

Talk by Geshe Tengye on the Practice of Chenrezig

19 May 2009, PM

Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche: Good afternoon, I have requested Geshe-la to give a short speech, advice, and Geshe-la finally accepted to do. So I just wanted to say what made Vajra Yogini exist, to be alive up to now, Vajra Yogini center alive, do you understand what I am saying? Alive, breathing, so that up to now, for so many years, alive, breathing is due to Gen Tengye, his kindness, his patience, his wisdom, for so many years, unbelievable, so many years, then Denis over there, just unbelievable karma, Gen-la and Denis, just amazing karma, Gen Tengye says I want to give Denis a change from being director”, he’s been really amazing good karma, permanent director for eons. The very first one was Elisabeth, she is not here, her spirit is here, so many years, maybe I can say something, so many years, so many difficulties, woowow, had to overcome, so many difficulties had to overcome, Gen-la giving inspiration continually and Denis going around, many difficulties, amazing, so on like that, with unbelievable hardships, of course, there are many students who might be here for so many years, so continuity, then invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama, how many years ago? In 1982 first time, second time? 1993, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave commentary on *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*, first time I was here, second not here, His Holiness gave commentary on *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* on this land, 4000 people, unbelievable great blessing. IVY from year to year benefited so many sentient beings up to now. Gen-la and Denis being long-life man for long time, like the Chinese long-life man, then of course many other students, so many people’s efforts, so really I want to mention, to thank from the bottom of my heart to Geshe Tengye and the people who have served IVY, made it able to benefit the world, and sentient beings, their kindness, and this time we have incredible opportunity to do 100 million MANI retreat and become closer to Chenrezig, the organizers present, Violette and Francois, unbelievable hard work, fully dedicated with whole heart. So that is why we have this incredible opportunity.

Geshe Tengye: Thank you to Rinpoche but I don’t really deserve all of those praises. This center was founded about 30 years ago by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche who planted the seeds, and now we are enjoying the fruits. So during these 20-30 years many students have benefited from the center and are now able to transmit the Dharma and benefit many sentient beings. Among these students some took ordination, becoming monks and nuns, and also the lay people, but everyone according to their own way has been able to transmit the Dharma. About 30 years ago in France there were only one or two Tibetan monks in the whole country, they were very rare. During all these years many people ordained, even if later some gave back their vows, and there are also many lay people, students, who really studied hard and now have a real good interest in and knowledge of the Dharma. The benefits of those seeds that were planted 30 years ago are unimaginable, incredible. In fact I have nothing new to tell you, nothing that you do not already know. Actually I am from the old generation and you are from the new generation so somehow probably have a better understanding of the Dharma than me. I am a little bit old-fashioned. Just to illustrate what I mean, I am from the generation of the typewriter and you are from the generation of the computer. But maybe on the debate court I would still have something to say! There is no doubt that you all over the years have studied well and developed a good understanding. There is no doubt that you have studied and listened well but you should not forget to connect all this to introspection, meditation, and reflection. Based on study, you need to reflect and meditate, that is the way to develop qualities and realizations. It is by thinking about what you have heard and by meditating on the different aspects that you can develop realizations, among which the supreme realization is to see your negative emotions diminish. Among the 84,000 teachings given by the Buddha there is no

teaching whose goal is not to diminish the negative emotions, for this reason we can consider the reduction of negative emotions to be the supreme realization.

It is good to think about the teachings but to meditate is better, but don't do like me, I'm not a very good meditator. I will not talk about general things for too long, you have gathered here to do the Chenrezig retreat and retreat the MANI mantras. When we talk about Chenrezig there are two aspects, the aspect of Chenrezig that is to be interpreted and the aspect that is the definitive meaning Chenrezig. The definitive meaning Chenrezig is the compassion that resides in the minds of all the buddhas. This definitive aspect of Chenrezig, which is the infinite compassion of all buddhas, is something we cannot perceive directly, which is why we have the interpretative Chenrezig, which is the manifestation of compassion in the many different aspects of the deity Chenrezig. When we do formal practice of the deity Chenrezig, we actually rely on the Chenrezig of the causal time. When we practice Chenrezig, we actually generate ourselves as the deity and take on all the features and aspects of the Chenrezig that we will achieve at the time of the result, when we will have actually developed all these qualities. When we do the practice of Chenrezig and we practice the visualization of ourselves in the aspect of the deity, we do this visualization, practice, in conformity with the aspect of the resultant Chenrezig, that is, we take the same aspect of the Chenrezig that we will achieve at the time of the result. When we do the generation of ourselves as Chenrezig we do the practice of the four purities. When we visualize ourselves as the deity Chenrezig and do the practice of the four purities: (1) purity of the body, we take the aspect of the body of Chenrezig that we will have at the resultant time; (2) the purity of the environment, the pure land that will be achieved at the resultant time; (3) the purity of activities, benefiting and helping beings; (4) the purity of enjoyments, which have the same nature of the enjoyments of Chenrezig of the resultant time. Through this practice of generating oneself as a deity at the time of the cause, we will actualize and become Chenrezig at the time of the result. This result of Chenrezig is nothing other than the resultant refuge. As part of the practice we generate ourselves as the deity and recite the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM. When we look at the mantra the first syllable OM, we see it is composed of A, AU, and MA. The meaning of these three parts of the syllable OM is related to the time of the base, time of the path, and time of the result. These three represent ordinary body, speech, mind. At the level of the base, they represent what is now, the ordinary level. The level of the path involves transformation, whereby the three syllables represent the body, speech, mind of the illusory body, either the pure or impure illusory body. At the level of the result, the three syllables represent the body, speech, mind of a buddha. These three syllables, A, AU, and MA combined in the syllable OM; the syllable OM symbolizes the purification of the three doors, the body, speech, mind, and the negativities accumulated by these three, as well as the transformation of these three into the body, speech, mind of a buddha. This transformation is achieved by the union of method and wisdom. There are various interpretations of the syllable OM and the meaning of the mantra. Another interpretation is that these three components of OM, A, AU, and MA, represent the three stages of death, intermediate state, and rebirth. According to this interpretation, at the time of the base there is ordinary death, intermediate state, and rebirth. At the time of the path, in particular in terms of the profound tantra practice, the mind is ripened by the causal initiation which gives rise to the two stages, generation stage and completion stage. It is said in the text that when we recite the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM if we think of the meaning of the mantra, even just of the meaning of OM, through the concentration and prayers of the buddhas the merits of the recitation become immeasurable. With respect to the rest of the mantra, MANI represents the method aspect and PADME represents the wisdom aspect. Just to explain a bit more, MANI represents the method aspect which protects from the extreme of peace. Then PADME, the wisdom aspect, means lotus, like a lotus is born from mud. This wisdom cuts the grasping at a self, the grasping at true existence; it cuts the ignorance holding a self, liberating from the extreme of samsara. Compassion, which is method, liberates from the peace of the lower nirvana. An arhat, a foe destroyer, of the Hinayana or Individual Vehicle, through his wisdom has actually cut the grasping at a self and reached the state

of nirvana without remainder, a state of incredible bliss or joy. It is said that when a practitioner of the Great Vehicle, a bodhisattva, reaches the last moment of the tenth bhumi, the end of the continuum of a sentient being, he has an experience of indescribable bliss that is much greater than that of an arhat. This bodhisattva on the last moment of the last bhumi or ground, the last moment of meditative equipoise, does not remain in that blissful state because in that blissful state he cannot move others and so moved by his compassion he emanates many forms and manifestations, becoming like a wish-fulfilling jewel, in dependence on the needs of the beings in all the different realms, in the divine realm, human realm, all six realms. Therefore, the bodhisattva does not remain in the state of peace, this being represented by the jewel that Chenrezig holds in his two hands, which shows that he works to fulfill the wishes of all beings. Just to finish briefly, the syllable HUM symbolizes the five wisdoms. The mantra MANI PADME, jewel and the lotus, is the way of calling on Chenrezig, whereas HUM invokes Chenrezig and asks him “Please Chenrezig bless my mental continuum and protect and guide me all the time.” If you look at the texts there are many meanings of the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM, but today we stop here because there are two translations and the risk is that you become tired. This short explanation was just to give you a taste. We see from the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM that it represents the heart or essence of Dharma in that it includes all the 84,000 teachings. It is said that if the merits of reciting the MANI mantra were to take form, the three galaxies would not be enough to contain them.

There is a story to illustrate the benefits of this practice. There was a man who had a statue of Chenrezig made of sandalwood, who destroyed the statue to make some pills of medicine, but later he regretted this and began to recite many mantras of OM MANI PADME HUM to purify having destroyed the statue. On the basis of this recitation in that same body he reached the state of Chenrezig. It is said in Tibet where people used to recite many mantras, that for some older people who recited many, for example, 100 million mantras, their teeth grew back. New teeth come out when you finish the recitation of 100 million MANI mantra, that commonly happened. I read in a newspaper recently a recount of a nomad whose mother had recited many MANIs to purify her negative karma of having killed many animals, goats and so forth, due to which new teeth started to grow. It is said that reciting MANIs is very beneficial for the person who recites, but it is also beneficial for the surrounding beings who hear the recitation. There are Tibetans who use prayer wheels who walk around turning the wheel, it may seem that they are not doing much but by turning the prayer wheel it actually purifies the negative karma of the beings they meet. Going around with a prayer wheel and doing circumambulations does not prevent them from arguing with each other! It has all these benefits but in addition, when you get angry with someone, you can use it to hit the other person! at the moment you are doing the practice of Chenrezig, generating yourself as the deity and reciting the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM, so you are practicing the aspect of Chenrezig at the time of the cause, but I wish that you will be able to actualize the Chenrezig of the resultant time. And so when you come to that result, I hope you will help the rest of us as a causal refuge. Thank you, this situation in which I find myself is a bit strange as I am talking in front of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and it is a bit like Buddha Shakyamuni being here and Ananda giving a discourse! But perhaps I can be excused because Rinpoche asked me to talk.

I just want to say that here we are enjoying the fruits, we are very lucky, coming from the growing of the seeds planted by the founders many years ago. These fruits are continuously going to be enjoyed because there are many of you who can teach and transmit the Dharma. When doing this it is important to have the mind of compassion, and also the people who receive the teachings should have a mind of compassion. It is important because that which makes the teacher happiest is the offering of one’s practice.

Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche: Geshe-la said that you are doing Chenrezig sadhana, as a result of which you will become Chenrezig and at that time you will become our causal refuge. you will become

Geshe-la's causal refuge. as a result of doing Chenrezig practice, you will achieve Chenrezig's holy body and become our causal refuge.

One meaning of A, AU, and MA at the time of the path is by actualizing the ripening aspect, the generation stage, you actualize the liberated path, the completion stage.

What Geshe-la mentioned is the very heart of the MANI retreat, very heart of the Chenrezig practice, the very heart of our retreat, what he spoke. It is very good when we recite the mantra to remember the meaning, at least even just, although it is explained very vast in the text, but Geshe-la mentioned the essence, so remember that so it becomes very rich and alive when you chant, it is like your heart is related to the path to enlightenment by thinking of the meaning of the mantra. That's it. Thank you very much, Gen-la.