughs] 'Cause you broke your refuge. You know? You broke refuge, you're not taking refuge at that moment. You're on an empty screen you are choosing to cause...create the causes to project some suffering. 'Cause you're {kay su}, {kay du supa} means you're, you're disregarding an obvious [unclear] of the Buddha. It's, it's a special kind of bad deed to say, "What the hell, this is a stupid rule." I mean the Buddha ninety percent cool. Ten percent, "Those are silly, you know, we know now-a-days that we can do those things", you know that's a special kind of bad deed but I don't want to...those are the grey areas. So you want to prevent from doing them in the future. And, and once you do that mentally, at work, if tomorrow, at work someone yells at you or says something unkind to you, and you start to react and then you remember this talk and you restrain yourself, through an understanding of the person's emptiness, you've just taken refuge and whether you like it or not, you're a buddhist, okay? [laughs] You've just joined the ranks of the buddhists. Okay?

It doesn't matter what church you go to or anything, you're already...you are a true buddhist then. The opposite's also true, if you never take refuge, like that, it doesn't matter if you wear robes or whatever...you're not really gonna get any kind of protection then. Somebody had a question. Yeah?

[student: I asked you if equanimity [unclear]]

Oh. I like it. I like it. I like it because we've reached that point that we [unclear] yesterday about equanimity? About really being able to sit in the room while the guy breaks down the door and [unclear] to kill you.

I mean, let's go back to that example, I mean what, what in the old man's mind, given this discussion, could have let him be so fearless at that moment? I mean, is he gonna get up and try to find some sharp object and try to hold it...stab the guy? That's, that's the opposite of taking refuge. That's, that's yelling back at the lady it's exactly the same thing. It's a lot harder to let someone stab you.

Refuge - raw transcript

By the way, there's a famous story of King {Wouldanna}...King {Wouldanna} and King {Bemasaya} were two Indian kings. They started giving gifts to each other, and each one wanted to outdo the other and finally they reached the point where somebody had given somebody a million dollars in gold and the other one didn't know what to do. So he went to the Buddha and said, "You know, I gotta send something back more valuable, what should I do?" The Buddha said, "Send my picture."

So...[laughter]so he hired some painters and he said, "Go to where the Buddha is and paint him and bring me the canvass." And he waited for a few days and nobody came back so he, he went over there and there's these guys sitting in front of the Buddha like that [laughter][laughs] and, and he said, "What are you doing, you're supposed to be painting a picture?" And they said, "He's too beautiful, you know and we [unclear]...can't. We can't take our eyes off of him, you know?"

And the Buddha said, "Don't worry" and he put a lamp behind him, and he put a sheet in front of him and he said, "Just, just outline it on the sheet, you know, the shadow, you know the, the silhouette."

So they outline the silhouette and the Buddha said, "Okay, let me, let me draw something, let me add something." So he drew the wheel of life. And, and that's where the wheel of life came from, up in the corner there's the Buddha pointing, and that's the silhouette of the Buddha. And the wheel of life the Buddha added. And he added all the twelve links and he added the five, six realms in the middle and the four in the middle and he added everything, he painted everything.

He said, "Send this to {Deana}...and something great will happen." So {Bemasaya} sends it to {Udayana} and...{Udayana} opens the package, he sees the painting, he grasps it like that. And he became an arya on the spot, he just 'Boom!', you know? So, later on he reaches arhat. Then he goes to...he, he gives up his kingdom, he goes to follow the Buddha. He, he gives up his whole kingdom and he goes to follow the Buddha. And he puts his son in charge of the kingdom.

The son turns out to be a bad guy, and he starts doing too much taxes and hurting people, capital punishment or anything like that and he starts really hurting the, the people. And {Udayana} hears about it, he says, "I'm gonna go back to my kingdom and straighten out my son." The two evil ministers hear about that and they tell the son, "Watch out, {Udayana}'s coming back, he's gonna take the kingdom back, he's gonna dethrone you. He might even murder you." So the son says...his name is {Shupachin Shikanday}, he says, "Do whatever is necessary to stop him."

And they go to murder him, {Udayana}. So here, here's a person who is an arya, he's a...I believe he's an arhat also, and they're going...he meets them, the assassins on the road. He says, "Are you here to murder me?" They said, "Um-hum." [laughs][laughter] "Just give me a moment to collect my thoughts, you know?" And...and he, and he tries to fly away, he tries to...he has miracle powers, he can fly.

Refuge - raw transcript

And, and he tries to fly but they fail him at that moment, I mean the karma over...what do you call it? The karma is stronger than his abilities, and he, he can't fly.

And in fact, when you study the five great sins, the five great bad deeds...that son is, is one person who collected both, he killed an arhat and he killed his father with one, with one deed. So he...two out of five, you know? [laughs] Which is very rare.

And, and the point of it, that {Udrayana} here has all that power to, to leave, I mean he, he has all this power to, to get away and he tries to get away...why? Out of compassion for the assassins, it's, it's stated in the sutra. It's not like {Udrayana}'s worried about himself, he says, "Boy, if they kill me my son's gonna collect two of the five great bad deeds. He'll definitely go to hell the moment he, he dies. I don't want him to go to hell, I'll do anything to try to get away." So he really tries to get away, he tries to use all these supernatural powers he has to get away...out of compassion for the assassins and for his son. He doesn't want them to collect that karma.

Which...why did I bring this up? The monk...he, he really should try to get away. I mean Dalai Lama did run away from the chinese I mean, it's compassionate, at a...not to let someone murder you. You know? And I'm not talking about that when I talk about...when I talk about equanimity, I don't mean that {Udrayana} sat there and said, "Okay just kill me."

You know he did try to use his powers to escape, out of compassion, so what I mean is equanimity doesn't mean to let someone abuse you, or, or harm in a way that would hurt them, what it means is not to get angry back. It...when you get very, very, very good at it, and you're not angry at the lady anymore, you might wanna punch her in the nose or something out of compassion. You know, but we, we're not at that level I, I, I [laughter] guarantee you. Don't do as people who fooled themselves into saying, "It's compassionate for me to yell back because I want to teach her a lesson 'cause she's creating bad karma" I mean, come on! Is that really your motivation? You know...anyway I, I've heard a lot of people say that. Maybe, maybe we could get to that point, I don't think we're at that point.

So you, you have to just try to...equanimity means as she's yelling at you, you don't respond. And...but now equanimity has a reason and a logic, and it's tied to taking refuge. I mean now it's not hard to have equanimity, it's just the intelligent thing to do. It's the educated buddhist approach. You know, when they yell at you you just...the best thing is to try to do something...constructive back, you know, something kind, back.

I don't mean to be...we're not like Dalai Lama who can hug Mao Tse Tung, you know? But at least you can try to make something good happen in the next few minutes, you know, say, "Okay I know, maybe I did something wrong, you know, can I help you, can we fix this, you know, can we do?" And, and in that sense you, you...that's equanimity. That's...and that equanimity is, is if you can keep your mindfulness, you can achieve that tomorrow. It's, it's just the equanimity of, of knowing what's gonna happen if you respond. And, and you don't respond...when people go around the office saying, "Boy, this lady is weird, she never gets men, you know, I don't know what it is."

Refuge - raw transcript

But you're not getting mad for your own purposes, y'know you don't wanna get any more bad karma you know. Yes?

[student: That's, that's an interesting point because it always seems like they really [unclear] nail you, in buddhism where it has the peace of patience of the [unclear]. One of the descriptions is..he or she could have one side a person [unclear] or the other side [unclear] so the arhat [unclear] And then you also have in the [b: Prana Parameta] was a [unclear] one of the offerings that you made so that he could [unclear] cut off a piece of his body so that he could buy butter lamps [unclear] And then also a bodhisattva that put butter lamps, I don't remember his name but [unclear] so it seems to be a sort of...attachment about the five elements. In some [unclear] but at the same time what this [unclear] did and the Rinpoche did in fleeing, is very compassionate because they came to us to...as well as preserving [unclear] so I, I see these, these two things going on where...with equanimity as sort of a [unclear] and I wonder if you could say something about that 'cause they seem to be somewhat in conflict [unclear]]

I think one is that...they don't...you...Shantideva says you're, when he talks about giving he says, "Start with vegetables" [laughs] you know what I mean? So don't go around giving your eyeball to somebody you know, you're not strong enough, and you would start to regret it and it would become a bad deed. The regret would be a bad deed. So, he says, "Start with what you can handle."

And, and they say that when those bodhisattvas do something...that would be to us painful they don't...they are already at a point where their karma is such that it actually feels good to them to do that. When, when...I don't remember who it was...{Shantarakshita} maybe or I don't remember, but he actually pulled his eye out and gave it to someone who asked him for it

[student: [unclear] Shariputra? Oh.]

And, and he didn't feel any pain. I mean, I mean by that stage you're not...it's, it's such a pleasure to do it that you just feels good, and, and if you don't reach that stage you're not allowed to do it. You know because you would regret it later, you would start to have second thoughts later and then that would be a bad deed, it would be a kind of...stinginess. Yes?

[student: So if yelling lady, if I [unclear] go through seeing emptiness and hearing all these things]

Good! Not too many things, okay? [laughs]

[student: Okay. And, and then not yell back at her]

Bottom line, yeah.

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Right. And walk away from it but later go, "Y'know", have it naturally come up, "Oh [unclear] pissed me off, this lady is yelling at me." I mean, is that not good too then?]

It's...you gotta, now...then you hafta use the emptiness thing on that. You know?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, and, and I promise you, and you know at the beginning...it won't, it won't work very well, I promise you that if you don't do it regularly you will forget this day, and you'll go on like you were before...I can pretty much guarantee that if you don't keep some kind of log book, in the evening or in the morning of how many times did you go for refuge, you know, you won't...it will never change. You won't change, it's not enough to wish, it's not enough to have a good intention on Monday morning, you know you've got to keep some kind of record. And don't make it long, make it about two minutes long. You know? Some people I know they go...we discuss this and then the next day they got a list of a hundred things they're not gonna do. And...keep it under five minutes. You know? We'll talk about the purification.

[student: In your life, like it [unclear] how many times [unclear]?]

[laughs] I think every time I get upset, I mean every time someone attacks me, or they're not really attacking me but I feel hurt, I, I don't know I mean personally I work in a very busy office, we go through these big waves of when everybody's upset or when everybody's happy and you know, and in a bad day, I guess about six, seven times a day, I don't have the...I don't have to do it all day long 'cause there's no one yelling at me all day long, somebody...some people do have a boss like that [laughs].

The fact is though the more you do it, and the better you get at it, then naturally the karma starts to weaken, and you can be in an office which is chaotic, and where people are being laid off and screamed at and, failing and, and you're just sitting there like...everything's going right. It's not supposed to be a buddhist goal, okay? It is a side effect, I'm sorry...you know, you're gonna be stuck with this side effect where everything goes pretty well all day, you know? You know, you know it's not supposed to be your motivation.

Failing to respond to her badly...will prevent you from having a lower birth, but as a side thing karma does ripen in three stages. One is called {tong gyur gi lay}. That means karma that you can see ripen in this life. One is {kye gyen on gyur gi lay} means in the next birth, you see it and then there's karma which is experienced in the second birth on to the millionth, you know. But {tong gyur gi le} does exist, there is karma which if you keep it up, on a regular basis, you'll start to see the results in this life.

And in fact the practice of tantra is, is the acceleration of all your karma into {tong gyur gi le}. It's, it's to try to get a result in this life. So that's...I mean the side effect is that you're...

Refuge - raw transcript

I don't say that you won't have disasters in your life but, but generally speaking your life will start to be much more...pleasant you have certain illnesses they'll start to get better, if you have certain personal problems they'll start to work out, if you have money problems they'll start to work out things like that it's, it's not...not...it doesn't work, and it's not...you do have other karmas in your pocket that are pretty powerful like Woody Allen did, but, generally speaking your life will start to get very nice.

[student: [unclear] I mean it's not like the power of yourself that, that's powerful it's just that you are capable of [unclear]]

No you actually change the karma.

[student: Do the actual problems become]

The reality changes because things are empty.

[student: It's not that your perception of reality]

It is just your perception and that's all the reality it ever had. [laughter] It's a good point. It's a good point you know? That's all the reality they ever had.

[student: It sounds like when you say the problem changes, it just sounds like the problem]

Yeah it's not a...you're right.

[student: Okay. I just]

The problem no longer...exists through your perceiving it. Which is the only existence it ever had.

[student: [unclear] remember.]

It doesn't mean, and I repeat, it doesn't mean I don't mean perception is a sense of having a good attitude or not having a good attitude I don't mean that. I mean actually changing reality. You know? Actually changing...the world, through your deeds. And that...it...I don't mean, what's that guy's name? That christian guy...Norman Peel? Vincent?

[students: [unclear]]

I know [unclear] have a cheery outlook on all these disasters that happen to you. [laughs] [laughter] I mean actually changing the karma and they're not happening. You know. Yeah? Yes please.

Refuge - raw transcript

[student, Yulia: I would like [unclear] to think about [unclear] faith. And my first question is, I never really understood the how a buddhist [unclear] object is [unclear]?]

I, I...you mean the object to whom you're praying or something like that? Or meditating?

[student, Yulia: I just remember in all the [unclear] back over and over again that everything is empty and just your projection of karma except for the cause [unclear]]

I'm not...I don't believe the [b: Lam Rim] said that. [laughs] Show me.

[student, Yulia: Maybe I remembered wrong but it seems to me [unclear] of its own and [unclear]]

Yeah right. No, no there is no such category. There is no such category. There is no object in the universe, which is free of the rules that I've described. You know, there is no, there is no such thing. You would be saying that there is something that exists in the universe which is not a creation of a projection which is forced on someone by their past karma, there is no such object. That would be an object that did not have dependent origination. And that would be an object that wasn't empty. And there doesn't exist such a thing. Yeah?

[student: So, we've heard a story of a fly who went around a stupa.]

Yeah yeah.

[student: One time [unclear] with no intention of circumambulating a holy object, and then having a good result.]

That's, that's because of those four elements of karma. {Sh samoa jar part, sh samoa jar part}...the main thing is {samoa}, the main thing is your motivation. The {nun sh}, the actual event itself, where that fly did go around that stupa, and, and because of that did have a tiny {bak chak} to be a student of the Buddha, and to progress as a student of the Buddha...it happens 'cause it, it did perceive, the fly did have a, some kind of primitive perception of going around the stupa...and...that's enough.

And that's, that's used as an example in scripture of the minimum {bak chak} you can have [laughs] I mean, it sounds like the closest thing to not-a-{bak chak}, and a...as I remember showing [unclear] stand out, {nig oh lee pu tu}, he had to interview all the students of the Buddha, and that was the household {re pel gay} and he, he came back and said, "This guy doesn't have it to be a monk. You know I've, I've used my ESP, I've searched his mind, he doesn't have the slightest sliver of any kind of good deed in his past lives which would allow him to be a successful monk." So he advised the Buddha not to make him a monk. And the, the Buddha said, "Ah, you made a boo-boo on this one." You know? And that's where he goes into this...story.

Refuge - raw transcript

[student: Did he let him get [unclear]?]

Yeah. And very famous, he became an arya in his life. [unclear]

[student: [unclear] goes back to the lady [unclear] you notice that a lot of students will just hit a stone wall, I mean they can't could not be and the mindfulness I think is real [unclear] to really changing what's going on I mean if you just act like you're not reacting it just creates a whole 'nother negative karma that's very hard to break. It's almost worse than yelling back.]

There's, there's three levels in...when we study monks vows, it's called...did you ever seen that? I don't know it's called concentric circles? This is like monks morality, about women okay? For a male monk. This is, this is breaking your vow of celibacy. This is being in a room alone with a lady. This is ever being touching a lady. This is looking at a lady. You know this is staying in a place where there's even any ladies. If you, if you always stay out here...you'll never get to there, you know? There's this idea if you just never be around a lady you never gonna break your vow of celibacy. And, and even if you get this far if you never stay in a room with one you'll never break your vows, it's like that you know?

There's these concentric circles like that, and, and what it means for a normal person's morality is...at the beginning, if you're overcome by anger at the lady you have to leave the situation physically, I mean the best thing to do if you're not strong enough yet, don't come this far. You know, stay back here. Never be in the same room, try to avoid the person, don't go down the hall when the person's going down the hall, it's not...I mean if you're not strong enough to stand there, and respond gracefully and helpfully, then, then get away! Don't...try not to enter a situation where you might encounter the person, as you get stronger in your practice, try to reach a point where she could be in your face yelling and you're, you're just keeping your cool, and not in a way that as I...you know, irritates her more than anything I mean we know, that the best way to irritate some of those people is to just..not say anything and that's what you're, that's what you're describing. And that's true.

[student: Yeah. It's very difficult when it's your husband. [unclear]]

Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yes. Yeah, no I mean [unclear] get away. [laughs] Avoid the, avoid the situation. I mean avoid the situation...go outside, you know, go for a walk, you know when it gets heavy, when there's yelling going on you just, you just walk away. That's, that's the minimum thing to do. The, the medium thing to do would be to stand there and try to be a little equanimit...I don't know the adjective.

[student: What I'm saying is just that if you get in the habit of walking away you still have to do something else because, there's...you can just do that then. You know what I mean?]

Refuge - raw transcript

Oh, but then when you get to the highest point, where actually in the face of someone screaming at you you can respond with, with care and, and love and concern for whatever made them angry and, and try to make the situation better. You know, in a very creative automatic instantaneous way while they're screaming at you, and those are all levels that you go through

[student: You just really have to work at it.]

And you have to know your own capacity. You can't overestimate your capacity otherwise you're really gonna screw up...you know?

[student: Don't you think [unclear] I, I really agree with what you have to say and I think it's so good that what you're saying, but it's very buddhist to just walk away, you know 'cause that way they're not exacerbating the situation but I think it's constructive after they've walked away, and they work with the, with their projection and with their own feelings to come back, and try to make a bridge]

Oh yeah sure.

[student: But people don't do that they just walk away.]

Sure yeah. Sure, I mean, what I've just describing now...there's monks who should stay in a monastery and never go outside of a monastery. You know? I remember...[laughter] you know, and then there's monks who, who can come out of a monastery but should never be in a room alone with a lady and then it goes like that you know what I mean? And you have to...if you judge wrong, you're gonna make a big mistake, you have to judge your own capacity. You have to know enough about yourself that

[student: Then you have to write, yeah, you have to write in those [unclear] how to [unclear] I used to think I never got angry. Because I didn't let myself get angry, I, I really didn't I just went who knows? You know when somebody's yelling at me I went...I think I got kind of scared and I went "No!" And so I didn't get angry back, but nothing happened that was very beneficial either.]

Yeah yeah. I think we'll take a...last question, then we're gonna take a break and do like fifteen minutes of...a quick purification thing, just so, you know, if this is the last class we ever have together, you, you know what to do about, you know what to do about the old karmas.

Now you have the method to, to clean up, to prevent the future karmas and I say if you don't start some kind of log tomorrow...I keep a little book in my pocket...if you don't record...don't make it long, record the three worse things you did that day, record the three best things you did that day. If buddhism never lets you record the bad things without recording the nice things, okay?

Refuge - raw transcript

You got...and don't let it go on for more than five minutes, you have three things you did during the day where you should have taken refuge and then three times when you came close to taking refuge. And if it takes you more than two or three minutes to do it you'll give it...you'll, you'll quit. Okay? Let's start it, let's start it like that, that's for the future bad karmas. That...past bad karmas we'll do in a minute. [unclear]

[student: I just want to say, that a, along the lines of what she was saying I have this experience at work, with, there's a la...a young lady who whenever she walks by me makes my heart beat [laughs] but not [unclear] my heart jump, not like, she's pretty but even if I don't look at her or something it just makes my heart jump, and so I, like I feels like then I have to deal with that because it's like if every time she walks by me and it's like maybe it scares me or something I'm not being mindful then it feels like I really I can't walk away, you know, or something I have to, I have to pay attention or figure out what, what, you know, what, what's going on, why is it always my heart jumps you know? You know is that, is that tr...that's what you have to do you can't...right or something]

You can't just run away from it. If there's only one hallway at work and [laughs] yeah, then you have to

[student: [unclear] maybe if you're...that guy remembered hearing his [unclear] Holiness saying that when ever his, his lama came he made his heart jump. You know so he thought oh maybe, something like that, maybe he's...like that you know?]

Something special.

[student: I dunno. Something I'd have to learn [unclear]]

Yeah I know. Okay so let's take a break and then we'll do...it'll help me remember what I'm supposed to say. [laughs][cut]

[end of tape]

Day 3 - Afternoon

Then you can do these, like when you write it down in your little book, you can do that. I have like [vines] of these books of bad deeds. They're very depressing [laughs]. But for most of us [it was] to find one from 1989, where it was the same thing. But, I think by working on it, you Ñ at least you prevent yourself from getting worse. And you do get better. And I believe that there's this what do they call that, emotion? or what's the point where something rolls on its own? You reach a point of momentum or something where, because you've been trying so long, finally one day it works. And you just don't do it anymore. And many times you will fail before that momentum gets to that point.

Just don't get discouraged; keep going, keep recording it, and keep trying to find it. The fight is very glorious; I think that's the dharma person's shining moment, is when you're fighting your own bad habits. And you don't feel very good, 'cause usually you lose [laughter]. And it's not pleasant while it's going on. [And you feel what you feel later on.] But imagine what you would be if you weren't fighting it.

And I think that's our great moment in the dharma practice that nobody knows except you. I mean, you don't get any certificate or anything [laughs]. But that's your shining moment, when you're fighting your own instincts.

And the fight is glorious. And sooner or later you win. But Shantideva says you don't come out without casualties. It hurts. And you have some failures. But you've got to keep going. As I said before, it's not a choice. You don't have a choice. You have to take refuge. There's no choice; what else are you going to do? You're just going to get old and die quietly? [laughs] You have to fight it. You don't have any choice, you really don't have any choice.

What's the option? What other things do people have to offer? There's no other kind of refuge. The doctors can give you refuge up to a certain point. And that's about it. And then they say they give up. They say, 'That's it. I can't help you after that.' So you've got to have some other kind of refuge.

Refuge is not a luxury; it's a necessity. You don't have any choice. It's the only thing that can help you. That's the whole idea of it.

So I want to come back to bad karma. First thing, it's called [tengi tope]. [Tope] means power or force. And [teng] means support; it's the [first] of the support. And support means, like when you fall down, you need some solid ground to get back up. There has to be something to push back up against.

And this is explained in two different ways. One way is to imagine the people that you hurt. There's usually two broad categories. In the short run, there's the person that you actually lied at, for example. In the long run, if you're trying to become a buddha, you just let down every living thing in the universe, you know? [laughs]

Refuge - raw transcript

You just delayed your buddhahood for another day, or another week, or another month. Actually, you're hurting all the people around you. It's like a pebble in the middle of a pond. Every bad deed you do has broad ramifications. It's not just hurting you. When you allow yourself to do something wrong, it ripples through thousands of people unknown to you. You can't see it.

I saw this movie, somebody told me I should see it, called "It's a Wonderful Life" Jimmy Stewart. It was really [great]. The angel comes and shows him what the town would have been without him. Unknowingly, he has affected hundreds of people. And a bad deed is the same. It's not only you who gets hurt.

When a monk checks out a girl on the street people see, subconsciously people know. Everybody knows. People sense what you're doing. And it affects them, and then it affects the next person, the next person... It goes on. So you've let down a lot of people.

And then secondly, the buddhas are all wincing. They're like, 'Oh, man... [laughter obscures next few words] [somebody's] let us down, checking out that girl.' And you let them down again. And if they're omniscient, they're probably wincing a thousand years ago, actually. [more laughter]

So you've let down a lot of people. [tengi tope] means you try to think of who it was you, what was the basis on which you, who you harmed. Every harm you allow yourself, the effects are very broad.

The second meaning of [tengi tope] is to take refuge and try to generate boddhicitta. That's just basic buddhist mental health. So as a start of any class, as a start of any purification, you just try to remember those two things. You take refuge as far as you understand refuge. Hopefully, it's not too fuzzy anymore.

And then secondly, you try to think of boddhicitta, which is to just think of all the people in the world who, really they are going to get old and die quietly. They have no other option. They're not aware of any other option. And you just think of them. So that's [tengi tope]. Say that, by the way... [brief aside about people who eat cookies and don't want to study Tibetan and they all end up in the Friday "cookie class"]...

Say [nama segin bay tope]. [tope] means power or force. [nama segin bah] is a really nasty word. It's the word for ripping something out. It's actually the word for rape in some cases. But it's the word for taking a big weed and ripping it out of its roots. It's to rip something out, and when you have herbs and you're extracting the essence of them, it's called [gin bah] also; you're sucking out the essence of the herbs.

So [nama segin bah] means to rip out something; called the destruction force sometimes. It means regret, intelligent regret. It does not mean guilt. The distinction between guilt and intelligent regret: Intelligent regret is understanding karma.

Refuge - raw transcript

You understand if you happen to yell back at the lady, 30 seconds later, you know very well what's going to happen. You just planted another seed in your mindstream, your mind does not end when you die, that seed will be carefully preserved and carried in your mindstream, and sooner or later, when the conditions are right, it'll come out, and someone will scream at you.

It will be worse than what you did, because things grow. Seeds are always smaller than their results.

So it's an intelligent Buddhist regret. It's not some kind of an anxiety, or worry or fuzzy bad feeling. It's a quite intelligent, educated, knowledgeable understanding that you just screwed up yourself. And you're going to get a bad result from it.

And it's a weird feeling, when you get pretty good at it [laughs]. It's like, you yell, and then 10 minutes later you're like [laughs], 'cause you know quite clearly what's going to happen. And it's very hard to get that seed out of your mindstream. Once it's planted there, it's very hard to get it out. And so it's just knowing that you've put little cancer cells into your body.

And they're going to grow, and they're going to get you. And you just did it yourself. So that's like intelligent regret. That destroys a lot of the force of the deed. What you said the other day [someone responds, 'Um-hmm'] just the understanding that you did a stupid thing helps to remove it.

Say [magnepa nay landopey tope]. [Tope] again means power. [Nepa] means a bad deed or a bad habit. [Nepa landopeh] means to literally it means to walk away, to turn away from it. What it means is, don't do it again, not to do it again. If you had to pick the one force here that was most effective, and is most powerful and really, really does stop the karma that you have from the past it's this one. OK?

Pick your main bad habit. If it's getting angry suddenly, if it's desire for food or ladies or whatever it is, or whatever you have, pick your own worst bad habit, and try to stop it. No. 3 involves a personal vow, a personal commitment, and it's saying, 'I will not do this thing again.'

And the great lamas of history have said, 'Set a time limit. You'll definitely do it again. Set a reasonable time limit in which you can police yourself, and prevent yourself from doing it again.'

I've done the same bad deed again before I got to No. 4. [laughter] I remember it. I've had the same bad deed occur to me, you know, the same desire or something occur in my mind, before I reached No. 4. In that case I should have set about a three-second time limit or something.

Refuge - raw transcript

Lamas often say 24 hours, or something like that. Something reasonable. Something you can really keep. Because otherwise, you're just going to collect what? It's another bad deed of what?

It's lying. It's lying. It's taking a vow and breaking it. So they're saying, make it a reasonable vow. You know, don't swear you're never going to yell at work again. 'Cause you're going to break it. You're just going to collect another bad deed. So...

[Someone else says, "We give these vows all the time that we know we're going to break."] Who? [MR laughs] No, I know, I know, but [we're in the] climate for really taking the vows you're talking about, which are [pattimoksha] vows or bodhisattva vows or [another word] is that you, as you take them as you take them, you truly understand that they are valid and important, and that you want to keep them.

It's not a requirement to take a vow and to believe that you're always going to keep it. Certain vows if you break them you lose your vows, but the only requirement for those kind of vows is just to believe in them, and want to keep them. But anyway, these kind of vows you should set a time limit.

[student: "Can you say, 'I'll try my best?'"]

Better not to. Better just to say, 'OK, if it has to be an hour, then let it be an hour.' You know? But let it be something that you're really pure.

You know, this is the exercise of building up your mindfulness. You start with an hour. For an hour, you can remember that you weren't supposed to do that. That's the idea of the one-day bodhisattva vow, [word], where you, 'OK, for one day I'll try to act like a bodhisattva.'

You try to keep that for that period, that your mindfulness can spread to that long, and you work really hard at it. This is the main force, obviously. The karma of not doing it again really helps destroy the seed that you planted from doing it before.

You know, I've had bad deeds big bad deeds in my early life but I did them once, but I spent the rest of my life Ñ you work on it, you know you say, 'OK, that bad deed I will work against that bad deed. I will never even come close to that bad deed again.' And that helps destroy the force of that bad deed. That's the main direct force that works against it.

OK, No. 4 is [nyemba ton]. [Nyemba ton] means antidote. Antidote means you do something to make up for what you did. For example, I live in a Mongolian community in New Jersey. They keep sheep to eat. I mean they keep them in their back yards and then they slaughter them. They're Buddhists, but they still do this. A lot of them were sent to Vietnam; they didn't know how to get out of it. And we had one student who was in firefights in Vietnam. He doesn't know if he killed anybody. But he came to my lama, he said, 'What do I do? What do I do to make up for that?'

Refuge - raw transcript

He said, 'I happen to know that your father's keeping two sheep in the back yard.' He said, 'You buy those sheep from him and you keep them till they die. And you feed them. That's a symbolic action to make up for what you did: something similar to make up for what you did.'

So he took these sheep Ñ Do you know how long these sheep [have lived]? [laughter] It's very funny. I didn't know that; if you don't kill them, they live like 20 years. And he kept them for about 12 years, and then they died a natural death. That's [nyembe tone].

Here you can do mantras, you can do prayers, you can try to do something symbolic to make up for what you did. But the most powerful word in all the scriptures is a meditation on emptiness.

To review what we said about emptiness, formally I don't mean just ruminate about it and go into your room. Say, 'For 10 minutes I'm going to think about the meaning of emptiness. And what are its ramifications as far as my behavior, as far as karma.

'OK, now what does emptiness have to do with why I'm doing this purification? What's emptiness got to do with the good deeds and bad deeds? What's the connection?' That's supposed to be the most powerful antidote force you can do. That's supposed to be the very best one. Why?

What if you reviewed that process that you're supposed to go through if somebody's screaming at you?

[student: "It would help you [do better]?"]

Absolutely. It would help you do all of those. You wouldn't do it again. If you really understood the lady's emptiness, the last thing you'd do is yell back. And that's why that's the most powerful force. That can actually destroy the karma.

All the scriptures say, Diamond Cutter's Sutra says you can read it there's a process by which these four forces in combination actually speed up the ripening of those karmas that you have, that you already have in your mindstream.

There are seeds in your mindstream, flowing along through time, that lined up in priority like airplanes at the airport. You know they're waiting to take off and they're coming to you next. And you actually can force them to [accelerate]. They accelerate, they join together, and you get a quick maturation, a quick ripening of the karma. And it's much, much less than what it would have been.

So, the example in the Diamond Cutter's Sutra is a karma that would have taken you to hell ripens as a headache or a backache for half an hour or something. And it's that kind of powerful acceleration.

Refuge - raw transcript

[One sentence from student about headache, Geshe MR laughs, but it's muddy. Then, "Does apologizing come into that?"]

It's listed in scriptures under [nyembe tone]. It's sort of an opposite action that you do. By the way, this is not a morning-after tale, OK?

I've heard [Hinayana] people. They do not have this teaching. It's true. It's in the [Mahayana] sutras. They do not have this teaching in the [Hinayana]. They don't accept this teaching. They say, 'Oh you Mahayana. You think you can do anything and the next morning you do these little four things, and everything's OK.'

Why is that not true? Which one of these tells you that's not true? The third one. OK, the third one says you're not going to do it again. If you're doing something the night before, and taking the pill the next morning, and then do it again the next night you didn't take the pill! It's not working. It won't work. It won't work over and over again. You can't just do whatever you want at night and confess it in the morning, purify it in the morning. It doesn't work that way. If it's not improving, you're not using these [word] powers. That's why this third one is there. You're slowly weaning yourself away.

It's like cigarettes, OK? You're not going to give it up the first night. You're going to go Who was it? The lady there, went from high tar to low tar to low-low tar, and it's got to be like that. Somebody asked the lama if one repetition of these four is enough to get rid of a karmic seed. And they said, 'No.' [Satta] means wearing it away. You have to do it over and over again. If you have a heavy bad deed that you did, if you've got something very powerful Ñ and you know what they are you'd have to keep applying this over and over again.

You know, if you're involved in an abortion when I was a kid I was involved in an abortion, OK? Ñ and that's a huge bad deed. That's a murder. So you have to keep doing it over and over. You have to keep [wearing/worrying] away at it. It's not like you do this once, and everything's OK.

You can sense that. You can feel that. It's not just going to go away like that. You have to keep applying it over and over again. And it gets stronger and stronger. And then it eventually wipes out that seed. Yes?

[mostly unintelligible question: ... just projecting... it's all in my mind... completely incapable of ever reaching enlightenment. And so my question is should I...]

It's not an [embracive?] rule against teaching people too much about emptiness. If it's a bodhisattva vow, actually, if it would lead them to give up the search for enlightenment, you know, I mean if it would lead you to give up your search for enlightenment, it's improper I'd break my bodhisattva vows if I mention emptiness or describe it to you, so you scare me [laughs], but I'm trying to say this: It's only emptiness which allows paradise or buddhahood to happen.

Refuge - raw transcript

Things couldn't change if they weren't empty, because the way things change is it's a shifting in your perception and not a changing in them. This world could never become a buddha paradise for you, personally, if it were not empty.

So it's quite the opposite: Because things are empty, they work. Because things are empty, they can change. Because this world is empty, your world can become a buddha paradise. You can experience this same [mahbrahta] as a glass of ambrosia, because you can set up the causes to see it that way. And then it will be.

And that's actually how enlightenment is possible. To say it the way the Diamond Cutter's Sutra says it, because you are empty, you can have an experience of yourself as a buddha. And one day you will look down, and see a buddha, a lady buddha, right? And that would be a perception forced on you by your past deeds.

[unintelligible short question: It opens Buddha?]

It permits paradise to happen. If things were fixed, they would be stuck in a rainy day and all this stuff. But because they're empty, they can change. They can become something else. Yes?

[some words unclear: "I think I got a similar experience to what you're describing when I did my first retreat I was reading "Advice from a Spiritual Friend" and I just got into this really negative place about myself because I was looking so carefully at my mind and seeing how many, many of the things come up and that all [word or two] it's this sort of Western I think thing that probably the Tibetans [couldn't get into?] ... blaming ourselves for the way our minds work. Just like taking guilty to the fact... we put it on ourselves, then it's so depressing, I feel like I'll never get out of it, you know?"]

There's a practice that you studied, [samtan], you study how to reach high levels of concentration or meditation. And there's two steps in there of the antidotes. One of them is to take action when it's necessary. What's the next one, do you remember? When you're having a meditation and things are going bad, you're supposed to take action.

[unclear response]

That's one. But when you reach that stage and you get to the next stage, what's the next stage, do you remember? It's to not take action, to lay off when it's time to lay off. And then taking action becomes a fault, you know?

And Buddhism is a friend of that. If you reach a point in this tracking of your bad deeds where it gets depressing, or it's obviously overwhelming, you are required to lay off. Go on to a different subject.

Refuge - raw transcript

And I'd give you that advice too. Change it every few weeks. I change it maybe every two months or something. You're not going to get rid of your worst bad habit like that. Work on it for a month or two, it'll become dry, it'll become repetitive, you won't be making any progress. Quit. And go to another one.

You have plenty of material to work on. [lotsa laughter] And variety is the spice of life. So go on to the next one for a while. And let that one go for awhile. And you'll find that you stay fresh. And if you get too hung up or depressed about one or concentrating on one bad habit that you have, go to a fresh one, and you'll have fresh solutions, and fresh attacks, and fresh approaches. When it starts to get dry and depressing 'cause you know that, you know, the same old thing, and it turns out after awhile that you're just recording everything and not doing anything about it, then go on to the next one, OK? Last question, then we should stop.

["So you promise that you will never do it again..."]

For a time period. For a set period.

["No. Let's say with the abortion thing. You aren't going to do it again. You can almost be positive.]

Geshe MR laughs: "Yeah."

["But still, that's not going to do it. You still have to keep having regret, and keep trying to make reparations somehow."]

Right. Right. You have to keep working on it. You have to apply those other three [Even everyday] you should review this one, or you could come close to it. You could encourage somebody. There was a very dangerous article came out in Tricycle magazine about I didn't read it Ñ but it was like, 'Oh, in Japan, this is what we do for abortions,' you know. I didn't read it, but I had a feeling it was sort of, 'Well, maybe this is OK.'

[Mia mira chakpa]: It's clearly stated in the sutras. You cannot kill a being who is either in the womb or out of the womb. Those are the two divisions of murder.

["I found [unclear couple of words]. I did read that article. I felt that what it was trying to do was to, you know, that there can be a wrong extreme of having so much regret that you're almost paralyzed and that you would go crazy or something, or you're impaired for the rest of your life because of this, you know. And that it was a kind of therapy they were offering. That's what I got from it."]

That's maybe good.

Refuge - raw transcript

["But I'm just thinking, in my past, I don't know why I picked this one particular thing, but I remember in high school, my best girlfriend went away on holiday, and I stole her boyfriend from her, because that's how I [something] in those days. And as soon as I got him, I didn't want him. But anyway, she came back, and as of course, she was no longer, no matter what happened, my best girlfriend anymore. And the whole thing was just a total mess. So I've tried to be very careful about those kind of things.

"But I keep wondering, God, I wonder if I ever went off, is it still lurking there, waiting for me, you know? I mean, am I still going to have to pay for that one? I mean, or do you try and work on emptiness? Is that the ultimate of...?"

Overcare doesn't hurt, as long as it doesn't get into paralysis. Doesn't hurt, you know, make sure it's gone. And then it reaches a point where you have to believe it's purified. And it's important to know that it's purified.

The big thing is at the moment of death how much you consciously a large part of it is at the moment of death, how much is still on your mind. And you know, if you have a near-death experience and you start to regret all these things about your life, then they're not purified yet, and you probably have to work on them.

["Well, it feels to me in this case, when you put it in that perspective, it's like many of the things that I've done in the past that I have regret for, I can't say that I've purified it, but I can help by truly having regret. I mean, that's the one thing that I can feel. Yeah. That's the best thing. OK... [mumblings from all around]

I felt kind of weird coming to teach here because I'm really just an American guy. And I was a little nervous about coming to teach here. And I'll repeat what I said the first night when I came.

[Vajrapani]'s very famous all over the world. I was part of a small center. We were very jealous of Vajrapani because they did so many good things. And it's really a great thing. Everything you've done here is really, really great. The place is great. The stupa, and the dedication to your root lama is the highest practice you can do, and everything is just really, really perfect.

And all the teachers who have come here and the whole scene is really great. And it's not from your [drupa]. It's not spontaneous. It takes work. It still takes work. And many people struggled to make this place here.

And just for the opportunity for us to have a few hours of classes there's many days and months of work that go into maintaining the place and things like that. So I think we should rejoice in that. It's a great institution. It's more important than the White House or something. No, seriously. If you think in terms of ultimate good, this place here is more important than that institution. Or Wall Street. Or whatever.

Refuge - raw transcript

These houses are more important than that.

And you just keep it up. I mean, the dharma world is hoping that you keep it up. And it's not easy. You don't get any positive reinforcement, much. You don't get anyone coming and telling you how great it is.

Mostly if you're in charge of a dharma place, or you help in maintaining it, or you help with financing it, all you get is complaints. You know, you get people telling you, 'That isn't how you should have spent your money.' Or, 'I don't like this place,' or 'This place is too cold or too hot,' or 'I don't like the food,' or 'Why didn't you do this, or why didn't you do that?' The last thing you get is somebody saying what a great thing you did. And you've got to just keep going on. That's kind of refuge when you talk about refuge and you start to get depressed about no matter how much you do, no one's happy, that's a kind of refuge too. In other words, you have to take refuge in your knowledge that you're doing the right thing, that you're doing the very best thing. And taking refuge in that means not getting discouraged, and not ever allowing that to happen.

When you're doing the right reaction to the lady, and you're nice to her, and then still she attacks you, take refuge again, you know [laughs].

Refuge to me means that: It means in the face of repeated disappointments, you keep doing what you know is virtuous. You just keep going. That's really refuge. And keep it up with [Vajrapani] too. Alright, you can...

[Chanting begins...]
