Today you, who are a rinpoche, respectfully requested a discourse on the dharma relating to the question “What is cultivation?” This is a very fundamental lesson; indeed, the first lesson. Nonetheless, this is an important matter that many cultivators, including those who have practiced cultivation over many years, do not understand and are confused about. It is difficult to incarnate as a human being. It is even more difficult to incarnate as a human being with the opportunity to encounter the true Buddha-dharma. Thus, today I will enlighten everyone on dharma relating to the question “What is cultivation?”

The essence of learning Buddhism lies with carrying out what we learn in our cultivation. We use good and bad causes and conditions as objects of cognition. Therefore, we must first understand what cultivation is. Cultivation is cultivating the increase of good karma and cultivating the avoidance of bad karma. It is increasing good karmic conditions, planting good causes, and reaping good effects. It is avoiding the increase of bad karmic conditions, not planting bad causes, and avoiding the reaping of bad effects. But the term cultivation has a rather broad meaning. We must first understand what cultivation is.

There must be that upon which the cultivator can rely. There must be models that the cultivator can reflect and rely upon.

All other religions espouse eliminating evil, promoting good, restraining selfishness, and benefiting others. The cultivator cannot rely upon this alone, for this is cultivation without understanding the purpose of Buddhism. This alone is not the practice of true Buddhism. Thus, in our cultivation, that which we rely upon is the Buddha. The perfect enlightenment of the Buddha is the model for our cultivation. We use our three karmas of bodily actions, speech, and thoughts to emulate everything about the Buddha. We thereby keep ourselves far away from all impure karma based on delusion and all evil conduct. We thereby constantly stay far away from that which is evil or bad. By not being involved with that which is evil or bad, our three karmas do not increase bad causes. Rather, we must carry out all good karma. Even one kind thought is something we should increase and never decrease. We should increase our good karmic affinity, good causes, and good karma every day. Simply put, we must always avoid that which is evil or bad and accumulate that which is good.

Why can it be said that we must stay far away from evil or bad karma but it cannot be said that we must eliminate evil or bad karma? Within the truth of Buddhism, there is the doctrine that the law of cause and effect can never be denied. Cause and effect cannot be eliminated. To say that it can is to take a nihilistic point of view. Hence, we can only build a wall of good karma,
which is like building a retaining wall. This wall of good karma has the effect of blocking us from our evil karma.

Thus, only through learning from the Buddha, cultivating the conduct of the Buddha, and ultimately becoming a Buddha can we thoroughly liberate ourselves from the karma (cause and effect) that binds us to the cycle of reincarnation. Cause and effect still exists when one becomes a Buddha. However, cause and effect can not affect a Buddha. For example, the Buddha saw mountains of swords and seas of fire in the hell realm. The mountains of swords and seas of fire continued to exist as extremely painful means by which living beings undergo karmic retribution. When the Buddha suddenly jumped into the mountains of swords and seas of fire in order to undergo suffering on behalf of other living beings, the mountains and seas immediately transformed into a lotus pond of nectar. They transformed into a wonderful state. With respect to a Buddha, all bad or evil karmic conditions turn into the manifestation of good karma. Not only is there no suffering, there is instead a manifestation of great happiness.

Cultivation is to leave the cycle of reincarnation, liberate yourself from all suffering, become a holy being, and persevere until you become a Buddha. To leave the cycle of reincarnation, we must establish a mind of renunciation (a mind determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation), a mind of firm belief, a mind with immovable vows, a mind of diligence, and mahayana bodhicitta. All real states emanating from these minds rely upon and are based upon right view. Without right view, all states of mind will be inverted and confused. In other words, you will not experience any beneficial effects from cultivation that lacks right view.

For example, if you want to practice bodhicitta first, you will not be successful. It will result in an empty and illusory bodhicitta, a deluded and false state of mind. That is because bodhicitta must be based upon a mind of renunciation. That is, you must have a mind that is truly determined to attain liberation, to attain accomplishment in the dharma, and leave all of the sufferings of reincarnation. You must deeply understand that the cycle of reincarnation is indescribably painful. Not only are you yourself suffering, but all living beings in the six realms of reincarnation, each of whom we regard as our father or mother, are likewise suffering in the painful state of impermanence. Only if you want to extricate yourself from suffering do you truly cultivate yourself. Only then do you engage in Bodhisattva conduct that benefits yourself and others. Only then can bodhicitta arise.

However, it would be a mistake if you begin by cultivating a mind of renunciation. That would not accord with the proper order of cultivation. That would result in a non-substantive, theoretical type of desire to leave reincarnation and a self-deluded and self-confused state of mind. In such case, you would not be able to establish the true state of mind that is determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation.

Thus, if you want to have this true state of mind that is determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation, you must first understand impermanence. The second step is to have a mind of firm belief. You must firmly believe in the sufferings of reincarnation, which has as its source impermanence. Only with such a mind of firm belief will you fear the sufferings caused by impermanence and successfully attain a state of mind that truly fears impermanence. Having attained a state of mind that truly fears impermanence, your state of mind that is determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation will grow stronger day by day. Naturally, your state of mind that is determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation will enter a real state that truly fears impermanence. If living beings do not understand that all conditional dharmas in the universe are
impermanent, if they do not understand the sufferings connected with reincarnation and impermanence, then they cannot establish a firm mind that gives rise to thoughts of leaving the cycle of reincarnation. If you have never thought about leaving the cycle of reincarnation, you will not cultivate at all, and you will not want to learn Buddhism. Those who do not learn Buddhism have no desire to leave the cycle of reincarnation. How could one who does not learn Buddhism have a mind determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation? Thus, you cannot first cultivate a mind determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation. As for the first step, you will not enter Buddhism without having a mind of impermanence.

(Truly giving rise to feelings of fear of impermanence and truly giving rise to a state that fears impermanence.) Even if you become Buddhist, you will not be able to attain a deep level of correct cultivation.

To understand what cultivation is, you must understand the eight fundamental right views relating to learning Buddhism and cultivation.

The first one is a mind of impermanence. The second is a mind with firm belief. The third is a mind of renunciation (a mind determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation). The fourth is a mind with true vows. The fifth is a mind of diligence. The sixth is the precepts. The seventh is dhyana and samadhi. The eighth is bodhicitta. Recognizing these eight dharmas and carrying them out with right views is correct practice of Buddha-dharma. According to the Buddha’s exposition of the dharma, the true meaning of bodhicitta is that it is the cause that will inevitably lead to becoming a Bodhisattva. Whoever walks the path of bodhi will ultimately reap the fruit of bodhi. The broad meaning of bodhicitta includes all of the mahayana dharma having to do with saving living beings out of great compassion and the causes leading to attaining the stages of enlightenment of a Bodhisattva.

However, because of the insufficient good fortune of living beings, some of the originally complete meaning of the Buddha-dharma has been lost as it was handed down from generation to generation. Especially in this current Dharma-Ending Age in which the karma of living beings in the three spheres (worlds) of the universe is like a sea of surging waves, it is as difficult for living beings to encounter the true Buddha-dharma as it is for a blind turtle swimming in the ocean to stick its neck through a
tiny knothole in a floating and bobbing board. Thus, it is now extremely difficult to obtain the perfect Buddha-dharma. As a result, the meaning of bodhi has shrunk. It has gradually shrunk from its broad meaning to the narrow meaning of bodhicitta dharma.

There are two types of bodhicitta. There is bodhicitta in the holy sense and bodhicitta in the worldly sense. Bodhicitta in the worldly sense can be roughly divided into “vow bodhicitta” and “action bodhicitta.” The practice of vow and action bodhicitta includes a myriad of dharma methods, such as those relating to sentient beings, non-sentient things, the four great elements, one’s own six elements, as well as breathing, the ear base, the eye base and other bases, inner and outer mandalas, and ritualistic chanting. Whether it is bodhicitta in the worldly sense or the holy sense, if you are guided by the two sets of seven branches of bodhicitta, that is the highest, most excellent, and most complete form of bodhicitta.

Each living being in the six realms of reincarnation within the three spheres of existence has the right to cultivate bodhicitta. However, most living beings do not have the karmic affinity. Thus, they practice a fragmented and shrunken version of bodhicitta dharma. As a result, they frequently harbor the misconceptions that only those with an enlightened mind can practice bodhicitta or bodhicitta is the dharmakaya state of enlightenment. Of course, we do not deny these are existing parts of bodhicitta. However, these conceptions omit the practice of bodhicitta dharma by those living beings who do not have an enlightened mind. More importantly, bodhicitta is not dependant upon an enlightened mind or an unenlightened mind. Bodhicitta is the power of vows made out of great compassion by those living beings who learn Buddhism in any of the six realms of reincarnation within the three spheres of the universe as well as the power of vows made out of great compassion by all holy beings in the dharma realm. Bodhicitta is actual conduct based upon great compassion that aids living beings in becoming Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. It is the mind of love in the holy sense that the enlightened and the unenlightened or the holy and the ordinary both have.

With respect to bodhicitta, those who are enlightened use their enlightened state of virtue and realization, correct practices, and propagation of the true dharma to teach and enlighten living beings so that those living beings will become Buddhas. With respect to bodhicitta, those who are not yet enlightened vow out of great compassion that living beings and themselves shall together attain accomplishment in the dharma and liberation. They help other people enter the path of the true dharma of the Buddha, vowing that they will become Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. To such persons, bodhicitta dharma is the virtue of aiding others to become accomplished in the dharma. Because they benefit others, they receive merit. They thereby increase the causes leading to their becoming Bodhisattvas.

The manifestation of bodhicitta is expressed through actual practice involving the three karmas, which practice reflects great compassion. Any true cultivator, no matter whether he or she is ordinary or holy, has the right to arouse bodhicitta and should arouse bodhicitta. That is because bodhicitta is not an enlightened mind possessed only by holy people. Rather, it is conduct based upon great compassion. It is the planting of causes based upon a vow that oneself and others become enlightened. Bodhicitta does not only include the ten good characteristics, the four limitless states of mind (the four immeasurables), the six paramitas (perfections), and the four all-embracing Bodhisattva virtues (four methods that Bodhisattvas employ to approach and save living beings). Rather, it includes the entire Tripitaka, the esoteric scriptures, and all dharma transmitted orally, through the ears, or
telepathically that engenders conduct that is greatly compassionate, is in accord with the dharma, and benefits and saves living beings.

Thus, the bodhicitta is ultimate truth in a broad sense. With respect to the Buddha, bodhicitta is the three bodies, the perfect wisdom of Buddha that is summarized in four truths, and the mind of anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. With respect to a Bodhisattva, bodhicitta is propagating the dharma and benefiting and saving living beings out of great compassion. With respect to an enlightened being, bodhicitta is not being attached to the characteristics or distinctive features of things and not engaging in intellectual frivolity or conceptual elaborations. This is his or her original nature. The true emptiness of original nature is wonderful existence. It is the ultimate truth of all conditional dharmas. This truth neither arises nor ceases. With respect to an ordinary person, bodhicitta is compassionately helping other people and vowing that they learn Buddhism and attain liberation.

You must first have the perspective of impermanence before you can arouse bodhicitta. You must understand the impermanence and suffering relating to yourself and other living beings revolving in the cycle of reincarnation and thereby generate a perspective of awareness, a mind of impermanence. You will then vow to leave the cycle of reincarnation. As a result, you will then establish a mind that is determined to leave the cycle of reincarnation. You will say, “I resolve to leave.” You also want all living beings in the six realms, who are like your father or mother, to leave. You understand that the cycle of reincarnation is like a bitter sea, is difficult to endure, and is extremely painful. Because of this resolute perspective, you will generate a strong and pressing fear. You will constantly seek to be liberated at this very moment. But you understand that only by having the conduct of a Bodhisattva can you quickly attain liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.

You thus vow to become a Bodhisattva. You seek to quickly enlighten yourself and others. Naturally, you then generate a mind of great compassion. As a result, the seeds of enlightenment are disseminated. The arousal of bodhicitta is based upon a mind of great compassion. Thus the Buddha said, “The water of great compassion irrigates the seeds of bodhi. As a result, the bodhi trees will have lush foliage and the fruits will be plentiful.” Hence, bodhicitta will naturally be established. Bodhicitta is the cause leading to becoming a mahayana Bodhisattva. You will attain pure and correct views and understanding of cultivation. Based upon these right views, you should deeply enter the emptiness bhuta-tathata (true suchness) and the practice of the state of emptiness. At this time, you transform worldly bodhicitta into a state in which you realize that “the three entities are inherently empty.” That is you transform everything in existence into bodhicitta in a holy sense. With bodhicitta, you cultivate the conduct of bodhi and enter the stage of a Bodhisattva.

Cultivation of bodhicitta requires implementation. Cultivation of bodhicitta is not a matter of just ritualistic chanting, making empty vows, or engaging in visualization. In the cultivation of bodhicitta, the most important aspect is deeply pondering the following concerning yourself: “My body is impermanent, is changing every nanosecond, and is moving toward decline, old age, and death. I compare why my face has aged over a ten-year period, over a forty-year period, or over a seventy-year period. The degree of agedness of my skin has changed. I will soon enter old age, sickness, and death and continue revolving in the cycle of reincarnation where I will experience suffering. I also contemplate that joyfully innocent, newborn, fresh, and lively look I had when I was a small child. I contemplate how I no longer have that childlike appearance. My face and skin have aged. My energy has declined. I often fall ill. That quality of youth is gone. The power of impermanence
will end my life. My relatives and old friends will all die one after another. Like a dream, it will soon be all over. My mind generates great fear. With a resolute mind, I act in accord with the precepts, practice in accord with the dharma, and enter bodhicitta by practicing the two sets of seven branch bodhicitta dharma: the Dharma of Great Compassion for All Living Beings as My Mother Bodhicitta and the Dharma of Bodhisattva Correspondence Bodhicitta.

When practicing the Great Compassion for My Mother Bodhicitta, you arouse great compassion and cultivate the following: understanding who my mother is, bearing in mind kindness, repaying kindness, loving-kindness, compassion, renouncing greed, and eliminating attachment. When practicing this cultivation, everyone should carry out the following for themselves:

**Understanding who my mother is:** I deeply understand that all living beings in the six realms of reincarnation within the three spheres of the universe have been since beginning-less time my fathers and mothers in the revolving cycle of reincarnation.

**Bearing in mind kindness:** I should deeply bear in mind that all of my parents (i.e. all living beings) that now exist in the cycle of reincarnation have since beginning-less time given birth to me, reared me, loved me, and became tired and ill for me. Their kindness to me is as heavy as a mountain. I should bear in mind their kindness. I will then regard the sufferings of my parents (i.e. all living beings) as my own suffering.

**Repaying kindness:** I understand that my parents (i.e. all living beings) have offered me everything. They are now revolving and wandering in the six realms of reincarnation experiencing endless suffering. I resolve to take action to enlighten myself and others, to save and liberate my parents (i.e. all living beings) in order to repay their kindness to me.

**Loving-kindness:** At all times, through the actions of my three karmas, I am loving and kind toward all living beings, who have been my parents. I wish them a long life without illness, good fortune, good luck, and a happy life.

**Compassion:** Day and night, I constantly beseech all of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to empower all of my parents (i.e. all living beings) so that they may extricate themselves from all forms of suffering, encounter and practice the Buddha-dharma, and liberate themselves from the sufferings of cyclic existence.

**Renouncing greed:** I hold no attachment in my mind to anything that I do to benefit any living beings, who have been my parents. I cultivate non-attachment to all of my good actions of body, speech, and mind. Thus, my good actions become natural and spontaneous, as my original nature is good. I do not do good purposefully. I do good and then forget about it.

**Eliminating attachment:** In my practice, as I cultivate all forms of goodness and benefit my parents (i.e. all living beings), I should not become attached to any dharma. I should eliminate all attachment to self. Realizing a state of emptiness, I am aware and I experience wonderful happiness that comes from samadhi. While practicing the dharma, I am not attached to the dharma. I do not intentionally get rid of deluded thoughts. I do not intentionally seek the truth. Not coming and not going, blissful, clear, and without thought, I am as calm as tranquil water. Everything, including myself, is inherently empty.

The supporting conditions for putting bodhicitta into practice must be based upon right view. We contribute to living beings in their performance of good deeds, but we do not contribute or help living beings in their performance of bad deeds. We rectify their behavior so that they perform good deeds. Thus, we do all good deeds that benefit living beings. We plant all good causes that lead to benefiting
living beings. In that way, we carry out the seven branches of the Dharma of Bodhisattva Correspondence Bodhicitta. We help living beings in their performing good deeds and help increase their good causes. We help living beings reduce their accumulation of bad karma and help them stay far away from bad causes. The seven branches of the Dharma of Bodhisattva Correspondence Bodhicitta are as follows. The first branch is “self and others are equal” bodhicitta. The second branch is “exchange between self and others” bodhicitta. The third branch is “benefit others before self” bodhicitta. The fourth branch is “dedicating merit” bodhicitta. The fifth branch is “fearlessly protect the dharma” bodhicitta. The sixth branch is “effectively lead others to correct practice” bodhicitta. The seventh branch is “renouncing myself to help others build good karma” bodhicitta. When practicing this cultivation, everyone should carry out the following themselves:

Self and others are equal bodhicitta: When there is a conflict of interest between myself and others, I will rid myself of hatred, antipathy, greed, and arrogant, disparaging mentality. I must not emphasize benefiting myself. I should treat myself and others equally.

Exchange between self and others bodhicitta: I want to bear the sufferings of all living beings. I give to others all of my happiness and good luck so that they may leave suffering and obtain happiness.

Benefit others before self bodhicitta: When other living beings and I are suffering, I want others to extricate themselves from suffering before I do. When other living beings and I are happy, I want others to be happier than I am.

Dedicating merit bodhicitta: I dedicate to all living beings all of the merit and accomplishments from my cultivation in the hope that they will leave suffering and attain liberation.

Fearlessly protect the dharma bodhicitta: When any evil spirits or demons harm the Buddha-dharma, lead living beings to break the precepts, and harm living beings resulting in the suffering of living beings, I will maintain right view, will not fear the evil powers of those demons, and will step forward to protect the Buddha-dharma and the wisdom whereby living beings will become liberated.

Effectively lead others to correct practice bodhicitta: Because living beings are burdened with the power of karma that has accumulated since beginning-less time, because they are ignorant and have created all kinds of negative karma, there will be times when they will not repent or change their ways despite my constructive exhortations. In such case, I will use powerful rectifying dharma methods to lead such people onto the path of true dharma and beneficial and good conduct.

Renouncing myself to help others build good karma bodhicitta: When the realization of other people is higher than mine or their ability to save living beings is better than mine, I will yield to other people so that living beings will be benefited more. At such time, without any hesitation, I yield to them. This furthers the great undertaking of goodness.

Bodhicitta, as part of cultivation, is the source of accomplishment in the dharma and is very important. I will now give an example involving a rinpoche and a dharma master. This rinpoche cultivated himself for more than thirty years. He received more than one thousand esoteric dharma initiations. He mainly practiced the Great Perfection Dharma (Dzogchen) of the Nyingma sect. He was able to expound the Buddha-dharma of the Tripitaka very well. However, he did not have any real dharma powers. The other person, a dharma master, had been a monk for more than twenty years. He strictly abided by the precepts and rules of discipline. He was well versed in the sutras, the vinaya (precepts and rules of discipline), and the commentaries. He practiced important and great
dharmas of the Tibetan esoteric school of Buddhism and was the abbot of a famous temple. Like the rinpoche, he was famous in expounding the dharma. However, he also was unable to manifest any actual realization.

I told them that no matter what great dharma of the esoteric school they may practice, it is all like building a tower on quicksand. Such a tower could not be built. I told them that even if they temporarily had some success in their practice, it would quickly vanish. I had them practice letting go of their own knowledge or habituated way of knowing because these are hindrances. I had them practice “What Is Cultivation?” After they practiced such dharma for about eight months, I had them add to their practice the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) and other dharmas. A miracle then happened. During a test of his progress, the rinpoche applied the Vajra Fist Powerful Thunder True Dharma Palm and manifested great powers. Actual realization was shown. However, the dharma master did not manifest any powers. He continued to practice this cultivation dharma. Under my careful pointing out of his shortcomings, he finally understood the importance of true cultivation and how true cultivation requires devoting time and energy on the actual carrying out of the three karmas. He finally understood that there is no room whatsoever for any slippage or compromise in this regard. He continued his practice for three months. In a test to measure his ability to manifest realization, his powers were thoroughly exhibited.

Thus, whoever can cultivate in such manner and carry out his practice according to the dharma will be able to obtain the true Buddha-dharma. Naturally, he will develop wisdom. He will not become involved with empty theories regarding the Five Vidyas. Rather, he will manifest actual states of accomplishment in the true Five Vidyas. Such a person will realize “manifestation of wonderful existence (supernatural power),” attain the fruit of bodhi, and enter the stage of a Bodhisattva.

The practitioners of all Buddhist sects should comply with these rules of cultivation and should practice bodhicitta. If you do not follow such dharma of cultivation in its proper order, then you will easily become confused and lose your way. Such dharma is the key to the methods of practicing cultivation.

Learning the methods of practicing dharma is another matter. All beneficial effects derived from learning the dharma are based upon cultivation. When your practice is in strict conformity with the dharma, you will naturally realize virtue and will successfully reach the true state. If you do not have the correct rules concerning cultivation, the dharma that you learn will become dharma based on erroneous view or even the evil dharma of demons. If you are complying with the dharma of cultivation as stated in this discourse, the dharma that you have learned is good dharma, and you are engaged in practicing Buddha-dharma. Cultivation also involves the ten good characteristics, the four limitless states of mind (the four immeasurables), the six paramitas (perfections), the four all-embracing Bodhisattva virtues (the four methods that Bodhisattvas employ to approach and save living beings), etc.

Some disciples will think that they know all of the important dharma I expounded today on cultivation. They will therefore not carefully ponder and fully incorporate into their thinking the cultivation of which I spoke. Rather, the wish they harbor in their hearts is to learn a great dharma whereby they will become a Buddha in this very lifetime.

Anyone with such a mentality has only superficial knowledge, has fallen into confusion, and has lost his way. Such a person will not learn the true Buddha-dharma. Even if he is practicing great dharma, such as the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) of the Nyingma sect, the Mind
Within Mind of the Kagyu sect, the Great Perfection of Wonderful Wisdom of the Sakya sect, the Kalachakra Vajra of the Geluk sect, Zen meditation of the Zen sect of exoteric Buddhism, reciting a Buddha’s name of the Pure Land sect, the dharma of the Consciousness-Only sect, or samatha and vipasyana of the hinayana school, he will not obtain any fruits from his practice and will not be able to transform his consciousness into wisdom. Thus, he will continue to go round and round in the state of an ordinary person. He will not be able to manifest any realization, the source of which is the wisdom of exoteric and esoteric Buddhism. He will not be able to exhibit any actual accomplishments in the Five Vidyas. He will only be able to manifest that which an ordinary person manifests. He may even be quite stupid such that he is only able to memorize theories in books and speak of empty theories, totally incapable of putting those theories into actual practice. Such a person cannot actually do anything. Even if he can do a few things, he cannot exceed those people in the world who are experts in those few things.

Think about it. Does such a person embody the Buddha-dharma? Is the wisdom derived from the Buddha-dharma so inferior? How can one who has not yet developed holy wisdom and still has the consciousness of an ordinary person possess the true dharma to enlighten himself and others? However, if you enter the practice of the dharma according to these rules of cultivation, then you can receive the true Buddha-dharma, can become truly proficient in exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, and can manifest accomplishments in the Five Vidyas. We should therefore understand that cultivation is the foundation for learning dharma, the cause of liberation, and the source of realizing the state of holiness.

Today I spoke briefly on the subject of what cultivation is. I expounded the subject of the correct practice of bodhicitta, which is part of cultivation. I did not speak of other dharma. There is so much more to teach. However, if I casually discussed those other teachings in this book, it would not be in accord with the rules of discipline and could easily create the negative karma of disrespect. Thus, I hope that all of you who learn Buddhism will deeply immerse yourselves in the Tripitaka and esoteric scriptures or will listen to my recorded discourses on the dharma. If you attentively listen to those discourses on the dharma with all your heart, within ten days you can attain a certain degree of joy or the wonderful joy of great enlightenment. If the causes and conditions mature, you will experience beneficial effects for your entire life or even attain great accomplishment, liberation, and Buddhahood.

Now that you have learned this dharma of cultivation, do you want to practice it? Anyone who engages in true cultivation can become accomplished in the dharma and attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Thus, we must clearly understand something. Although you have read “What is Cultivation” and although you have read the eight fundamentals of cultivation and two sets of seven branches based upon right view, that is called “reading words relating to practice.” That is not cultivation. If you understand the principles relating to cultivation, that is called “understanding the theories of practice.” This is also not cultivation. If you begin to implement this dharma of cultivation according to its content, that is also not cultivation. That is called “entering the process of cultivation.” If you have done your utmost to apply great compassion in accordance with this dharma of cultivation, that is called “coarse cultivation.” It is not true and correct cultivation. If you do not need to do your utmost to apply great compassion, if you naturally, effortlessly and perfectly carry out the eight fundamentals of cultivation and two sets of seven branches according to the dharma, that is called “cultivation.”
Why is it that doing your utmost in cultivation is not called “cultivation” but rather is called “coarse cultivation”? It is because since beginning-less time, the power of karma and the hindrances of ignorance have obstructed practitioners. Hence, they cannot let go of greed (selfish desire), hatred (anger or antipathy), and ignorance (delusion). They cannot let go of their attachment to self. This produces the hindrances that are based on the defilements (afflictions). This also produces the hindrances that emanate from their own knowledge or habituated way of knowing. These karmic hindrances devour all of the right mindfulness (right thought) of these practitioners. As a result, the process of implementing each of these rules of cultivation is difficult for these practitioners. Precisely because of this difficulty, they choose the method of using their utmost effort to practice cultivation. Using one’s utmost efforts in this manner is like a pebble that is coarse on the inside and out rather than a shining precious stone that has been carved and polished. Practicing part of the eight fundamentals of cultivation and the two sets of seven branches and not practicing the remaining parts is also not called true cultivation. That is why it is called “coarse cultivation” or “incomplete cultivation.”

Thoroughly understanding the rules of cultivation, not forcefully implementing them, and naturally carrying out the eight fundamentals of cultivation and two sets of seven branches according to the dharma is true cultivation that is without attachment to self and that has overcome the hindrances. This is the path of bodhi. Thus, every day practitioners should introspect upon Great Compassion for All Living Beings as My Mother Bodhicitta and Bodhisattva Correspondence Bodhicitta. They should reflect upon those two sets of seven branches, asking themselves whether they have practiced them according to the dharma. If you were unable to practice these rules according to the dharma contained in this discourse, it shows that you have entered the state of “coarse cultivation.” If you did not fully implement these rules, then your cultivation is incomplete cultivation. You will not become accomplished in the dharma and liberated from the cycle of reincarnation through such incomplete cultivation. Even if you have some minor accomplishments, it will be impossible for you to attain great fortune and wisdom, supernatural powers, and realization in the Five Vidyas.

If you introspect every day upon these two sets of seven branches, are not forceful in implementing them, are greatly compassionate, follow goodness in a natural way, and carry out the two sets of seven branches naturally and according to the dharma, that would be true cultivation and complete practice. You will thereby easily be able to attain liberation, become a holy being, and obtain good fortune and wisdom. You will accordingly have realization in the Five Vidyas. You will certainly reach the stage of a Bodhisattva. Thus, you should understand that “reading words relating to practice,” “understanding the theories of practice,” “entering the process of cultivation,” and “incomplete cultivation” is easy. To practice the two sets of seven branches perfectly and without attachment is difficult. Actually, when you let go of attachment to self, you immediately enter correct and true cultivation. How could this be difficult? Everyone can do that!

When you do your daily introspection, besides using thoughts to contemplate and visualize, it is more important that you must use as objects of introspection fellow disciples with whom you are familiar, people with whom you get along, people who are not good to you, negative karmic conditions, any conditions or people that make you unhappy, or people you find hard to get along with, to whom who do not speak, or who do not speak to you. You must use them as objects of your practice, asking yourself, “Today did I act in accordance with the two sets
of seven branches and on my own initiative show goodwill to these people? When I approached that person on my own initiative and he attacked me with abusive words, did I forbear those insults with patience and continue to approach him in order to show goodwill?” You must not bear any grudge due to abusive words, abusive conduct, and insults. If, every day, you practice your bodhicitta without relenting, carry out the two sets of seven branches through your three karmas of physical action, speech, and thoughts, actually cultivate yourself according to the dharma in a real and concrete way, and realize “the thing itself is empty,” then it will be very easy for you to learn the supreme Buddha-dharma. In such case, bodhicitta and the stage of a Bodhisattva will naturally be yours. That is cultivation.

I have finished expounding the dharma of cultivation that benefits living beings. However, there is a certain type of matter harmful to living beings that occurs all the time. I am referring to the matter of using my name to harm the interests of living beings. I would now like to call attention again to a problem that is especially important and that everyone should take seriously.

In this world, there currently are some dharma kings, venerable ones, rinpoches, dharma teachers, and even laypersons who claim that they are my trusted followers. They may claim to represent me in handling a certain matter. They may claim to convey a certain message from me. Or, they may claim that what they say are my own words. Actually, I have disciples in exoteric and esoteric Buddhism and in each of the main sects. No matter what the status of any greatly virtuous person making such a claim may be, nobody can represent me. This applies to even very small matters!

Only when a person has a special-purpose document that I gave him or her clearly indicating he or she represents me in handling a certain matter, that document contains my signature and fingerprint, and that document is accompanied by a corresponding sound recording or videotape can he or she represent me in handling the matter specified in that document. Otherwise, no matter how high the status of a dharma king, venerable one, rinpoche, or dharma teacher may be, his or her views, discourses, and explanations of dharma do not represent my views and do not serve as the standard of correct understanding and correct views. I know that my own oral discourses and writings are the true dharma without any bias. That is because my oral discourses and writings truly benefit and liberate living beings. Furthermore, nobody may use any method to make additions, deletions, or revisions to my writings or discourses on the dharma given orally. Anyone who violates what is stated above is certainly one with wrong views or one who has fallen into demonic ways, no matter how high the status of that person is.

Thus, the only time someone can represent me is when everyone personally sees a document containing my fingerprint and there is accompanying proof in the form of an integral sound recording or videotape that corresponds to the document and in which I personally speak. Otherwise, no matter who the Buddhist disciple may be, including those disciples of holy virtue who have been at my side for a long period of time, everything that they think, do, say, or write is their own conduct and absolutely does not represent me!

(The above discourse was translated from Chinese to English.)
三世多杰羌佛傳的修行法

頂聖如來多杰羌佛第三世雲高益西諾布為仁波且等弟子的開示：
什麼叫修行？

今天你這個仁波且為大衆講法「什麼叫修行？」這是常基礎的第一課，但也是許多修行人乃至長年修行者沒有學懂而迷離顛倒的大事。人身難得，暇滿人身寶更難得，故而今天我當為大家講「什麼叫修行」之法。

學佛的實質，要落實在修行上，因此我們首先必須明白什麼叫修行。修行，即是修善惡二所緣業之增益與離避。也就是增益善緣，種善因，結善果；離避惡所緣，離惡因，避惡果。但修行二字頗為廣義，首先認識到底修什麼行？因此要有所依對緣。無所依緣，則易成外道之修行。比如，魔教修行，就修成魔行。佛教修行，就修成佛行。所以必須要有所依緣，有所楷模應照而依止。又如，只知去惡揚善，克己利人，這是其他宗教都會做的事，這也就是不明宗旨無所依的修行，不屬於正宗佛教行持。因此我們的修行，所依緣之對象則是佛陀。依照佛陀的完美覺位作為我們所修之相應楷模，以我們的身口意三業學佛陀的一切，使一切不淨善業緣起惡行遠離不得沾邊，只令其時時離離遠惡，不使其有所近沾三業增加惡因。而一切緣起善業都要行持，哪怕就是一善念，只能增益，不可損減。日日增加善緣、善因、善業，簡言之就是時時離離惡積善。為什麼說惡所緣業只能用遠離，不可說是滅除呢？因佛誡中，因果不昧。因果是滅除不了的，說滅除是斷見，故所以只能善業築壁，猶如築一道擋土壩，起到隔開的作用。由是學佛，修佛之行，最終成佛方可徹底解脫輪迴的因果縛業，此時因果照樣存在，但對佛無沾。正如佛陀見到地獄刀山火海，地獄刀山火海依然存在，應報衆生痛苦不堪，當佛陀為代衆生受苦而自身顛然躍入時，此刀山火海當下化爲蓮池甘露，成爲殊勝的境界，一切惡所緣境在佛陀身上轉為善業的顯現，不但無苦，反顯大樂。

修行就是出離輪迴，解脫諸苦而成聖，直至成佛。要出離輪迴，因此就要建立出離心、堅信心、不動願心、精進心、大乘菩提心。而所有一切心的依止境，皆建立在正見上，如沒有正見，一切心均會顛倒、混亂。換言之，沒有正見是修而無有受用的。比如要先修菩提心，是無法修起來的，會成爲空幻菩提，虛妄之心。因爲菩提心首先建立在出離心上，也就是一個要有真正解脫成就出離輪迴諸苦的心，他要深知輪迴苦不堪言，不但自苦，而且六道衆生如父母均在無常苦痛中，知苦、欲脫於苦，他才會修修行，才會發出自利利他之菩提行，菩提心方可誕生。但是如果首先從出離心開始修，又是錯誤的，是不合次第之修，會修成空言出離，妄惑自迷心，這樣也是很難修起，建立不了出離心實相的。所以要有真正的出離心，必須要第一步首先是明無常境，第二步要有堅信心，堅信輪迴無常的苦，有了堅信心才會懼無常苦，才會修成無常心，有了無常心，出離心就會日益增進，自然出離心就會生起實相。如果衆生不了解萬
法皆無常、輪迴無常的痛苦，就建立不起一顆堅定的心去出離輪迴的念頭，沒有出離輪迴的想法，根本就不會去修行，不想學佛，不學佛的人，本來不想出離，怎麼還會有出離心呢？所以不能先修出離心。因此，第一步，沒有無常心，就無法步入佛門。就是皈依了佛門，也無法深入正確修行。

要知道什麼是修行，就要明白學佛修行的八基正見。

第一基是無常心，第二基是堅信心，第三基是出離心，第四基是實願心，第五基是精進心，第六基是戒律，第七基是禪定，第八基是菩提心。認此八法為基而修行正見即是正知佛法的指南。這八基正見是修行人不可缺少不可錯亂的次第。凡是無常心所攝化受用的，就是修行的因；凡是堅信心所攝化受用的，就是不變的因；凡是出離心所攝化受用的，就是解脫的因；凡是實願心所攝化受用的，就是行道的因；凡是精進心所攝化受用的，就是進取的因；凡是戒律所攝化受用的，就是正法的因；凡是禪定所攝化受用的，就是智慧的因；凡是菩提心所攝化受用的，就是菩薩的因。八基是修行解脫成就的根本，如果根不正，就會本則亂。所以修行的根本是不可亂的，因此修行的八基必須依於正見作爲宗標，也就是以正知正見來引導八基的次第和正確發展修行，這就叫做修行。在修行中要時時落實菩提心的修持，因爲菩提心是成道之根本。

佛陀說法，菩提心的真實之義是必然成道之因。凡行菩提道者，終結菩提之果。菩提心是廣義全攝一切大乘法之大悲法以成菩薩地因。但由於衆生福報使然，佛法經代代相傳，遺漏法義。尤屬至今末法時期，三界業海波濤洶涌，衆生如盲龜更難以穿過流動海流之木軀如牛鼻之孔，故而要得完美佛法難中之難。因此菩提縮水，所以由廣義逐漸縮成了狹義之菩提心法。菩提心分兩種，勝義菩提心和世俗菩提心，世俗菩提心又粗分願菩提心和行菩提心。於願、行二菩提心之修持，又分情器四大和自身四大以及呼吸、耳根、眼根等内外壇城和儀軌誦文諸多修法。無論世俗還是勝義菩提心，而歸於七支菩提份才是最上妙完美的菩提心。本來菩提心是三界六道衆生個個有權修持的，但今大都衆生法緣不俱，故已執持化整為零縮水之菩提心修法。因此往往誤會成覺悟之心方可修之，或曰以菩提心為實相成就之境。當然，這也是存在的一部分，但卻遺漏了非覺悟之心的衆生而修菩提心之法。更重要的是，菩提心並非覺悟和非覺悟的心，而是學佛的三界六道衆生及法界諸聖生發的大悲願力，是以大悲心所實施的利益衆生成佛菩薩的實際行行為，是覺悟和非覺悟，聖凡兩界的勝義愛心。對覺悟者而言，即是以自覺之證悟法對行正法弘法教化衆生，覺悟有情成佛道。對未覺悟者而言，即是以大悲之心發願衆生與我等皆共成就得解脫，幫助他人走入如來正法之道，願其成菩薩成佛。菩提心之法，對他而言是利他成就之德，由於利他之故而自獲德量，故對自己而言即成增益菩薩之因。菩提心之業相，是大悲現之三業之實際行持。凡修衆生，無論凡聖，均有權發菩提心，也應該發菩提心。因爲它不是衆人獨有的覺悟之心，而是大悲之行為，願自他覺悟的因種。菩提心之所攝並不只含十善、四無量、六波羅密、四攝，而菩提心所緣三藏密典及一切口耳心傳諸法，建立合法利衆渡生的大悲行舉。故知菩提心是廣義所緣諦相，對佛陀而言是三身四智，當體無上正覺菩提心；對菩薩而言是大悲弘法利生渡有情；對證悟者而言，是離絕諸相戲論，當體本來面目，即空妙有之諸法實相；對凡夫而言，是慈悲助益他人願其學佛解脫。

發菩提心，首先必須要有無常觀，對自我與衆生輪迴之無常流轉痛苦，生起覺觀無常境界，即發出離願，由是則建立出離心，我出離，衆生六道父母也出離，輪迴苦海難熬痛不欲生，為是願觀而生強烈恐懼所逼，時時求當下解脫，
慈悲：於三時中，願請諸佛菩薩加持一切父母脫離諸苦，得遇佛法修持，脫離輪迴解脫諸苦。

捨貪：所有一切利益衆生父母之事，無掛於心，養成三業無著善行，故成天然自行，本質為善，並非刻意所為行善，做了即忘了。

斷執：於行持中，所修諸善，利益父母，一切法義應無所住，斷掉我執，空明覺相輕安，於修法中不執於法，不除妄念，不求於真，不來不去，樂明無念，平如靜水，當體即空。

實施菩提心的助緣，必須建立在正見觀照下，對衆生所行事業於善因中施與的而非他造不淨業的緣起所需增長施與的，故知凡善因緣起有利衆生者，必須實施七支菩薩應照菩提心法，對善緣起當施與他助益善業，助益善因，對惡緣起當施與他損減惡業，遠離惡因。菩薩應照菩提心法七支為：一支，自他平等菩提心；二支，自他交換菩提心；三支，自他輕重菩提心；四支，功德回向菩提心；五支，無畏護法菩提心；六支，強導正修菩提心；七支，捨我助他菩提心。

自他平等菩提心：兩相利益對時，斷除瞋恨之貪瞋、漫謬之心，不可利己為重，應自他平等對待。

自他交換菩提心：一切衆生的痛苦，願我一人來承當，我的一切快樂吉祥都給予他，讓他離苦得樂。

自他輕重菩提心：我與衆生均苦時，應先願他人解脫苦，我與衆生均樂時，應先願他人多我樂。

功德回向菩提心：我於一切所修行，一切功德成就等，全部回向諸有情，願衆離苦得解脫。

無畏護法菩提心：一切妖孽惡魔施以破壞佛法，導致破戒殘害衆生讓其痛苦時，我將持以正見，不懼魔之惡力而挺身保護佛法，維護衆生慧命。
強導正修菩提心：他由於無始業力纏身，愚癡不明，造諸惡業，而到了善勸不得悔改時，由此，我將施以強有力的善化法門引導他，入其正法善行之路。

捨我助他菩提心：他之成就將勝於我，渡生緣起勝於我，但於利益眾生中，能捨我助他更能利益大衆，此時，毫不考慮，當捨我助他，助成衆善大業。

修行中的菩提心，是成就之本源，非常重要。此舉一位仁波且和一位法師的事例。仁波且修了三十多年行，受過上千個密法灌頂，以寧瑪大圓滿法為主修，佛法經律論也講得很好，但是就是沒有實際功夫。另一位大法師出家二十餘年，戒律嚴謹，經律論通達，兼修密乘重要大法，是一著名寺廟的住持，也是講經說法之名師，但也沒有實際證量展顯。我告訴他們：無論你等修什麼密乘大法，都是浮士築高樓，建立不了大業的，就算一時修起，當下即會垮塌。我讓他們放下一切修行所知障礙，專修「什麼叫修行」，修了大概八個月，我再讓他們合修大圓滿等法義，結果奇蹟發生了，仁波且在測試中，以金剛拳五雷正法掌的功夫，顯示了巨大威力，實際證量出現了，但法師卻沒有展現出力量。法師又繼續加修我開示的這一堂修行的法，在我細心的教化下，他終於明了真修實修的重要性必須實際於三業上下功夫，一點折扣也不能打，他又多加了三個月的修持，結果在證量展顯測試中，他的威力徹底體現了。因此，凡是能依此修行，如法修持而行持，即可獲得真正的佛法，自然開敷大智，離說空論五明之不實，體顯真正五明之實境，證妙有之道量，修成菩提道果，達菩薩之地。

這修行的規則和菩提心的實施是佛教各宗各派都應該要遵循的，如果不依於此一次第法則步入，則易成顛倒迷行，此為修行之要領。至於學法，則是另外一事，但是學法的一切受用，皆建立在修行上，有了嚴格合法的行持，自然法入證德，圓成證境。如果沒有修行的正確法則，學法則成邪見之法，乃至妖魔之惡法。依於修行之法，方為善法，佛法之修行。在修行中還涉獵十善、四無量、六度、四攝等。今天所講的修行法要，有的佛弟子會認為，這些我都知道明白的，因此就不會細推體解我講的修行了。而他心中的願望是一心學到大法即身成佛。凡有此觀點的人，已經是一知半解，落入顛倒迷行之中，是學不到真正佛法的，哪怕他已修大法紅教大圓滿、白教中心、花教大圓勝慧或黃教時輪金剛、顯教中的禪宗參禪、淨土念佛、唯識法相、小乘止觀等，都是得不到受用，不能轉識成智，所以照常在凡夫境界中打轉，是體顯不了顯密智海中的表相、實際五明展顯的，而只能體現普通人的表現，甚至於笨笨的，除了把書本上的理論背下來虛談空論之外，落實到實際上，自己什麼能力也沒有。什麼也不會做，就是能做那麼幾項，對比之下，也超不過世間上的專家們，這能說是佛法的體現嗎？大家想一想，佛法的智慧就這麼差嗎？凡夫之識，未開聖智，又怎能談得上執持有正法自覺覺他呢？但是，依照修行入法，就能得到真正的佛法，就能真正顯密俱通，體顯五明。故所以我們應知修行是一切學法之基，解脫之因，證聖之源。

今淺講什麼叫修行，即修行中的菩提心正修，不涉別法。要講的太多，但由於在此書簡談不合律法，易造不恭之業，故望善信，深入三藏密典或專聞我開示之法音，只需十日之內一心認真聞法，即可達到分段喜樂，或大悟勝喜，緣起成熟不但終生受用乃至獲大成就解脫直至菩提。

你們現在學了修行一法，你願修行嗎？只要是修行，個個皆能成就解脫，因此我們必須要弄清楚，雖然看了「什麼叫修行」，而且八基雙七支依於正見都看了，但是那叫做修行
文，不是修行：如果你把修行的理论看懂了，那叫见行理，
也不叫修行；如果你已经开始按照修行一法履行，这不是
修行，这叫作行行；如果你已按照修行一法以大悲之心儘
量照著做，这叫顽修，不名正修：如果你以大悲之心不需儘
量，自然完美如法按照八基双七支行条执行，这才叫修行。
何以儘量而修不叫修行称之为顽修？因为无始业力、无明诸
障障其行人，所以贪瞋癆放不下，我执抛不开，由此产生煩
惱障、所知障，其障业吞噬行人之一切正念，所以行人難以
执行行条，正因难以执行行规，所以才會用儘量的心态去
修，故以儘量而为之，猶如毛石顽皮，表裡夹砂，非為琢成
的闪光之寶，或於基双七支中部分能修，部分不能修，这
也不堪真修行，因此名之为顽修，或入於缺修。

如果了徹行条後，不需加以强制，而自然如法基双七
支並行，则為無我執、破障弊之真修行，此是菩提道也。故
於每日中行人應自當觀省大悲我母菩提心及菩萨應照菩提
心，於双七支中省察観照我是否如法而修，若未能如法，說明
已經落入顽修之中，若未全面行持，则属於缺修，是此之
修则难以成就解脱，或许小有成就，也是不可能有大福慧、
神通、五明之證量的。

如果每日觀省七支行条未加强制，大悲從善，自然而發
如法於双七支，此即真修圆满行持，如此者輕而易舉可得解
脱成聖，福慧、五明相應而具，必成登地菩薩無疑。因此當
知，看行、見行、入行、缺行者易，七支完美修行無執者
難，其实放下我執，當即就入正修行持，何難之有！人人可
以做到！

日中觀省時，除了以意念空观之外，而重要的是必须依
於平日之道友，或相處之人士、或寃對、或逆緣、或不順
心、相互間不言語談话之人，做為所緣，必須對之修持，今
日我是否依於雙七支，與之主動和他交好？而於主動親近他
時，對方惡言相刺我時，我是否忍辱，繼續想得親近於他以
表善意交好？對於惡言惡行侮辱不予計執，若能每日中不退
菩提心，雙七支行持，體現三業，依法修行落實在實處，而
又歸於當體空性，如是行舉，學到無上佛法易於反掌之間，
菩提道心，菩薩地境自是你之聖位，這就叫修行。

利益衆生的修行法講完了，但是有損衆生的事隨時在發
生，那就是借用我的名義損害衆生利益的事，現在我要再次
提醒一個特別重要、大家要引以重視的問題。

目前，世界上有些法王、尊者、仁波且、法師、甚至居
士都說他們是我的親信，代表我處理某件事情、或轉達我的
話、或把他們自己講的說成是我講的。其實，在顯密二宗、
各大教派中都有我的弟子，無論該大德是什麼身份，沒有任
何人能夠代表我，哪怕只是一件很小的事情都不能代表！唯
獨只有這個人持有我發給他的專用文書，上面註明他代表我
處理某一件事，這個專用文書上有我的簽字和指紋印鑑，同
時配有相對應的錄像，那麼這個人可以代表我處理該文書上
規定的事情。再者，無論這些法王、尊者、仁波且、法師的
地位有多高，他們的見解、開示、講法，都不能代表我的觀
點，都不能作爲正知正見的標準，我只知道我本人的開示和
文論是正法無偏的，因爲我的開示和文論是真正利益衆生、
解脫衆生的。而且，任何人不能以任何方式增删、修改我的
文字或法音，如有對其作僞者，無論此人身份多高，此一定
屬於邪見或入魔之人。因此，大家如果沒有親自見到蓋有我
的指紋印的文證、並配有我親自所講與文證相應的、完整的
錄音或錄像的憑據，除此兩點之外，無論是什麼佛教徒，包
括長期在我身邊的聖德弟子，他們的一切，其想法、做事、
語言、文章均是他們自己的行爲，絕對不能代表我！！！