

Gyamtso-la sent me a message, and in it he said that in New York City they've been offering tsok for three years now. So he requested me to say something, record it and send it back. I don't have anything special or important to say. As Gyamtso-la knows I'm 79 years old now. Not only that, I have diabetes, problems with my kidneys and blood, and these three sicknesses are always weighing me down and have weakened my physical health. Physically I'm not so well. Moreover, my language has become so that it doesn't really make sense anymore. Before I knew Tibetan fairly well; if I needed to speak or write in Tibetan I could do it fairly well. But now I've been traveling and staying away from home for so long - through Bhutan, Nepal and the West - it's been more than thirty years since I've come to the West for medical treatment and so forth. I haven't been here for three years continuously, sometimes I've gone back to Bhutan and Nepal to meet with family and then come back. But it's been thirty years since I arrived in America. And by now I'm forgetting Tibetan and can't speak it clearly; when I write I make mistakes. I don't know Hindi, how could I know Chinese? The thirty years I've been here I've never gone to a school to learn English, and I've never had a private tutor to teach me English. So now I don't really know English and I'm forgetting Tibetan. We talk about language, but now sometimes it's the case that I don't understand my own language. So if I talk a lot maybe you all won't understand me. And if I talk a lot, I have nothing meaningful to say. I can talk a lot, and take a break, leave it aside... But actually what it comes down to is that you say you've been gathering on the 10th, on Guru Rinpoche day, for three years now, and you've asked me to say a few words. I have nothing to say, really; I have no qualities of knowledge or learning. But you all have faith in the Buddha dharma, and in particular solid faith in Guru Rinpoche, so I'll say a few words to make it worthwhile by some dependent-arising.

You've been offering tsok on the 10th Guru Rinpoche day for three years now, and asked me to speak, so I'm very happy. Even if I can't say much, we all have strong faith in the Buddha dharma and in particular in Guru Rinpoche, so I'll say a thing or two, whether it's beneficial for others or not. I'll do it with a pure intention. Among sentient beings there are all different kinds. As you know, there are six classes of sentient beings, all with their own appearances. Of these six kinds, it's said the very best kind of sentient being is the human being. But if we take the example of human beings, as the Buddha said, those with faith in the Dharma are very rare. Some might have a human life, but haven't met with the Dharma, have no belief in the Three Jewels, no belief in cause and effect of karma. Due to some positive karma from past lives they have obtained a human rebirth, but don't take the meaning from human life, with no belief in the cause and effect of karma, no belief in virtue, no belief in non-virtue. They have a "mere human life" - they've

only merely taken human rebirth, due to the infallible working of whatever positive karma they've accumulated in past lives. Nihilists don't accept karma of cause and effect, but nevertheless, not a complete accumulation of merit from past lives, but still some positive karma from relying on the Three Jewels, or perhaps relying on a worldly god - some kind of positive karma from past lives has led to a human rebirth. But if one hasn't met with the holy Dharma, then one doesn't know any way to progress towards Buddha hood through future lives. One may be human, without horns on their head and tail at the back. One has a human body, and can speak and understand, but the real meaning, the real meaning of Dharma they don't understand. They don't understand the meaning of karma, they don't believe in the Three Jewels. It seems like a human life, but it is not a "precious human life". These kinds of people are "mere human beings". They've obtained a human life, but they're not really different from animals. As the good fruit of merit made in past lives one may obtain a human body, and is also born in a central land where the Dharma exists, all of one's sense faculties are intact, one doesn't have 'reversed karma' - meaning that you're not somebody with wrong views who doesn't believe in the Dharma, the lama and the Three Jewels, but someone who has faith in the Three Jewels and the Buddha dharma, one without 'reversed karma'. There are the 5 personal endowments and the 5 circumstantial, outer endowments: that the Buddha has come to this world, taught the Dharma, that the Dharma exists, that the Dharma continues to abide today, that there are beings upholding the Dharma, and so forth.

The 5 personal endowments and the 5 outer endowments together total 10 endowments. And then the freedoms: the freedom of not being born in hell, the freedom of not being born a hungry ghost, the freedom of not being born as an animal, etc. If one is born in hell you are tormented by heat and cold and there is no chance for the Dharma; not being born like this in hell is a freedom. If you are born as a hungry ghost you are overwhelmed by hunger and thirst, and there is no chance for the Dharma; not being born there is then a freedom. If you're born in the animal realm, animals are constantly attacking and harming each other. That's their general suffering. Besides that they can't think, they are stupid. They can't read or speak any words. They don't even know the difference between good and bad. And then even if one is born a human in a land where the Dharma exists, if you are an ordinary person with wrong views and no belief at all in karma, past and future lives, or what positive actions to take up and negative actions to avoid, then there is no freedom. So not being born this way now is a freedom.

If you're born in a land with no Dharma (as a barbarian) and you have no idea at all about virtue and non-virtue, then there is no freedom for the Dharma. So not being born as a barbarian like this is a freedom. And it's a freedom not to be born as a human who is mentally disabled and can't speak, whose sense faculties are impaired, without the intelligence to judge what is to be taken up and what is to be abandoned. Also, even if you're a human, if you're born in a world where no Buddha has come there would be no appearance of the Dharma - like being born into darkness - you couldn't even hear a single sound of Dharma. Not being born into darkness like that is a freedom. If you're born as a long-life god then you are totally consumed by the sensual pleasures of form, sound, smell, taste and feeling. There is no mind for Dharma, only attention to such worldly pleasures. Not being born as a long-life god is a freedom. These are the 8 freedoms.

Moreover, today you have obtained a human life; you are born in a central land of Dharma; the senses of your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind are all intact; you don't like negativity and non-virtue, and so you don't have reversed karma; the Buddha dharma abides and you have faith in it. These are the 5 personal endowments. The Buddha came to this world - Buddha Shakyamuni, the fourth Buddha of this world - and taught the Dharma. Due to his kindness we can hear the Dharma and the Dharma remains. Even though it is now the Kali Yuga, the Dharma hasn't yet disappeared. Also, there are other beings following this Dharma. These other beings and all these outer circumstances are the 5 outer, circumstantial endowments. In total there are 10 endowments. If you have a human life with these 8 freedoms and 10 endowments, then you are said to have a "precious human life".

However difficult our life may be now, due to the merit of past lives we've obtained this precious human life with the 8 freedoms and 10 endowments. A precious human life is like gold - more difficult to obtain than gold - therefore it is called "precious human life". A "mere human life" is human, but no different from an animal. With no belief in past and future lives, no faith in the Three Jewels, no belief in practicing virtue and abandoning non-virtue, one is no different from an animal. As I've said again and again, such a life is a "mere human life". As Buddha taught, a "precious human life" is complete with the 8 freedoms and 10 endowments.

Among us, how perfect of a precious human life we actually have, how well we practice the Dharma and how much faith we actually have, I can't say. But we'll just say that through dependent-arising we have obtained precious human lives. Having attained this, though, there's nothing permanent or stable about it; it's like

a flash of lightning, like melting snow, like a cloud, a dream, it's fragile and transient. It only appears as something lasting. Whether we're doing business, or performing some relative virtue, whether we're in politics or a religious figure - whatever we're doing, when we get involved it seems it will last a long time. We do it for the sake of our livelihood and to benefit our loved ones; we always think it will bring benefit. We're always thinking this life will carry on for a long time like this and won't easily change. Because of a bad habit, strong imprints, we never consider impermanence. With self-grasping we hold our own body and speech as most important, and those close to us we cherish and hold as friends.

Whatever it may be - be it our household, farm, business, whatever - these transient things appear like they'll last. They happen, but they are conditioned, always changing, and in no way permanent or stable. They only stay a short while. But we apprehend them as lasting, hope that they'll last and try to make them last. In fact, whatever appears are only appearances whose essence is constantly changing. There is nothing that is permanent and stable; everything is impermanent.

Whatever we do it is always changing, and therefore no matter what we do, it is actually useless. Yet we always think whatever we're doing in the world is useful, that it's beneficial. If we can't purely practice the Dharma, if we don't have faith in the Three Jewels, then no matter what happens or appears, it is just temporary and fleeting. We think that it's real and will last; due to strong habitual imprints from our past lives it seems to us as if it will last. If it goes well we try to perpetuate it - whatever it may be, work for the Dharma or work in the world as in politics. We hope it will go well and grasp on to it, and do what we can to make it last.

At the root of all of our busyness is the fault of not remembering impermanence - the certainty of death. There are many teachings on impermanence in the sutras and tantras. Now I won't read them - there is nothing here to read - but many stories and teachings about impermanence are taught in the sutras and tantras. You can look at them, and if those who know about them can tell them to those who don't, it will be very beneficial. Nobody wants to hear about impermanence; worldly people like politicians and businessmen obviously don't like to hear about it. Even Dharma practitioners don't like to hear about it - although as Dharma practitioners we have to know about impermanence from the scriptures and teachings. None of us like to hear about it because it just tells us that everything changes - that we'll all die, that if we're healthy now we'll eventually become sick, that we'll be separated from all our dear ones. The Buddha only spoke the truth, he was the great Rishi (master) who never said anything false, only whatever is true about reality.

Sentient beings, grasping for substance at all that appears, think the truth we hear is not true, that we won't die, that husband and wife won't part or die, that our material possessions won't change. Even if one is an abbot of a monastery with many disciples, we endeavor to make them last and think the situation won't easily change. All of these efforts to make things last are because we grasp at permanence.

Whatever there is whatever appears we hold on to and think it will last. We work to prolong it to make us happy, to have others think well of us. The root reason why we need to go through samsara is grasping at permanence of everything in the world. The Buddha taught us impermanence and we say with words that we go for refuge to this teaching, but actually we're frightened of it and we don't even want to hear about it. If we don't want to hear about it, we won't think about it. And if we don't think about it and we don't remember impermanence, there is no way at all to remember the Dharma. Whatever we do in this world, because the mind is not subdued we work to make this present life alone last a long time. Even if things don't work out, we do what we can to make them work out. If things go well today, they could be different tomorrow. But we don't know this or believe this and we're duped into thinking that it will last.

Buddha taught that once we're born into existence, there is no existence that isn't trapped by the net of the Four Extremes - or the Four Ends. What are they? Once we ascend to a high rank or position, like a religious master - be it a leader of a religion that believes in permanence, or a Dharma master - or like an official, or a wealthy businessman, we stay up only temporarily and eventually we will fall.

"The end of rising is falling" - what goes up must come down - "falling" here is meaning to go down. We can never stay up. If we go up, we only stay up moment by moment. We're deluded by the permanent appearance of these moments and hold on to them as lasting. Anything created by causes and conditions that are made up of substance has no permanence or stability whatsoever. It is all impermanent and will eventually disappear. "The end of rising is falling."

"The end of meeting is parting." All of the dear ones we meet with, whether husband and wife, lama and disciple, we will eventually be parted from. It is impossible for any meeting to not end in parting.

"The end of birth is death." Once we are born, there is no where for us to go but to death. Birth is conditioned, therefore death is inevitable. The end of birth is death. The end of meeting is parting. The end of rising is falling.

“The end of accumulation is exhaustion.” Whatever material things are gathered or accumulated will eventually diminish and become exhausted. The greatest fault of not remembering impermanence is that the mind never turns to Dharma. When there is no thought or practice of Dharma we become distracted and preoccupied. Worldly people can’t be blamed; they simply live their lives for enjoyment, thinking they’ll stay around for a long time. Put worldly people with wealth and importance aside.

We lamas and Dharma practitioners (though it’s not right to call me a lama, somebody who upholds the Buddha dharma) - carrying the name and reputation of a Rinpoche, or Khenpo, or a good Dharma practitioner, or a Ngakpa - if we can’t practice a little Dharma based on remembering impermanence, then regardless of our reputation as a Rinpoche, lama or teacher, regardless of how much others respect us, without remembering impermanence it’s impossible to accomplish a Dharma practice that can help at the time of death. Not only that, in this life even if we have great qualities of learning and so forth, without remembering impermanence we are only superficial, pretentious.

As Lord Buddha taught, once we are born in samsara there is nowhere to go not subject to these Four Ends: the end of meeting is parting, the end of rising is falling, the end of accumulation is exhaustion, the end of birth is death. He taught that there is nowhere in cyclic existence that we are not bound by these Four Ends. It’s exactly like the example of the stock market, the financial stock market in the west, which you can see on TV. The arrow goes up, and then goes up a little higher after a few minutes, but it’s only a matter of time, it can only go up or down. Like this example everything that we see, everything that appears is subject to change, and therefore nothing we do can really make a difference because eventually it will just change. Our mind might be happy now and after a few minutes become unhappy.

Anything conditioned [by causes and conditions] is changing so it is impossible to ever bring permanent, lasting happiness. If we’re able to remember that everything conditioned is impermanent, then we’ll know that however long we may live we are going to die, and as a result of that fear we’ll look for answers, we’ll look for a way. Everything is changing - our dear ones, friends, husband or wife, household - it can not last. We’ll wonder what to do? We won’t think of anything else but going for refuge to the Three Jewels, and our faith will become stronger.

What does it mean to have faith?

Even if we don't know the inconceivable qualities of the Buddha, the inconceivable qualities of the Dharma, the inconceivable qualities of the Sangha; even if we haven't studied much and because of too much work we haven't learned about the infinite qualities of the Buddha's body, speech and mind, if we remember impermanence our faith will naturally grow, and we will call on the Three Jewels, the Buddha and Guru Rinpoche. Faith will naturally grow stronger. Buddha's wisdom, compassion and power are unobstructed and limitless.

By remembering impermanence and having faith it's impossible to not receive the compassionate blessings of Buddha's qualities. Even if one has done little study and little practice, if you have faith and belief the blessings of Buddha's body, speech and mind will definitely be received. The infinite qualities of the Buddha's body, speech, mind, qualities and activities are embodied in every Buddha.

One shouldn't be discouraged if they don't have the learning to know about these qualities. In the common vehicle [of the Hinayana and Mahayana] the Buddha is Shakyamuni, the fourth Buddha of this world system. Shakyamuni Buddha himself said that after his parinirvana he would emanate again, taking rebirth in Lake Danakosha as Guru Pema. Before he passed away, Shakyamuni Buddha made this prophesy and it can be seen in many sutras and tantras, Such as the *Gong Pa Ngepar Tenpa*, and *Jampal Tsen Jod [Manjushri Nama Samgiti]*:

*"The glorious Buddha born from a lotus,
Holding the omniscient wisdom treasure,
The king of various magical emanations,
Holder of the great awareness mantra of awakening."*

Shakyamuni Buddha foretold about his own manifestation:

*"On an island of Lake Danakosha,
The one called Pema Jungney
Superior to me will be born."*

Therefore, on the 10th and 25th know that all Buddha's are embodied in Guru Rinpoche - Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tsogyal. Understand that they are two in aspect only; in essence they are the Dharmakaya and not different. Lha Bab

Duchen, the Buddha's parinirvana and his birthday were set out by the Buddha's compassionate blessing.

Shakyamuni Buddha appears as a bikshu, a monastic; Guru Rinpoche appears as a ngakpa yogi; Vajrasattva and others appear as yab-yum, with consort. We may wonder why they are all different but we shouldn't have any doubt. The one who harbors doubt is one's own mind; the one free from doubt is also one's own mind. As the Buddha taught, "*Those who have doubt will never gain realization.*" If we have doubt in the Dharma, it's impossible for us to practice. Shakyamuni Buddha taught this in many scriptures such as the *Tsig Sum Do* [Sutra of the Three Statements]: "*Those who have doubt will never gain realization.*" It doesn't matter if you haven't done much study and practice. Have no doubt in your mind and have faith in the Three Jewels. The qualities of the Three Jewels are infinite - as vast as space - nothing can stop them. Understand that all these inconceivable qualities are included in the Buddha of each holy day, and the qualities of other Buddha's are not lessened by including them.

So on the holy day of Guru Rinpoche understand that all the infinite qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - of the Buddha's body, speech, mind, qualities and activities - all are embodied in Guru Rinpoche. Likewise, if you're doing dakini practice on the 25th, understand that all of these qualities are embodied in the dakini. In the common vehicle, Shakyamuni Buddha and Amitabha appears in the aspect of monks, separated from desire, while in the Vajrayana you may have faith and meditate upon Vajrasattva, Guru Rinpoche, and female deities like Tara and Yeshe Tsogyal. In fact all of them are the Dharmakaya: "*All merit is born from the expanse of wisdom.*" There are Buddha's limitless as the sky, but they are all essentially the Dharmakaya. There is not a single Buddha that is not of the Dharmakaya. Therefore, when practicing Dharma, practice mainly with faith.

On special days such as the 15th, or holy days of Shakyamuni Buddha, don't have the conceptual confusion that Guru Rinpoche, Shakyamuni Buddha and other Buddha's are all different. The difference is only in the aspect of their appearance. The Buddha's manifest wherever there are sentient beings. In the common vehicle Shakyamuni Buddha showed the appearance of a bikshu, separated from desire, one who gave up his kingdom and the worldly life and became a monk, and taught the Dharma that way. In essence, the Buddha is the Dharmakaya; the Buddha has no conceptual thoughts of good and bad. Therefore if you are doing a puja of Shakyamuni Buddha, all the Buddha's who are limitless as spaces are embodied in him. Guru Rinpoche, Tara, male and female deities are not different; all of them are Buddha, and not a single one is not of the Dharmakaya. Understand that all Buddha's are embodied in Shakyamuni Buddha.

It's the same thing when doing rituals of Vajrasattva; all Buddha's equal to space, all of their different bodies, teachings, all are in truth the Dharmakaya, and there is no Buddha not embodied in the Dharmakaya. All Buddha's are embodied in Guru Rinpoche; understand that Shakyamuni Buddha exists in Guru Rinpoche's body, speech and mind. Have faith in this way and practice on the 10th day like this. Practicing like this will help you to be unbiased, and it will benefit the way in which you practice. Why? Because you won't have many judgements, and you won't create much conflict, attachment and aversion.

I don't know a whole lot, but it's said in the Mahayana sutras and tantras that the Buddha's mind is the Dharmakaya; the Vajrayana says so. The Dharmakaya is wisdom, and wisdom is one, not two. In wisdom there is no limit and no fixation; wisdom is not dual, but non-dual, like pure space. The Buddha's abide in this ultimate sphere (Dharmadhatu). All emanations are born of the Dharmadhatu. Guru Rinpoche is born without wavering from the Dharmadhatu. All of these emanations have their own stories of liberation and histories, but in essence they are of the Dharmakaya, and the Dharmakaya is free from all obscuration. The place that all Buddha's abide is the Dharmakaya, the ultimate sphere of Dharmadhatu. Know that there is absolutely no difference and have faith.

Even if you've done little study, if you think in this way you'll have less bias and judgement. Again, the Buddha said, "*All merit is born from the expanse of wisdom.*" The Buddha's have no concepts of good and bad, and if you can practice in this way you won't create the karma of attachment and aversion. Without thinking that some Buddha's are better than others, that some are different, and avoiding some while holding other Buddha's as superior, it will help the mind to move closer to enlightenment. By understanding that the Buddha's manifest in whatever ways will best benefit individual sentient beings, we won't hold our own religious tradition as superior and have aversion to others' traditions, but instead we will see them as equal. The Buddha's may show the appearance of a monk, or of a yogi, or as a sambhogakaya form like Vajrasattva, but essentially they are all the Dharmakaya; there is absolutely no way that they could be other than the Dharmakaya. Such is taught in the Mahayana and it is taught in the Vajrayana. At any rate, it's taught: "*All merit is born from the expanse of wisdom.*" Understand that in the Buddha's compassion there is no prejudice, and pray with that understanding.

It's now the Kali Yuga (degenerate age); the Buddha's come not from prejudice, but from previous prayers that they made. Shakyamuni Buddha prayed to come at

the end of a 500 year period to help the miserable sentient beings of this world. From the pure land of Tushita he emanated and was born to a queen in the garden of Lumbini. He was raised as a prince and then abandoned his kingdom and fulfilled the purpose of sentient beings by teaching the Dharma of the common vehicle and the uncommon vehicle. In the same way, without wavering from the Dharmadhatu Guru Rinpoche was born in Lake Danakosha to teach the Dharma of the mantrayana, just as Shakyamuni Buddha prophesied. In essence, though, they are the Dharmakaya, and the qualities of the Dharmakaya are unhindered, with only enlightened qualities and no faults whatsoever. According to the sutrayana, Shakyamuni Buddha wears the robes of a monk; according to the vajrayana Guru Rinpoche appears as a great yogi; according to the sambhogakaya Vajrasattva and others appear in yab-yum, with consorts. Essentially, "*All merit is born from the expanse of wisdom*", as I've said again and again. In this object of our faith - the Buddha's - there is no place at all for bias and judgement to arise.

It appears to our mind as a deity - if we have faith in deities - and to this object of our faith there is no distinction between better or worse. It is a deity, a wisdom deity - not like worldly deities that discriminate and grant siddhis if they are pleased and harm if they are offended. The object of our faith is a wisdom deity, which is Buddha.

Buddha's can appear in different aspects like Shakyamuni Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, Tara, Yeshe Tsogyal, but they are all the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Dharmakaya, eternally free from obscurations. Being free from obscurations, enlightened qualities can shine; all different kinds of bodies can emanate. Among the five Buddha families, the root Buddha in the centre is Vairocana. Whether you've arranged a statue, or mandala, or are doing meditation, its essence is the mind of Buddha, the Dharmakaya, which is perfect like a sky empty of clouds, or a clean mirror. Being utterly free from obscurations its enlightened qualities are unhindered, limitless, and for the benefit of sentient beings they appear unhindered in all different kinds of forms. The speech of Vairocana shows many Dharma teachings and the mind of Vairocana is always looking upon us with loving-compassion. Therefore, whatever our objects of faith, whatever body of the Buddha we are looking to, there are only enlightened qualities and no faults. It can manifest in a myriad of ways: in peaceful forms, wrathful forms, as a renunciate, or like Vajrasattva in yab-yum, or as a female deity like Tara or Trolma, or as Guru Rinpoche. It has limitless qualities that appear without obstruction. If we think that they are different we will fall into judgement. All are the Dharmakaya; they are the luminous, unhindered appearances which arise from the emptiness of the Dharmakaya.

And there can only be pure appearance of the Buddha, impure appearances are impossible. Limitless kinds of different appearances arise unhindered - which is Vairocana. In this way Shakyamuni Buddha is Vairocana; Guru Rinpoche is Vairocana; whatever forms arise only possess enlightened qualities. There can be no faults. If we can understand the object of our faith and think in this way, real faith will be born. When doing Dharma practice, observing one's own mind, we can receive blessings by prostrating and making offerings, purifying negativities, accumulating merit, and then dissolving the deity into oneself. Or we can meditate on Guru Rinpoche in the space in front of us - Guru Rinpoche in yab-yum or any form - make immeasurable offerings, purify and accumulate merit, and then when Guru Rinpoche dissolves into us we should feel that we've obtained the entire blessings of his body, speech, mind, qualities and activities. Feel that Guru Rinpoche has dissolved into us and that we've completely received his blessings, and without any grasping or fixation one's awareness should be lucid and clear, in a state of oneness with Guru Rinpoche. When the nature of that awareness is revealed, its nature is emptiness.

No matter where one looks for the nature of the mind it can't be found, not in the 5 elements, not in the sense sources, nowhere. When asking what the mind is made of, there are some who hold nihilist views, like the Charvakas who don't believe in future lives, karma, deities, or spirits; those who think in this way are the worst kind of nihilists. Unlike them, having faith in the Three Jewels, be it Guru Rinpoche, we meditate that Guru Rinpoche dissolves into oneself and remains inseparable, and with faith free from grasping we feel that we have really received the blessings and become one with Guru Rinpoche. Remain in state of mindfulness like this. The nature of that mindfulness - call it mindfulness, awareness or mind - the nature of all of these is emptiness, which appears to itself.

In this emptiness there is no non-Buddhist, no Buddhist, no Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyu or Gelug that can be found with any substance or material, in any way tangible or like a being we could meet. They could never be found. For the sake of sentient beings many different traditions arose in India and Tibet from the Dharma being taught in different ways. These traditions bring great benefit, but they can also bring great harm. As to the one who brings harm, the Buddha's and their emanations do not bring any harm. The Buddha's are solely beneficial with minds of great compassion and wisdom. They have no grasping at subject and object in their minds and therefore can only bring benefit to sentient beings, and no harm whatsoever. However, in the deluded perceptions of sentient beings there are pure and impure appearances which lead to religious sectarianism, seeing some traditions as good and others as bad with attachment and aversion.

Even among Buddhists there can be grasping like this. Among the Muslims, for example - and Islam is likely a good religion - but among the worst kinds grasping leads to a kind of materialism, holding on to one's own religion as if it's substantial, material. One thinks one's religion is the only way and whoever doesn't follow it is bad. Extreme grasping in this way one becomes like a demon. The one who practices a deity is the mind; the one who practices a demon is the mind. Once there is strong grasping in the mind discrimination becomes stronger. It grows stronger in the present life, thinking one's religion is the only way, and it carries on in the future life. Attachment and aversion burns like a fire and karma is created, with strong attachment to one's own side and a growing hatred to the side of others. Actually, religion is supposed to benefit the mind, but forget about future lives, enlightenment at the time of death or even a more peaceful mind in this lifetime. A terrorist thinks that their way is the one and only way and plots to eliminate any opponent.

All of you know, I don't need to explain it. Besides Buddhism there are many different religions, and some are better than others - though it's difficult to compare them to Buddhism, as you all know. Among non-Buddhist religions, some can bring about siddhis and levels of Samadhi, they can bring about virtue. They may not have ways to create merit like in Buddhism, but in their systems they can make merit. Some are eternalists, holding views of permanence; there are many different traditions in the world. Among them, some think that their tradition is the one and only, that others are impure. In past lives they have seen other traditions as impure, and in this life, as this grasping gets stronger; it becomes reified to the point of materialism. When somebody becomes like this they are worse than ordinary non-religious people. They may not be concerned with food, clothing and fame, and worldly people certainly engage in stealing, killing, lying, etc. - there are many police, courts and prisons as evidence of this.

As religious sectarianism grows stronger it turns into a form of materialism. Putting other issues aside, one can have such grasping at their own religion that they begin to think of eliminating anyone who doesn't follow it. For the sake of their own religion they may try to eliminate others by mentally deceiving them, or by taking up weapons like guns, knives and bombs. Or another example I'm sure you all know about: His Holiness the Dalai Lama has given a lot of admonition about the protector. Out of compassion His Holiness has explained, for the benefit of the Tibetan people, its history in Tibet which goes back through his predecessors to the 5th Dalai Lama and Terdag Lingpa and so on, that it was taken as a main protector.

Some people may have understood his advice and carried it out - anyhow, it's not our business really - while others have had wrong views and totally misconstrued this nectar-like advice that's being given. I don't need to say much about this, and anyhow it has nothing to do with me. All of these problems come from religious sectarianism. Once that exists, one becomes like a demon. Forget about becoming a deity, a wisdom deity; one becomes like a demon. When religious sectarianism becomes strong enough, you become someone who'd go so far as to kill and attack others in the name of religion. We see this as war and conflict taking place in other countries of this world. Beings in different places have to experience their own karma, but all this fighting for power over one another begins with self-grasping, which leads to attachment and anger. Based on attachment and hatred, one is occupied in this life with trying to increase their power and authority. And if one can't do this as they desire, then without thinking of anything else - forget about thinking religiously, there's nothing religious about it - they carry knives and guns with a mind to destroy their opponents.

All of this comes down to the mind, even if it is about religion. Once there is such strong grasping in the mind, forget about it being religious, it turns in to a great evil. For example Sunaksatra, the half-brother of the Buddha who had such wrong views that he abandoned the Buddha. It is the fault of mental grasping and the strong pride that follows that. Whatever the case may be, whether religious or non-religious, as Buddha said once we have grasping in our mind, we tend towards materialism. Here materialism doesn't necessarily mean money, silver and houses. Strong mental preconceptions lead to attachment and aversion that in turn create a great deal of karma - karma that is created on the basis of "me" and "you". One tries to fortify their own side and slander the other side with harsh, angry words. If that doesn't work, one gets physical using weapons like knives and bombs as a way to get rid of the others.

These may seem like religious causes, like staunch devotion and pride in their god or religion, but in fact they are like nihilists, worse than the extremist Charvakas. We see this nowadays in this world, people say it is for the sake of religion - be it Buddhist or non-Buddhist - that it is worship of their god, in the service of their god or religion. There may be many patrons and disciples that follow, as happens in foreign countries and as happened in Tibet. But forget about actually practicing religion; such strong grasping leads to great evil. People like this become worse than ordinary, non-religious people. In the name of religion they engage in the evil karma of killing and attacking to destroy their opponents. In fact, there's no doubt they are carrying out the ten non-virtues and the five heinous crimes.

And it all comes down to sectarianism - attachment to one's own way and aversion to the ways of others. Forget about Buddhism with its extraordinary teachings of karma and past and future lives. Such people have no belief in past and future lives. As a sign that they don't understand karma, in this life they hold tight to their own religion and search for and try to eliminate anybody who doesn't follow it - lama, monk, khenpo, whoever, they look for them wherever they are and kill them. Then they think that they no longer exist, that they've gotten rid of them. But this is a big mistake. Even if they managed to kill a few people, the one who did the killing has accumulated an enormous amount of negative karma in their mind. No matter who that person may be, when they die that karma will not die but go on. As for the person who was killed, say a lama or a monk, though their body has been killed once, their mind can never be killed because it's not material.

The karma we created in the past will be carried on, and we will take rebirth in another body. If we were somebody who meditated, had interest in virtue and faith in the Three Jewels, even though our body may have been killed in a religious conflict by a bomb, our mind was not killed and the positive imprints in our mind will ripen in a rebirth as somebody who practices virtue. Essentially what all of this comes down to is that the root cause of suffering, the one who creates all suffering, is in the mind. Habitual imprints are made in the alaya storehouse consciousness of our mind, and these imprints lead us to create a lot of karma. The differences of the habitual imprints in our mind determine the suffering we undergo; it is this that must be the cause of the suffering of so many lives that we go through. A person who has habits of merit from previous lives imprinted in their storehouse consciousness will be somebody who has faith in the Three Jewels, and understanding of karma and past and future lives. In the present life they will meet the Dharma and a noble Guru. Not only will they meet them, they will be a practitioner of the Dharma, somebody with natural faith and understanding of the Dharma.

Somebody like that - even if they're not a great scholar - can accomplish everything. Because even though due to past karma they might be poor or weak - there will always be suffering - the positive imprints will ripen so that their suffering becomes a cause of happiness. They'll go on through future lives until the time they attain Buddha hood always taking higher rebirths as gods or humans, as beings who meet the Dharma and have faith in the Three Jewels. It is taught like this in many sutras and tantras.

All of you should have pure faith in Guru Rinpoche is the emanation of Shakyamuni Buddha. As Shakyamuni Buddha prophesied:

“One will be born who is superior to me.”

With pure faith in this you can practice in your own home, accumulate however many Benza Guru mantras as you can. Even if you don't have much knowledge, simply have pure faith. On the 10th and 25th continue doing tsok pujas, and from time to time you can gather in a group if you like, in a centre or a house. In particular you can observe the 10th day according to the Phuk tradition [of astrology], which is the lunar 10th day of the 5th Tibetan month. In the Gongdu tradition - the Gongdu terka (treasure) of Sangye Lingpa - it is the 10th day of the 6th Tibetan month. There is no difference.

No matter what days you practice, the enlightened activities of Guru Rinpoche are inconceivable and it is always a holy day, whether it is the 10th or not. In particular on the 10th day of each month Guru Rinpoche displayed different activities, which you can read about in his life story. You can read there what he did in the 1st month; what he did in the 2nd month; what he did in the 3rd month; what he did in the 4th month; what he did in the 5th month; what he did in the 6th month; what he did in the 7th month; what he did in the 8th month; what he did in the 9th month; what he did in the 10th month; what he did in the 11th month; and what he did in the 12th month. All of these are recorded in the Kha-tang. You can read about them there.

If you're too busy with work to read his life story, then simply as I've been saying practice with one-pointed faith. Even if you haven't studied a lot - and you don't have to study and know a lot; it's up to you if you want to have a lot of knowledge - with one-pointed faith, practice on the 10th and 25th. You can do so in your own home, or you can gather as a group in somebody's house and practice. However you do it, it is good to keep it up.

As the 10th day of the sixth Tibetan month is coming, Gyamtso-la asked me to say something. I know there are many of you there with faith in Guru Rinpoche, some from Yolmo, Tibet, Bhutan and Mukom; some of you I know by name. It's good for you to practice in your own homes or in a group on the 10th and 25th. You've all asked me to say something, so I've recorded something here in brief.

I'm old now. I grasp at permanence and think I'm going to last forever. I stay here in Daliya and talk all the time, but I don't do anything. Whether it's beneficial for others or not, if somebody asks me to speak I have no choice but to say a thing or two. It's time for me to pass on, but nonetheless.

Even though I'm old and I have a lot of sicknesses, and it's nearing time to pass on, I stay here in Daliya thinking it might bring a little benefit to others to purify negative karma and accumulate merit. According to the wishes of Sonam Gyaltzen I stay here, and there's a small temple here, not big or fancy like a traditional Tibetan or Bhutanese temple. I don't have many things; it's not wooden or painted and I don't have a lot of things. Sonam Gyaltzen provides what I need, and he has put up a simple sign with the name of the centre - "Puja House" - on a thangka. It's a simple temple, not excellent like a Tibetan or Bhutanese temple. In the meantime, though, as long as you have faith, then whatever simple kind of shrine you have is just fine.

Sometimes you can come here. If you have no time at all, it may be better to work. If you're trying to get here and there for pujas on the 10th and 25th and you can't finish your work, it's possible you'll feel regret. So do what you have to do with your time. At death, though, only the Dharma can benefit and nothing else. To go towards enlightenment in our future lives, we absolutely need to have the Dharma. Our accomplishment of Dharma depends on our faith and the way that we practice, regardless of how many teachings we've heard about accomplishing Dharma.

Since we have mind, we definitely need the Dharma. Reality is not as the Charvakas think - with no past and future lives, no karma of cause and effect - there is no truth in that at all. There are past and future lives; there is cause and effect of karma; there is the suffering of samsara; there is the bliss of enlightenment. There is scriptural authority and logic to prove them - and even if we don't know about these, we can see it with our own eyes. Therefore it is 100% better to have faith, than to not have faith and not accomplish the Dharma.

You may have a lot of work to do with your body and speech, but keep faith in your mind. Without grasping, have great faith and go to sleep with Guru Rinpoche at your heart. When you wake up, remember Guru Rinpoche and make offerings, water bowls, and then go to work. If you can do this I think it is good.

As I've said, when you all have time - winter is very cold, I know, but it depends on your own motivation - when you feel you need a longer break from work and want to do retreat for, say, two days a week, you can come here to Daliya. Steven has a guest house, and they don't charge much, not as much as other hotels. The rooms are very good. Or you can stay in a tent if that's better.

When it comes to Dharma practice, whatever we have is fine. If it doesn't rain too much, it would be fine to stay in a tent. On the 10th and 25th if you have time you can come to Daliya for one or two days when you're free. I'm not saying that you have to come; I'm suggesting that you can come if you have time. And if you can't come I'm very happy that in New York City you do practice in your own homes or in a group. You can rent a place and gather there on special days like the 10th and 25th. That is very good. Above all the main thing is to have faith, to believe, and to accept future lives.

Thinking about future lives shouldn't be a cause for suffering. If we make merit, then because there are future lives wherever we are born we will find happiness, virtue, and we will be able to benefit others. Thinking along these lines we can practice virtue. No matter how little or great the virtue we practice, it will never be wasted, because the one who practices virtue is the mind. If there are positive imprints in the mind they can only bring benefit, no harm whatsoever.

The many sufferings that beings have to experience come about when the negative imprints in the mind are stronger than the positive, and one hasn't been able to purify the negative imprints and increase the positive. Because of the negative imprints, one accumulates karma from attachment and aversion and has to go through a great deal of suffering in samsara.

It is up to us if we want to follow the Dharma. There are some great scholars of the Buddha dharma; there are some great practitioners of the Buddha dharma. Whatever Dharma practice we do - like prostrations, making offerings - Dharma practice is supposed to benefit the mind. Therefore whatever goes through your mind, remember the Three Jewels. Regardless of how little Dharma knowledge we may have, the Three Jewels have the eye of wisdom and as long as they see us, that is enough. Don't think that they are something we can touch, or like a person we can see. We simply need the compassionate blessings of the Three Jewels, and to receive their blessings we need faith.

As the Buddha taught:

*"Those without faith
Will not give rise to white virtue;
From a seed that has been burnt
No green sprout can grow."*

If we have no faith, there is no way for white virtue to give rise to happiness. Take for example any kind of seed we plant in the ground. If fire has burnt it, nothing can grow from it. Any hope for a green plant to grow is burnt. As this example shows, faith is extremely important. Why does it need to be so important? Because all merit and happiness come from faith. If we have faith, then regardless of however great or small our practice is, the object of our faith is Buddha and there is nowhere to go but to Buddha. And we are all Buddhists. When we have faith, whatever the size of the virtue we create, it is a great virtue. Therefore, without grasping always keep faith in your heart.
I'll finish here. Thank you.

[*Dedication*]