

NONSENSE QUESTIONS AND NONSENSE ANSWERS

Q. What is Dharma and what is Dharmic

A Dharma is nature or religion or philosophy; it means an object. Dharmic means the one who practices, the subject. In Tibetan Dharma is Chos and Dharmic is Chos-Pa or Chos-Chan. Chos is object and Chos-Chan is subject. Chos-Pa means the one who does Dharma, from beginners' stage right up until Buddhahood.

Now to consider some ideas that people have. Some think, 'How long I have practised yet Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and Meditation Deities have not yet entered into me.' Now for example if your eyes are open you may see a beautiful flower. When your eyes are closed you do not see that flower, but you might be able to remember it. When you die your dead body will not see or remember. Then also how will it be possible for the beautiful flower to enter the dead body?

A boy and girl are thinking each other so beautiful and honest and loveable. Each is a subject but is also an object for the other. Each as subject sees the other as object and feels much interest. But then one goes away and although they cannot be seen or touched by the other they can still be remembered. But if one should die will he go and enter the other's body or come in through his eye?

Now for both these questions, if someone says yes then they must give full details how it is possible. But it is my idea one would not get any answer or one might say 'perhaps', or if honest and direct speaking then one will say 'no'.

Now if we use these examples to examine the religious side, Dharma, Chos, is similar to the flower or the friend and the one who looks at the flower or the friend is like the Chos-Pa or practitioner. This Dharma or Chos is natural (Of course everything is natural but this naturalness cannot decide or examine anything.). Well can what is natural see others or not? If you say it is possible then maybe Dharma can see you, but if not possible to see you, then not possible.

Q. Does natural dharma mean some mind you believe in, or is it a knower, and which is object and subject?

A. If you believe this is a subject or knower then maybe it could touch or satisfy you but only because you have a mind. I do not think that object looks at or shows something for or to subject for then it would also be a subject not an object. My idea is the Dharma or Dharmata is only object and not subject. It is Dharmakaya that is subject. Subject and object are naturally the same in Dharmadhatu but that Dharmadhatu does not judge subject and object. It is the subject that must gain understanding of the nature of both the object and itself.

Dharma practice is very difficult and it is also very easy. Why is it difficult? For a very long long time we have done many sins and lived in very bad ways with much egoism, desire, ignorance, stupidity, jealousy and so on, and we have not performed good actions. Due to this we have very strong habits and so to change to the other side and practice virtue is very difficult. These old habits of wrong practice have developed with us so that our inner characters have become bad.

Dharma practice is also very easy but not, I would say, according to Hinayana and Mahayana for they both require very long hard practice. According to Hinayana one studies the Four Truths of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation, and the sixteen

impermanences. And one tries to maintain moral discipline (sila), and gain meditative absorption (samadhi) by means of calm abiding, (shamatha, Zhi-gNas) and clear insight (vipassana, Lhag-mThong). By these practices and studies one gains the result of Arhatship but it takes a very long time to attain and it brings peace only to the one who practices and not to anyone else.

In the Mahayana system of Bodhisattvas' practice one follows the path of hearing or studying, contemplating, and meditating, and the three training of moral discipline (sila), absorbed contemplation (samadhi), and supreme knowledge (prajna). Also the Bodhisattva must practice the six paramitas (generosity, moral discipline, patience, perseverance, concentration, and profound discernment) and so gather the two accumulations of merit and supreme knowledge necessary for gaining Buddhahood. By practicing like this they will gain Enlightenment after three or seven or thirty-two measureless aeons (Drangme kalpas). However I feel doubtful that having started Dharma in this life one will be able to continue the Dharma in one's next life. This is something that nobody can guarantee for only the Buddha knows this. This is because in our past lives we have performed many bad sins and these will mature as birth in difficult places with little opportunity for Dharma practice. (If one practices on emptiness (sunyata) then all one's sins can be washed away - but this depends on the strength of one's practice.)

According to the Tantrayana or Vajrayana if you practice with full faith and full initiation and if you keep all your vows and do fully all that your Guru tells you then you will get Enlightenment in this life or in the bardo, or in the next life or within the next seven lives. We find reference to this in the Tibetan Tripitika, and mNga-Ri Pan-Chen says as follows in his *SDOM-GSUM RNAM-NGES: "Di-Am-'Chi-Ga-Dang-Ni-Bar-Do-Ru-Rang-bZhin sPrul-Pa'i Zhing-Du rDzogs-'Tshang-rGya."* This means that if you practice tantra strongly then in this life, or when you die, or in the next life you will get Buddhahood, the state of purity and perfection. Those of excellent capabilities (dBang-Po-Rab) will gain enlightenment in this life, those with middle range abilities (dBang-Po-'Bring-Po) will have success when they die and those of lowest capacity (dBang-Po-Tha-Ma) will get enlightenment in their next life. This is stated in the *RNAM-SNAM-SNANG MNGON-BYANG GYI-RGYUD* and many other works and thus Tantrayana is the shortcut or quick path to Nirvana

Also if one follows the Mahayana and after, 3 or 7 or 32 Drangme Kalpas is ready to gain enlightenment, one still needs to gain the 'Od-Zer Chen-Po'i dBang-bsKur, the initiation of great light rays, for without this one cannot gain full Buddhahood. All Buddhas need this.

For these reasons it is better that those who have joined the Dharma should continue to practice, whether they do so with me or without me or with some other male or female teacher. I have heard that some Tibetan Lamas have said in the West that Western mind has too much energy and so differs from Tibetan mind. Well I do not agree for each country, each nation, each people have some people who are very intelligent and with great energy and others who are intelligent but with no energy and others who are not so intelligent and they also are found both with and without energy.

Modern education and society encourages one to seek joy through the six sense organs. Yet modern education also contains Dharma but uses its facts a little differently. The joy of the six sense organs can also be Dharma if you know the method - but that depends on your mind and understanding. Also I am an Asian man but when I look at the situation of my own people I see it to be the same as for Western people. Perhaps the Lama spoke like that because he did not want to teach or perhaps he does not know Tantric ideas properly. Because if one teaches these things one must do so carefully for if you discuss these things without having enough idea it will be difficult for you to give a good answer.

Now to consider Dharma and faith. What is faith? It is firstly being pleased, secondly liking and feeling desire, and thirdly having full belief. For example perhaps one wishes to go from India to America. For this one needs food, lodgings and also travel expenses both ways. This can come from others or from one's own finances. Well firstly one likes the thought of going to America, it pleases and interests one. This is like first stage of being attracted to the Dharma. Secondly one makes arrangements for the journey, selecting the airline, buying the ticket and insurance, getting a passport and visa and so on. Similarly with the Dharma you make the necessary preparations for practice and gather together whatever is necessary. Thirdly you feel that your arrangements are adequate for you to make the round trip. Similarly with the Dharma you feel sure that by doing practice you and all other beings gain peace and enlightenment.

Or to give another example, if someone is very thirsty and they see water, and then they feel happy, this is like when we first hear of the Dharma and feel attracted. Then if they come to drink the water that is like the stage of starting to do practice to bring one closer to the Dharma. Then if they find that the water has cleared their thirst and so they believe in its qualities then that is like full faith in the Dharma based on direct knowledge of its beneficial qualities.

Faith is not similar to modern medicine or like an injection of 24 hundred thousand strength of penicillin therefore those who like Dharma must try themselves and not expect me or any other teacher to put some injection of faith in them. Faith is with yourself. You like one girl and want to marry her, or you want to eat some good food. By doing this you get the result of one minute's joy or half an hour good taste and three hours full stomach. Your desire for joy and food comes from your subject self not from the object of the girl or food. If one is willing to make great efforts to gain these brief joys then why should one not make effort for the Dharma which gives the greatest unending happiness. Therefore you must do practice and pray with the Seven Line Prayer (Tshig-bDun gSol-'Debs) and so on.

One man is rich and has everything while another is very poor. But the poor man can beg or apply himself and thereby also gain something. Similarly if you find that you have very little faith then you can pray, apply yourself to the practice of Padma Sambhava to increase your faith.

Here where I live in Bengal there are some slight difficulties due to being in the plains and sometimes it is hot and also we have some financial difficulties. But surely these are not impossible to bear. Formerly Naropa, Milarepa and many others experienced many difficulties for the sake of their practice but they put up with them and said, 'It's ok'.

If you look at other sentient beings, the animals like monkeys all have tails but we humans do not have them. That is we who are more advanced do not have to keep looking behind us for a tail that has to be protected. Even so, looking back we young Dharma practitioners who get difficulties should check again (That is we still have some externals that we have to be careful for). Whether going or sitting or whatever we should be careful not to forget our practice and especially the Seven Line Prayer (Tshig-bDun gSol-'Debs). Speaking this way is my bad fighting teaching system but perhaps it will be beneficial for my students. If you have interest you can read this and give it to others and if you think it is bad you can use it for toilet paper.

Now a further point regarding faith. I heard one idea and I believe it is a stupid idea but people think it is very important. I will explain it in a position in between intelligent and stupid yet that is still not necessary. People think that if we pray the god must come before us and show himself to us and give something, as in the cinema or drama (but also for the cinema we also have to do something either buy a ticket or get an invitation). They have that idea. Well, firstly for all the human beings in the world we can say that all are human and all have the same human right, but my idea is that until now this doctrine exists only in writing and has not

become fully ripe in practice. For as regards the Kings, Queens, Presidents, Chairmans, Ministers, Judges, big officers and so on one must first request their permission before one speaks to them and then perhaps one will get a chance and perhaps not. If all human beings actually had the same rights then they could all go to stay in the Indian Rastrapati Bhavan or Buckingham Palace in England or the White House in America. Thus up until now we humans have not attained equal rights. We say that we humans have the most power and the most rights but if we once go even to the zoo we find we have no rights. Firstly we have to ask the Zoo-keeper and then he looks at the lion to see if it is in a mood to see us and then perhaps we are given permission. So clearly we humans have no general rights and power at all.

When for we ordinary humans it is not possible to stay together with other humans without fighting and when we have these rough flesh bodies, how should it be possible for us to immediately see the pure gods who have light bodies? Human beings must themselves think about equality, friendliness and mutual benefit. Those who do this will get human right but not others. Our minds are covered with sin and ignorance and so we cannot easily see Padma Sambhava, Chenresi, Dorje Dragpo Tsal or the other gods until we have full faith although with their light bodies they can easily move here and there.

Padma Sambhava has said that every day when the sun rises he will travel along the sun's rays to those who pray. Perhaps you will say how can he come to me and everyone else when he is only one god who stays in Zangdopalri? But Padma Sambhava is not an ordinary person like you and me for he has the power to send out infinite emanations. If you shake during prayer time your idea will be completely changed. Until now we have the hard covering of ignorance. This is very difficult to open but when we pray maybe light rays will enter us from Padma Sambhava or some other god. That means something is coming into you. Until now you do not believe it will come to you. But it is not only Padma Sambhava, maybe Chemchog Heruka, maybe Chenresi, maybe Sengdongma and so on for all meditation deities- at the time of initiation or at invitation or at the descent of blessings (Ye-Shes-Babs-Pa) when your idea becomes changed then it is that god's blessing. After initiation you must get correct teaching and then do practice and then this will happen.

To help your practice you should make offerings and gifts. There are different kinds of gifts, namely gifts to the poor, gifts to animals, gifts of all we possess, gift of our own body through gChod etc. Offering (mChod-Pa), is a more honorific word than giving (sByin-Pa) and it is used to refer to gifts made to the upper class of guests, those who have some qualities such Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Gurus. There is also the honorific word 'Bul-Ba which is used for offering the printing of books, making stupas, monasteries, tea offerings to the sangha and so forth.

It was because of making gifts and offerings that there was no problem of food and money in Tibet. Some people say that the real reason for this was low population but I do not agree with this. My idea according to Buddha and Padma Sambhava's doctrines is that because everyone did offerings and practice water was always available, the sun's heat was good and timely, there were few bad diseases, especially for domestic animals, and butter and other food stuffs were cheap. Now if I consider where I stay now, things are quite different. In the first place I stayed in after leaving Tibet, I had to pay rent and rates for water supply. I thought they were joking, for how is it possible to charge for water! When the situation is like this and money gets tight then making gifts is difficult, yet those who give to others never go hungry themselves. If you make gifts you do not in fact lose any money because you will find that somehow you always have enough.

As for Dharma protectors, just as a king or government keeps police and military force and tracker-dogs etc., and though these may look like separate entities they are in my idea the representatives or aspects of the king or the governments, so similarly the Dharma protectors are the representatives or worker aspects of the Buddhas and wishing gods. Since some people

cannot be controlled or made peaceful or taken to enlightenment by peaceful forms, all the main gods like Chemchog Heruka have these Dharma protector representatives. Information on this is available in the original Tripitaka and they are connected with Kun-Tu bZang-Po and Kun-Tu bZang-Mo. There are other lower Dharma protectors who were originally just local gods in Tibet. Padma Sambhava controlled them then they also later became high gods. Also some meditators die and become dangerous and thus come to require offerings and attention - but these I call Yidag or hungry ghosts. But if you are the king and you keep a military force then you must pay them for their work.

Now the five afflictions (kleshas) and the eight consciousnesses (vijnana) are also the five original knowings and the eight great Bodhisattvas - on that level samsara and nirvana are about the same. But if ordinary people like you and me say that these gods and practices are high and those others are low, these are good and those are bad, then it is only a sign of great egoism and ignorance and that one's sins and afflictions have not been purified.

Now my idea is that all sentient beings can be divided into two groups, humans and non-humans. Non-humans have the same nature as humans, the same basic idea and same selfishness but they do not have such bad thoughts. They also have notions of our party or friends and the other party or enemies but they do not make a point of causing trouble to each other. Some eat grass, some eat meat, some eat fruits. Some are independent and some are dependent. The 'independent' ones include horses, lions, tigers, elephants and so forth yet of course they are not really independent because male needs female etc and they require some tree or rock to stay under and water to drink. The 'dependent' ones include cows, buffaloes, pigs, rats, cats, cocks etc, for they all need to be near people. All animals whether dependent or independent have simple natures and simple ideas. But humans are always selfish and full of the five afflictions of dullness, attraction, aversion, pride, jealousy. No matter how much they get they are never satisfied. They split all peoples up into our party and friends and the other party and enemies and they even make enemies out of their own party. Everyone does this.

Now, my ideas about Western and Asian: among the Asian people there some good scholars and some others who are very lazy, hoping for too much but not doing anything at all. The Tibetan idea is that village people who live far from the big cities are very honest and easily satisfied with what they get. Their manner is very rough but not really bad. In comparison to this, city people show a very peaceful manner but their inner idea is very rough, being always concerned with how I can get instead of thinking of others. Among we Tibetans 100% of people respect their parents and respect their gurus and teachers. Among other Asian peoples these qualities are 20% less. Now I have been to the West. I have seen Italy, Germany, and some parts of France and Austria. Everybody there is educated and whoever is educated has less respect for their parents and god. But they work hard. The amount of hope is about same as in Asia but in the West the people work hard to get what they want. Because there is no teaching on impermanence people there do not become weak and lazy. Asians know about impermanence but they do not practice Dharma and only think 'Today I will die so why bother.' The teachers say this and parents naturally give this idea.

Who does Dharma practice? About all Asians do Dharma practice, that idea comes naturally to them. That is to say 100% look as if they are doing Dharma practice but whether their minds are controlled or not who can say? But once they start they continue Dharma practice till they die. But if they do Dharma practice without understanding anything then I do not know what benefits it has.

The Westerners who practice Dharma that I have seen are mainly over fifteen years of age and have been educated. Now Western modern education is very nice and useful. Those who know the word meaning must also know reading and writing and so those who are over fifteen can all read some European language. Then if we teach them they can pick up in three months what an Asian would in two years. The reason is that they have come thousands of miles

and they have to spend money themselves for food and cloth. In the early years they studied thoroughly and so must still study well. But first these Westerners look to see which Dharma is best and which Guru is best. It is similar to when they go eating in many different hotels until they find a good one. When they are happy, gain understanding and belief, then they enter the Dharma and work hard. (People in Asia say these westerners are all C.I.A and C.I.D I personally do not have any government and so I do not have to inquire into this. But inside every 100 foreigners maybe two or three are like this. And why not? If they do this they are serving their own countries and they do not destroy others.)

One hundred foreigners come before me. My idea is that they must work hard. Before they were taking hashish and alcohol and now if they work hard they will get good health. Then they maybe have money to stay for two years. There are other groups of foreigners who come to avoid compulsory military service. Others like to live very well in big hotels and with many motor cars. This is difficult to do in the West due to the expense and so they come to Asia since here they can live for three or four months on what they spend in one day in Europe. Also I have seen those men who lose their girlfriends due to death or change of idea and those women who have lost their men due to change of idea or death. Because of this they cannot stay in their own countries and so they come out, for that is very painful for Westerners and for Asians too.

Now when people smoke hashish they get funny ideas with joy coming. Then with that they have funny ideas of impermanence and some philosophy. Others have some interest in Tibetan history, philosophy etc.. They intend to write some book and so work hard to get it finished and become famous.

Right or wrong these are my ideas why people come to Asia. Than having come here some people develop faith and then practice strongly. But they will not practice anything they do not understand. I like this idea very much indeed. For that reason I believe that those who stay with me for more than three months are religious people. But I also know some foreign people who are not like that at all. I have stayed some days in several hotels where foreigners congregate to smoke and drink and do many things and I have seen as follows: One man says I went to Darjeeling and saw Dudjom Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche and so on and I also went to these other places and met these and these Lamas and got this and that teaching and then did practice. Then someone hears this and goes off and tells the same thing to others about himself, although he has not really done anything at all. To them I would always say do not spoil this short life. While in Asia you should study some religion or culture.

But anyway we Tibetans have been refugees for twenty years and some have been in India for fifty years before that yet even now if they have to go to Delhi they cannot speak to the local Indians.

The former translators who came from Tibet to study in India had a very difficult time. They were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas - this I really know now. I came to India thirty years ago and since that time some other Tibetans have learnt no Hindi, Nepali, Bengali etc. apart from words for rice, salt and so on.

I would say that 80% of the foreigners take something with them when they go back to their homes. They have learnt music or art or Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or some village culture or even have just some photographs of dead bodies being burnt - but even this will be enjoyed by some others in Europe. All this may seem like nonsense talk but it is necessary for what follows.

Now some people say that reading texts aloud is not necessary, for thinking is Dharma. Then I question them if they can always think good or Dharma thoughts. If they say yes then they must be Bodhisattvas. If they say they can stop bad thoughts for a while but then they have to try again then I believe them because I am also a very ordinary meditator. Now as regards

why reading is necessary, if you read loudly and from memory with concentration then ordinary thinking will be stopped. Why should we practice prostrations? If you do prostrations then your body will become weak, the sense organs will become weak and the consciousnesses (rNam-Shes) will become weak and unable to cause so much trouble. As an example of the value of reading loudly one man has a girl friend who is always singing one song but then she dies and is gone but singing the song himself the man feels some connection with her. Similarly when we read prayers strongly it reminds us of our connection with the gods and it is also blocks of other distracting thoughts. So our reading of the Seven Line Prayer (Tshig-bDun gSol-'Debs) and mantras is helpful. To those who say they do not read anything and have a meditation free of thoughts I say this is pig meditation for a pig also enjoys deep sleep free of thoughts.

Some foreigners and also Asians ask why Dharma dress and hats are necessary. To give one very ordinary example, when I joined Visva-Bharati University our Director of Research, Principal of Vidya Bhavana and Vice Chancellor was Dr. P.C. Bagchi. When the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came in December for the convocation, all the high members of the university were invited. I was also invited and sitting at the first table, we were able to ask Mr. Nehru some questions. But because he was Chancellor of the university and Prime Minister of India and a very great personality I did not want to trouble him. Anyway, I was encouraged by the other guests and the Vice-Chancellor and so I said that I had no interest in politics and also I would not ask him about Buddhism. But all the Bengalis here were saying that I should wear a dhoti and so I asked him if he thought that I should do so. The Prime Minister replied that I should continue to wear my Dharma robes because they were my own dress, and people respected them. Also the Home Section and Police would think that I was a real man, not like those who were changing their dress and identity. By keeping one's own dress one will appear trustworthy. Then from that day on nobody said that I should change my cloth.

There are two benefits of wearing Dharma dress: one outer and one inner. Firstly, whenever someone is wearing religious dress whether Muslim, Hindu, Christian or Buddhist, they are respected by all people. If for some reason the police should want to arrest them they will do it slowly and discretely and not with handcuffs and chains. Secondly, if some demon should come to trouble someone in Dharma robes the demon himself will be afraid for he will know that this person, whether high or low, will surely have taken refuge in the very powerful Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and so he will not be able to make trouble. And when Yama the Lord of the Dead sends his messengers to take someone who is wearing Dharma robes then they will not rush in but will examine his state well before they take him.

Also if you wear Dharma dress then it will not be so easy for you to do wrong things. For example if you want to go with some girls they will say, 'you are a monk and so it is not proper', and if you try to associate with thieves they will not like it for it looks very bad for them. Also it is said that whoever wears Dharma robes will be blessed and served by the Buddhas and Dharma-Protectors of the ten directions.

If you make an upper shawl (Zan), lower skirt (bSham-Thabs), and short sleeveless shirt (Tong-Ga) then you will gain the same merit as from building a Khang-Bu brTsegs-Pai mChod-rTen, a Buddhist holy reliquary. A bSham-Thabs requires a minimum of five arm spans length and two and a half cubits height. The upper and lower strips should be a hand span high. We also say that additional lengths of cloth (Kha-bsKong) are perhaps necessary and of course we Tibetans also have fifty length bSham-Thabs, but not according to rule. The Zan is the same length as the bSham-Thabs but is two cubits in height. Regarding the Tong-Ga, Mr. Santi Bhikshu Sastri who was a lecturer in Sanskrit in Visva-Bharati University, and then Research scholar in Leipzig University, East Germany, and who then became a full Professor at Padma University in Ceylon, said that this was actually a nun's dress that was worn to cover the breasts. It is perhaps possible that nuns especially need such a cloth but other Indians have that style of cloth and it was probably adopted for warmth when Bhikshus went to Tibet. In Tibetan we say Gvra-Pa Shi-

Na Gvra-Pa Dros, that is, monks are only warm when they die. When sleeping the monks use warm woollen cloth such as is not available nor necessary in India.

Now to consider the necessity of wearing hats. I do not understand why people should ask the strange question as to why it is necessary to wear hats. But the person who asked was a very open man. If an Asian person has 100 thoughts he will only say 20 of them. Lord Buddha has said that before others one must make things open and not keep things hidden. Out of every 100 thoughts that come foreign people say 100. I went to Europe and saw that young and old are wearing hats. Without a hat it is not possible for them to go for dinner or lunch. Bishops and Archbishops have hats and so these foreigners must know what hats are, yet they still question me. Anyway, our Tibetan Dharma hats were first introduced by Indian monks. The different sects in Tibet each had a different style of hat. rNying-Ma-Pa have many kinds of hats such as Padma mThong-Grol, Dab lDen Rigs-lNga, Padma sNyen Zhu but our puja hat is only used for meditation. How these hats are made and what their benefits are has been written by Padma Sambhava. To wear the hat one must have full Dharma dress otherwise it looks like only fancy dress to my eye. This hat is necessary for receiving blessings and for inviting the gods into the mandala and the practice place. It is also worn generally when making praise and when presenting assembled offerings (Tshogs). And sometimes the hats are worn when expelling the obstructors (dGegs-gTor) and when making the outer, inner and secret offerings.

Then to consider Lama Dancing. This is not ordinary dancing and it must be performed with meditation on deep doctrines and on the Deity. In Tibet those who danced as rDo-rJe Phur-Pa, gShin-rJe Tshe-bDag, Guru mTshan-brGyad and so on had to have the full mantra recitation for the Deity (that is, one recites the mantra one hundred thousand times for each of the syllables in the mantra). Those who play the instruments and those who must watch must believe that it is the actual Deities who are dancing and not ordinary people whom they know. By the audience's faith and the dancer's meditation the Deities come from the pure realms of Zangdok Palri or Chos-dBying (Dharmadhatu) and give blessing. Originally, these dances were only performed inside the temple with the doors closed but for the past 300 years they have become more like an open drama for the sake of getting offerings and gaining name and fame. According to the books the dance must be a real practice and each dance or 'Cham has its own special numbered postures and this counting system goes together with how the cymbals (Rol-Mo) are played. All the separate portions of the 'Cham must come together correctly.

Now to consider gTor-Ma. Firstly, philologically gTor means to destroy and Ma means great, so it is the great destruction. All that is desired, all that exists in samsara and nirvana, all grasping ideas and ignorance must be destroyed within Dharmadhatu nature. There are many ideas regarding the construction of gTor-Ma. There are general offering gTor-Ma like Zhal-Zas and also special gTor-Ma which are those for the practices of the nine yana. Bya-rGyud, kriya tantra, uses gTor-Ma with the Three Whites (dKar-gSum, milk, curd, and butter) and the Three Sweets (mNgar-gSum, honey, treacle and refined sugar).

This is also used sometimes in the sPyod-rGyud, charya tantra, where the offering system is to have the meditation deity as a king with the disciple as a subject of the king and so one offers very carefully and purely. In the rNal-'Byur rGyud, yoga tantra, there are bGegs-gTor, bKa'-gTor, sMan-gTor, Zhal-Zas, dBang-Po rNam-lNga, Sha-Rus Zhal-Zas etc. these can all be made from tsampa and butter and the bLa-Med Nyer-lNga, the 25 unequalled spices. The offering system here is of one friend giving to another friend.

The Pha-rGyud, Pitrayogatantra system, is about the same as rNal-'Byur-rGyud. Ma-rGyud is a little different and the offering system is as a child giving to its parents and as the parents giving to the child.

In Ati-Yoga all that exists is offered into the Dharmadhatu, offering all there is completely.

This is the original idea of gTor-Ma. There are also some forms which are constructed. Some people ask why I make gTor-Ma out of wood. Well, why are gTor-Ma made out of tsampa roasted barley flour? Maybe it is a lazy system and an economical method to make gTor-Ma from wood. But although I am poor if necessary I also make gTor-Ma from tsampa. Some Tibetans ask how the gods can eat wood but these people have come from Tibet just a few years ago and I would like to ask them if they can show me the gods eating tsampa gTor-Ma. Also in Tibet I have seen silver gTor-Ma with jewels and I am sure that these people would agree that if these are allowed for big Lamas then wood gTor-Ma must be allowed for poor lamas. There is also the Yi-Dam gTor-Ma which has a Tshe-gTor on the back and that Tshe-gTor is made of wood. Also in Nepal I have seen gTor-Ma made of clay and also I have made tormas out of clay for my sponsor Tshe-Ring Don-Grub at Rewalser. Clay gTor-Ma have the advantage that worms do not eat them, heat does not destroy them, and they have no bad smell. But if you use butter, rats and cats will come to eat it and if you use water then after some time hairs come out all over it and it looks like a sheep. Wooden gTor-Ma also do not have these bad qualities. Also I use plastic ornaments on the wooden gTor-Ma. This is because I am very poor and have no coral, no turquoise, no diamonds. If I had them then I would use them but as it is I use the best that I can find. Also if one used real jewels it would attract thieves and also the income tax men would come to bother one. Plastic is cheap, yet still it has cost Rupees 600 up till now.

Regarding the use of drums and cymbals it is generally like this. You like one girlfriend but she needs many things to please her. So you must collect things to give her and then you get a little joy. Now the Buddhas, Deities, Dakinis and Dharma Protectors are not poor and they do not actually need anything from us. Yet we are poor in merits and good qualities and so we make offerings to the Buddhas. They accept because of their compassion and so we get virtues and blessings.

To briefly consider the question of offering butter lamps. I was asked why one should burn them by someone who had already read my Mar-Me sMon-Lam, Butter Lamp Prayer (published as *RADIANT ASPIRATION*), seven times with me. He is like someone with a house fitted with electricity who does not turn on the switch, for the answer to that question is given in the prayer.

These are the answers to some questions that have arisen recently. In future many questions will arise and that is also nice. In the past, present and future many thoughts arise and these thoughts make questions. But it is due to these thoughts that we are still kept in this world of misery. Till now we are thinking thoughts and questions and in the future also we will be thinking questions and they never seem to end.

I think that if you people all study and practice the following verses then your ordinary thoughts will perhaps be stopped. (I do not say that you will become stupid but rather you will get a good understanding).

As regards the objects of our vision, the appearances of absolutely all the outer and inner entities that constitute the universe and its inhabitants, maintain the state in which they can appear yet without being grasped at as something inherently real, for in fact they are the divine forms of clarity and emptiness, pure and by nature untaintable by the false notions of graspable objects and grasping mind. We pray to the guru who self-liberates desire. We pray to Padma Sambhava of Urgyan.

As regards the objects of audition, the audible matter comprising all the sounds that we grasp as being pleasant and unpleasant, remain in the state of sound and emptiness that is free of all conceptual interpretation, for they are in fact, sound and emptiness, the unborn and unceasing speech of the Jina. We pray to the Jina's speech of sound and emptiness. We pray to Padma Sambhava of Urgyan.

As regards the objects of our mentation, these restless movements of the five afflicting poisons' thoughts, no matter what arises, do not enter upon the intellect's unnatural activities of awaiting future thoughts and following after past thoughts since by leaving the restless movement in its own place we are liberated in the dharmakaya. We pray to the guru of self-liberating awareness. We pray to Padma Sambhava of Urgyan.

With the purification of all the appearances of the outer objects of grasping, the liberating of the grasping mind within, and simultaneously the natural luminosity of the recognition of our own natures, by the compassion of all the sugatas of the three times, may I and all beings be blessed with the liberation of our minds.

Of these four verses, the first three deal with eye, ear, and mind activities and the fourth with the purification of outer object and inner mind and in the middle of that, the awakening to one's own original nature, aided by the blessing of all the Tathagatas and Gurus. What is written there regarding the eyes and forms, the ear and sounds, and mind and all thoughts, should also be applied to your feelings, tastes, smells for these are all part of the mind's activity. All the six senses must be pure.

From day to day I get more idea of my own impermanence. How long I will stay now I do not know but for that period anyway, as long as it is possible to speak with my burning sharp tongue and my mind is clear, I will always do some writing and teaching.

In brief I say this: You must always keep faith in your Gurus, Three Jewels, Three Roots, Three Kayas and also in all sentient beings for they also have Buddha nature. You must have full faith in the Dharma, burning butter lamps and giving offerings to the Dharma and the poor etc. If that is not possible for you in the future then six times daily, or when you wake, eat or sleep, you must really remember your Guru, Meditation Deity and so on.

Do not go after your thoughts. Our thoughts will never finish so if we keep going after them we will never be finished with them and never come free. You must stop your thoughts. Also keep your mind clear and develop a helpful attitude towards others. Do not keep bad thoughts.

C.R. Lama

Mahavajracharya

Working President and Special General Secretary

The International Indo-Tibetan Nyingmapa Buddhist Cultural Preservation Society

and

President

The 'Chi-Med Rig-'Dzin Society

6 May 1979

POSTSCRIPT

This was dictated by CR Lama to me and typed up in Santiniketan. Only a few copies were printed. This one has remained in my papers since that time. However any trace of the presence of the Guru is a blessing. CR Lama's way of speaking and behaving was quite unique. Without hesitation or doubt his mode was spontaneous and free of regret. He was unconstrained by the fetters of the rational mind and its fears.

James Low, 2/4/20