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CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class One: Introduction to the desire and form realms

Death and the realms of existence:

CHU NGUNPA DZU **Sanskrit: *Abhidharma* - *kosha***
Dharma high treasure higher knowledge treasure house
(thing) house

Written by Master Vasubandhu (c. 350 A.D.)
(also called **Yik-nyen**)

We're studying the third chapter.

GYALWA **GENDUN DRUP** The first Dalai Lama, student of Je Tsongkapa.
victorious one man's name (1391-1474)
(means Dalai Lama)

TAR LAM **SEL JE** "Illumination/Lamp on the Path to Freedom."
freedom path lamp, illumination Commentary by the first Dalai Lama to explain the
Abhidharmakosha.

Three realms of suffering existence:

The universe is made up of these three parts. All three realms are suffering realms - every being and every object in all three realms is suffering. There are also beings who don't live in these realms. They are outside suffering. If you're in these three realms, you're in a place of suffering:

DU - KAM	SUK - KAM	SUK-ME - KAM
desire realm	form realm	form less realm
	(physical matter)	(mental beings without physical matter)

Form realm:

Physical matter reaches its highest expression in this realm. The realm is characterized by beauty - everything is beautiful, and the beings aren't naturally attracted to objects of the senses; they're beyond that. All beings here are devas - living in a kind of temporary paradise. They live for millions of years enjoying themselves. There are different kinds of pleasure beings - some think of something and it appears for them to enjoy; others can enjoy both what they emanate and what others emanate as well. These pleasure beings are not the same as tantric deities who are enlightened. These devas use up all their good karma by living for millions of years in paradise, and then suffer death and are reborn in hell. No virtue is left for a better birth, only negative karmic seeds. The suffering of the last days of a deva before dying is greater than all the pleasure of those millions of years.

The form realm has four divisions, each of which has 3 or more subdivisions - deep, very deep, and extremely deep. There are a total of 17 levels of the form realm - 17 physical places where you can be born.

Four divisions of the form realm:

8 subdivisions within this level

3 subdivisions within this level

3 subdivisions within this level

3 subdivisions within this level

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class One, continued

There is a **causal form realm**, which is the meditation which you are in during this life which **causes** your mind to transfer over to the **result form realm** after you die and take a resulting rebirth there.

Being in deep meditation, withdrawn from all physical senses leads to the first level of the form realm. The better your meditation, the higher the form realm level in which you take rebirth. There are four different meditation levels (samten). In this life, if you meditate at one of those levels long enough, when you die you will go to the corresponding level of the form realm. For example, by meditating at the second level of samten, you end up in the second division of the form realm. The depth of your meditation determines in which level (1, 2, or 3) of the second samten division you will be reborn. You can only get to this realm by doing no bad deeds. *The purpose of meditation is not to be reborn in a higher suffering realm, but for your mind to go to the form realm and use it as a platform to see emptiness, and for higher spiritual attainment.*

The desire realm is the lowest of the three realms. It has five or six different kinds of beings (depending upon how you count intermediate state beings). There are twenty different sections of the desire realm.

Kinds of beings:

Ten bad births:

- 1.) **Hell beings:** There are eight levels of hells (eight hot and eight cold)
- 2.) **Craving spirits:** They have a subtle physical body, which you can't see. They are born into an existence where they are never satisfied.
- 3.) **Animals:** They live lives of fear of being killed. Most live in the ocean.

Ten good births:

- 4.) **Humans:** They are divided into four types according to the continent they are living on.
- 5.) **Pleasure beings:** There are six different kinds living in the desire realm. (There are 17 kinds living in the form realm, which are a higher type than those living in the desire realm.) There are two kinds of pleasure beings in general: those living inside samsara (which includes form realm and desire realm pleasure beings) spending their lives in super-pleasure, and the totally pure and enlightened beings who live outside suffering life.
- 6.) **Bardo (intermediate state) beings.**

The first three kinds of beings constitute ten possible bad births (eight levels of hell, craving spirits, and animals = ten). The humans (four types) and pleasure beings (six types) constitute the ten possible good births in the desire realm. There are **twenty total possible kinds of rebirth in the desire realm.**

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class One, continued

The **desire realm** is so called because **desire is our primary motivation** - desire for food, sex, and the objects of the senses. We are attracted to the most lowly kind of food and pleasure - coarse bodies and foods. Our existence is defined by our desire for nice physical objects and wanting to get away from unpleasant objects. The characteristic of this realm is that we can have bad thoughts which are bad deeds. When we focus on our desirous thoughts, the thoughts become greater and stronger.

Okmin is the highest level of the form realm, but it is still a suffering realm. You can get there by meditation and practice. There is a second **Okmin** which is a Buddha's paradise where you become enlightened, live, and from where you send emanation bodies to help all beings. You can't prove that any of these realms exist. If things are empty, then any realm could exist for you based upon your karmic projections.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Two: Formless realm, five births and ways of birth

Formless Realm:

There is no one physical place where the formless realm exists. The formless realm for a being is wherever it dies. Beings in the formless realm have only minds, no bodies. By putting your mind in formless realm meditation, you create the cause to be born there.

Four kinds of meditation - which cause rebirth in four corresponding levels of the formless realm:

- 1.) Not conceptual and not non-conceptual. Your body is in the desire realm; the mind is at an extremely subtle level called "not conceptual and not non-conceptual."
- 2.) Limitless awareness meditation.
- 3.) Nothing at all meditation.
- 4.) Peak of existence meditation.

Four levels of formless realm - resulting levels where you are born based on the meditation you do:

- 1.) **NAMKA TAYE** - limitless space.
- 2.) **NAMSHE TAYE** - limitless awareness/consciousness.
- 3.) **CHIYANG ME** - nothing at all.
- 4.) **SI-TSE** - the peak of (suffering) existence.

Beings in each realm, and each realm itself, are defined by their own particular hang-ups and attachments/afflictions. The formless realm beings are attached to their minds (it's all they have!)

The way you move up from realm to realm is that you become unattached to more objects: smells, food, etc. When you think of the three realms, you think of three physical places. How do you travel between the three realms? The way you travel between them is mental - your mind reaches a new level of subtlety. If you meditate a lot, you lose your desire for the objects of the senses - your mind is resting on a higher plane and doesn't care about food or sense objects.

The mind is absorbed in a very subtle existence. The mind is in the form realm, and the body is in the desire realm. If you refine the mind further, so that there is absolutely no attachment to objects of the senses, the mind enters the formless realm. That's what the three realms are: three different levels of caring about (or being attached to) the objects of the senses. The subtlety of your mind determines which of the three realms you are in.

While you are in these subtle meditations experiencing bliss, your body is still deteriorating. You have not reached nirvana. You are still in suffering worlds. By doing this meditation, you are just creating the cause to be born in a higher pleasure realm when you die. If you are reborn in these higher realms, you lose the opportunity to become enlightened - a human birth provides the best (perhaps only) basis to become enlightened and permanently free from suffering.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Two, continued

When you escape samsara it's not that you go somewhere else - to another place - it's that your being has changed to something else, which is not suffering.

The goal is to get to the introductory level of the first level of the form realm now, in this life, to see emptiness directly. The goal is not to be born in the form or formless realms.

Four ways of taking birth:

- 1.) **DZU - KYE** - To be born complete, with a mature body. This is the best way to be born. It doesn't hurt you or anyone else.
- 2.) **DRUSHER LE KYEWA** - To be born from warmth and moisture - like insect eggs when it rains in summer. This is the second best way to be born; it hurts you but not your mother.
- 3.) **NGEL KYE** - Born from a womb. The third best way to be born. It hurts the mother and it hurts you once.
- 4.) **GONG KYE** - Born from an egg. The worst way to be born. It hurts the mother and it hurts you twice, when laid and when hatching.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Three: The lives of craving spirits and animals

YI - DAK Sanskrit: *Preta*
craving spirit

We will study craving spirits from this book:
TEN RIM CHENMO
teaching steps great book

GESHE DROLUNGPA
spiritual friend (place name)

C. 1100 AD, author of **TENRIM CHENMO** -
The Great Book on the Steps of the Teaching.

Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419) was the author of **LAM RIM CHENMO**
path steps great book
Great Book on the Steps of the Path

This work was taken from the book by Geshe Drolungpa.

Four causes for birth as a craving spirit: There is one general cause and three specific causes (attitudes).

General cause: Doing the ten bad deeds with medium strength (neither premeditated nor light strength, such as accidental, etc.)

Three specific causes:

1.) **JINPA NAMSUM MAJINPA**
giving three types not giving

Failing to give the three types of giving:

The three types of giving are:

a.) **SANSING GI JINPA**
material wealth of giving

Giving shelter, food, etc. the material things that people need to live.

b.) **MINJIKPAY JINPA**
not to be frightened giving

Giving protection from harm, danger, fear.

c.) **CHU - KYI JINPA**
Dharma teaching giving

Giving Dharma teachings. This is the highest kind of giving because it helps in all future lives.

2.) **SERNA**
being cheap

Stinginess. Not wanting to see your possessions become less. Having the misconception that keeping what you have and not giving is the way to get things.

3.) **TRAKDOK**
jealousy

Jealousy. Wishing that others didn't have the good things that they have. The opposite of a bodhisattva ideal.

How does one become a craving spirit by doing the above? The essence of karma is the movement of the mind. The movement of the mind leaves an impression on the mindstream.

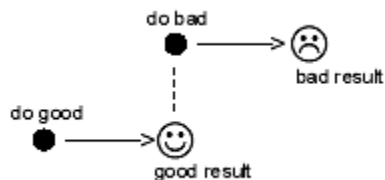
CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Three, continued

Four principles of karma:

- 1.) **LE NGEPA - Fixed content.** Doing good yields a pleasurable result, and doing bad yields a painful result.



Because the good result comes at the same time as the bad deed, you think it came from that bad deed rather than from a prior good deed.

- 2.) **PEL CHEWA - Gets bigger.** Results are greater than their seeds.
- 3.) **MA JEPA DANG MA TREPA - If you don't do a karma, you won't get a result.**
- 4.) **JEPA CHU MISAWA - If you do a karma it never just goes away.**

In an extreme form, not giving causes the perception of yourself to flower that you can't ever get enough, and you always want more. This is what a preta is: a being overwhelmed with wanting and not being able to find anything. So by planting perceptual seeds of not giving, those seeds grow extremely large and powerful and expand. Not giving plants a seed that grows and causes your perception to become such that you see yourself as a craving spirit.

Three kinds of pretas:

- 1.) **CHIY DRIPPA CHEN**
outside obstacle

Beings with obstacles on the outside. The things out side of you are a problem. The outside things that you want become repulsive when you get close to them. Your perception of things is appealing from afar (a good karma ripening), and when you get close, your perception shifts, and it becomes repulsive.

- 2.) **NANG-GI DRIPPA CHEN**
inside obstacle

Beings with obstacles on the inside. They have mouths the size of a pinhead, and a stomach that is very large. Can't get enough food to ever be satisfied. If they get any food into their mouth, it is consumed by fire in their mouth.

- 3.) **SEKOM GYI DRIPPA CHEN** **Obstacles to food and drink.** When they get something to eat that's not nasty appearing, it burns on the way down and in the stomach.

Pretas can be any size and reside either below the earth, a certain distance from this planet, or amongst us. A preta grows from having a perception of yourself not giving, or being stingy or jealous. The seed expands, and you see yourself not having or being able to get enough in a big way.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Three, continued

Animals:

General cause: Doing the ten bad deeds to a lesser extent, for example accidentally or infrequently leads to rebirth as an animal.

Specific Causes to be born as an animal:

- 1.) Consistently breaking minor rules.
- 2.) Disrespecting others.

Where animals live:

- 1.) **JING - NA NEPA** In the ocean
- 2.) **KATORWA** Spread out all over the place

Animals' existence is based on living in fear of being eaten. They are in sheer terror their entire lives, and always running away from danger. Animals in contact with humans have another set of sufferings: being tortured, having their skins taken off, being beaten, being ridden, being made to work involuntarily, etc.

In the human body alone, there are 80,000 species living, and there are 360 million species living on the planet, according to the scriptures.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Four: The lives of humans and pleasure beings

Books used:

PANCHEN LOBSANG CHUKYI GYELTSEN First Panchen Lama (1567?-1662)
great master pure mind banner of Dharma

Author of **DE - LAM**
easy path

We will study a commentary on *The Easy Path* by
NGULCHU DHARMA BHADRA (1772-1851), called **RINCHEN BANGDZU**
quicksilver jewels chest
Chest of Jewels

DUK -NGEL DRUK **The six sufferings which are always with us**
suffering six **(humans and devas):**

- 1.) **NGEPA MEPA** **Nothing is fixed.** Friends become enemies, and vice versa. What you like for awhile, later you don't like. Things are always shifting and never stable. Good karma wears out and bad karma ripens to replace it, and vice versa.
- 2.) **NGOM MI SHEPA** **You can't be satisfied.** You see something you want, you obtain it, bring it into yourself, and digest it. This is the pursuit of happiness. Nothing works for us though. Our nature is that nothing is satisfying in the end. It's as if the pursuit of happiness ends in the pursuit of suffering. This suffering never stops.
- 3.) **YANG YANG LU NDORWA** **Shedding your body over and over.** You have a natural tendency to take care of your body more than other people's bodies. Putting your body first over over body shedding causes you to withhold things from others, which is a non-virtue. You can't take your body with you when you die, but you take your mind with you, which is full of non-virtue from taking care of your body instead of theirs.
- 4.) **YANG YANG NYINGTSAM JORWA** **Being reborn over and over.** The energy over over to be reborn which projects you into this life is the same defective energy which leads to the degeneration of this body. The energy which makes you young and beautiful is the same energy which makes you old and ugly.
- 5.) **YANG YANG TO-MEN DU GYURWA** **After high comes low.** Everything cycles over over high low change around from high to low. It's the nature of

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Four, continued

the energy driving your life. It goes in waves; karma ripens and then wears out/dissapates. Work, relationships, and life end in lows after highs.

6.) **DROK MEPA**
companion none

There is no companion. You are the flow of your karma - the result of what you did before. You are separate from everyone else, and will always be separate and alone. You meet with people temporarily and then separate and are alone. (Therefore do not do a bad deed for anyone. You and your karma is yours alone.)

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Five: Bardo beings

Bardo teachings (all from *Abhidharmakosha* Commentary)

BAR - DO The state a being is in between death and birth.
in between

BAR SI The life in between.
between life

The following two are synonyms for bardo beings:

BARDOWA The being in the bardo

DRI - SA Smell eater
smells eater

There are many corrupt teachings on the bardo. This teaching is from the original text and is very accurate.

Beings take rebirth in the bardo as bardo beings, although with a very short lifespan. Bardo beings are **DZU - KYE** - born complete; they arise spontaneously.
miraculous born

LUNG **RIKPA** Master Vasubandu uses both logic and scriptural
scriptural proof logical proof proofs to prove the existence of bardo beings.

Logical proof of bardowas:

DRU GYUN You can't go from a (seed) grain to a plant with out the seed
a grain stream turning into a sprout and continuing to grow. You can't get
 continuum from New York to Kansas without traveling there. Similarly,
 when you die, you must travel to the next birth. Bardo beings
 and the bardo are how you travel. It's where you travel from the
 place of your death to the place of your birth. It's part of the
 continuum. But why not just die and immediately be reborn
 elsewhere?

CHELE JUNGWA You can't have a broken continuum. There must be instances of
cut off continuum time between death and birth. The period of time between death
 and birth, and what goes on during that time, is what the bardo
 is.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Five, continued

Ultimately, the moment you stop seeing yourself as one kind of being and start to see yourself as another kind of being, your perception has shifted. You are empty and exist as a continuum of perceptual shifts toward yourself. Death, the intermediate state, and rebirth as another kind of being result from your perceptions about you and your world shifting. You and your world are empty; they are projections. Your perceptions of who you are and what you are just shift.

Scriptural proofs:

SIPA	DUN	TENPAY	DO
existence/ kind of being	seven	to teach	sutra

The Buddha taught that there are seven types of beings and one of them is a bardo being. If you accept the Buddha's omniscience, you must accept a bardo being.

Three conditions needed for human birth:

1.) **MA - RUNG DATSEN DEN**
fit to be a mother still possess
(human women) menstruating

A woman who has a physical body capable of birth and is still menstruating.

2.) **PAMA CHAK SHING TREPA**
parents desire and make sexual
contact

The father and mother have desire and make sexual contact.

3.) **ORISA NYEWAR NEPA**
smell eater in the immediate vicinity

A bardo being must be in the immediate vicinity of the parents when they're having sex.

Because these above statements are made in scripture spoken by the Buddha, it's considered a proof of bardo existence.

BARDOR	DAVVA
in the bardo state	gone beyond Nirvana

Buddha taught that you can enter nirvana from the bardo - this is another scriptural proof.

If you commit one of the immediate five misdeeds you immediately take rebirth in the lowest hell. The bardo isn't considered a rebirth, it's not listed among the five types of beings' rebirths. You still go through the bardo in this case.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Five, continued

What do bardowas look like?

The outward appearance is like the realm you will be born in. The same karma is projecting you through the bardo as is projecting you into your next life. Hell bound beings are the color of charred wood; animal bound beings are greyish, craving spirits are translucent, human or desire realm devas appear as five or six year olds with golden bodies, form realm bound beings appear as clothed adults, formless realm bound beings have no appearance at all.

A bardowa's life span is a maximum of seven days. If you reach the end of seven days and haven't taken rebirth, you die and take another rebirth as a bardowa again. You can do this seven times. The maximum total time in the bardo is 49 days. You can also be there for a few seconds. The day of death counts as day one. According to the secret teachings, it's possible to help someone in the bardo.

It's possible to see bardo beings if you get "the eye of a god" (**HLAY CHEN**). This means that in deep meditation you can see them. It doesn't mean that a third eye pops up on your forehead. There are eleven classic obstacles to developing that meditation. If you meditate and eliminate the eleven obstacles, you can see bardowas.

Bardowas can see other bardowas of the same class or realm.

Once you enter the bardo, you can't redirect your rebirth to another realm. The same karma projects you through and out of the bardo.

Bardowas have miraculous powers like flying, passing through solid objects, and travelling vast distances very quickly.

Bardowas live on and eat smells.

Bardowas are caught in the womb when they see a couple making love from a distance and interpret it to be some kind of pleasure, and move closer to join in. They have a hallucination where they see sex as something wonderful and glorious and go closer and closer. Then they go into the womb where, because of the perceptions they have there, they become trapped and can't get out. Their perception changes, and they see solid tissue which they can't pass through. Their perception of themselves and the world shifts, and they become locked into that existence/rebirth/perceptual reality. The karma ripens and continues to propel them along that way of seeing things.

Bardowas travel according to the realm they are going to. If they are going to hell, they're walking upside down. If they're headed for a pleasure being realm, they're travelling slightly upward. Once in the bardo, you are looking for your next birth, being driven towards it. That's the life of a bardowa.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Six, continued

- 2.) **LEK JA**
doing good **Taking care of your body** with massage, baths, etc. Generally taking care of your body.
- 3.) **NYI**
sleep **Sleep.** Not too much or too little.
- 4.) **TING-NGEN-DZIN**
concentration **Concentration** is good for your body. Not having your mind torn in many directions or running all over the place. You concentrate on one thing at a time.

These things sustain the body, which is a polluted one and which must deteriorate and die. These things keep the body going, but it's a defective and inferior body.

Formation of the World

JIK TEN **LUNG GI KYILNKOR**
perishable base wind energy of mandala (a huge disc)
(the world)

There are two great presentations of how the world came to be - one in the Kalachakra tantra, and one in the Abhidharma system. We'll cover the Abhidharma system.

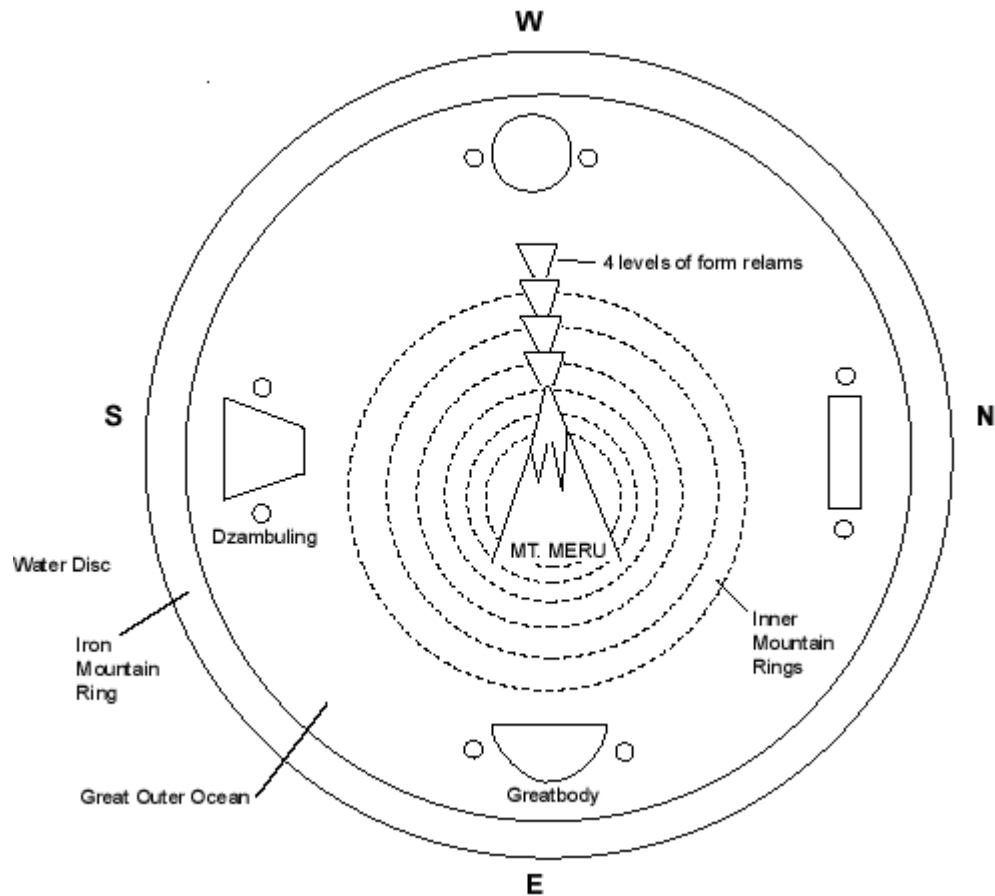
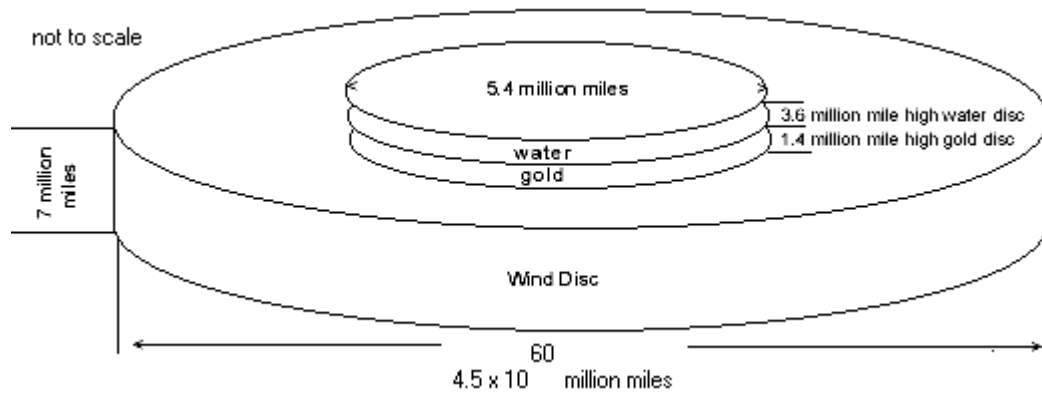
In the beginning of this planet there was empty space. Energy began moving very slowly and picked up speed until it congealed and formed a diamond-hard disc as a base. It is still energy circling, but going so fast that it is diamond hard. On top of that water formed, and gold formed within the water at its lower third. Mt. Meru is in the center, with seven mountain ranges circling it. Then there is a mountain range around the outer edge of the wind disc made of iron. The inner mountain rings are made of gold.

Mt. Meru is made of something different on each side. The eastern side is silver, southern is lapis, western is ruby, northern is gold. The color of the sky around Mt. Meru corresponds to the side of Mt. Meru you live on. Blue sky means you live on the south side of Mt. Meru. The first inner mountain ring is 360,000 miles above the water and 360,000 miles below the water. Each ring of mountains is half as big, as you go outward. Between each mountain range is an ocean. Those are called the inner oceans. The outer ocean is between the iron mountain ring and the outer gold mountain ring. In the outer ocean are four continents. We live on the Dzambu ling continent. Our world consists of the disks, hells, paradises, etc.

Why doesn't the world appear to us like this? Because it's empty. Our karmic projection is different. If we had different karma, we would see a different world system.

CLASS NOTES
Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence
Class Six, continued

Drawing of the mandala of a universe beyond our normal perception.



CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Seven: The lives of hell beings

NYEL - WA

hells

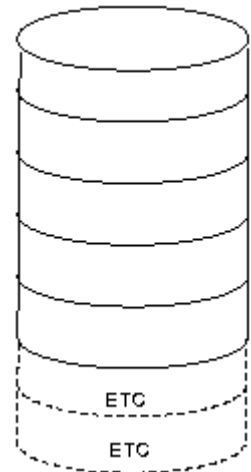
TSA NYEL GYE

hot hell 8 kinds

Eight different kinds of hot hells

They are shaped like this, stacked on top of each other. The lighter ones are on top, and the heavier ones are toward the bottom. They are located directly under Bodh Gaya in India.

8 TYPES OF HOT HELLS



1.) YANG - SU
revive again

Hell called revive. It is a huge chamber 90,000 miles across. A mass of confusion, screaming, heat. The inhabitants have hatred towards everyone there. Everyone attacks each other with their hands or whatever they can find until they knock each other unconscious. Then they hear a voice that says "Yang-su", and they revive, get up, and start again. They have the special kind of pain and agony of dying repeatedly each day without end. In our life we only feel the pain of death once. Beings live there for millions of years. A moment of pain there is greater than all the pain you could feel in your entire life as a human. This is the lightest of the hot hells.

2.) TIK - NAK
line black

Black line hell. Strong beings force you down on the hot ground and put hot chains across your body which leave black burn lines along your body. Other hell guards cut you up along those lines. Each part of you that is cut still feels pain. In the hells, you never lose consciousness: you always feel pain, endlessly. Your body just regenerates and then you start over again.

3.) DUN JOM
collect destroy

Gather and smash. Hell guards drive you into a canyon between mountains and then the walls collapse or close and smash you. Then the mountains open and you regenerate. The rocks take on different animal shapes each time. With each hell, the life span is progressively longer.

4.) NGU MBU
scream

Screaming hell. The ground of all the hells are iron and red hot. You're naked and there's nowhere to go. The ground of this hell is particularly hot. You can't stand still, and so you just run around screaming. Your feet are burned to flesh, then bone, then your legs burn up and you are running around on your knee stumps. Then they burn and you're on your hands. Then the body burns up. After that, your body regenerates and you start over.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

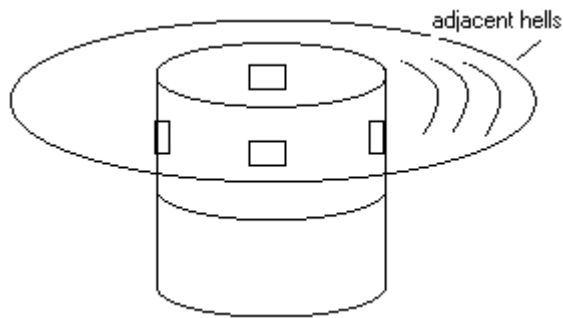
Class Seven, continued

- 5.) **NGU-MBU CHENPO** **Great screaming hell.** The same as above. Everything just hurts
scream great more than the one above.
- 6.) **TSA-WA** **Heat.** There is a metal hut with a sealed door. You're put inside
heat and the hut is heated. You're inside without escape and
nowhere to go. You just stay inside roasting, suffering,
running around, etc.
- 7.) **RABTU TSAWA** **Extremely hot.** You are put into a chamber with two rooms. You
extremely hot think the other room is better, and so run back and forth
between the rooms to escape. Your feet and legs burn up
as you run back and forth.
- 8.) **NAR ME** **No torment.** (Sanskrit: *Avichi*) The suffering never gets less. This
torment no is the greatest pain possible. The degree of pain is
constant at that level. The pain there is greater than all
the pain of all the other hells combined. A jet of fire hits
you, and you become incandescent like the filament of a
light bulb. You emit some kind of noise, which is the only
way to be recognized as a being. Otherwise, you'd think
that there was just a column of flame there. This is the
longest life span that exists.
- DRANG NYEL GYE** **Eight cold hells:** You are naked and cold, with icy winds
cold hell 8 kinds blowing. As the cold gets worse in lower hells, your body
blisters. The blisters worsen, open up, and your body
splits open as you go lower in the cold hells. The names of
the hells reflect your body color or the way in which your
body is splitting open from the cold.
- NYE KORWAY NYELWA** **Adjacent Hells:** There are doors to escape the hot hells when
adjacent hells your karma to be there wears out. When you escape the
hot hells, you enter the adjacent hells, which have
different zones. You come to the door of hell, leave hell,
and jump into hot coals up to your knees. Each step you
take burns your foot off. Every time you lift your foot, it
regenerates, and every time you step down, it burns off.
After you leave that zone, you're up to your neck in the
swamp of corpses - rotting corpses and excrement. There
are creatures biting at your skin. Then you come to the
razor road - razors face up. You run barefoot across the

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Seven, continued



razors. Each time your foot comes up for a step, it regenerates. You see some trees and run over for escape. When you get under the trees, the leaves are like knives and fall down on you. Huge wild dogs chase you and you try to climb the trees. The trunks are covered with long daggers which turn down as you climb up. When you get to the top and think you're safe, birds with steel beaks come and pluck out your eyes and at your face. When you climb down, the trunk daggers turn up toward you as you go down.

Partial Hells:

NYITSEWAY NYELWA
tiny part; partial hell

This is the ripening of a personal karma. You can only share this karma with one or two other people. You are born into a very painful situation which is restricted to you. This can happen anywhere. You're a hell-being and you're in a situation like crashing and burning in the desert.

How do you get to the hells? Where do they come from? They are your own projections. They do not have a quality of their own. No construction crew built the hells. You just have a perception of dying, a perception of being a bardo being, and then a perception of hell. It just takes three perceptual shifts to go from this life to hell. There are 64 movements of the mind in one finger snap. It could happen that fast.

Karma expands. You had a perception, it expands and ripens into something vastly greater than the original event. Your past bad deeds create your hell - that perceptual projection. You're not 1,000 miles from hell. You're at the door all the time.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Eight: Description of time and space, cycles of eons

KAL - PA **There are four different kinds of kalpas in Buddhism.**
eon (this is from the third chapter of the *Abhidharmakosha*)

1.) **JIKPAY KALPA** **Eon of destruction.** Four different things happen at the same
destruction eon time:

- 1.) No more beings are born in the Avichi hell of this planet. (There's no time to go through Avichi hell if the planet is destroyed. Beings are born in Avichi hell of another planet instead.)
- 2.) Lifespans on Dzambuling (our world) reach 80,000 years.
- 3.) The eon of continuation ends.
- 4.) The eon of destruction opens.

The above four things happen simultaneously at the beginning of the eon of destruction. This is followed by animals and craving spirits being born on other planets instead of here. Humans reach the meditative attainment of the first level of the form realm, die, and take rebirth there. Then beings in the first level of the form realm attain the second level of form realm meditation, die, and are reborn there. So everything in the desire realm empties out up to the second level of the form realm. It takes 19 intermediate eons for the desire realm to empty out after the process has started in the beginning of the eon of destruction.

BAR KAL There are 20 **intermediate eons** that make up an eon of
intermediate eon destruction. It takes 19 intermediate eons for beings to empty off
the planet. At the beginning of the 20th eon, the rain stops and
all vegetation dies, the sun supernovas, and splits into two. Later a third sun forms, and all rivers and streams evaporate. A fourth sun forms, and large lakes dry up. A fifth sun forms, and oceans dry up. A sixth sun forms, and continents go up in smoke. A seventh sun forms, and the planet burns up, which also causes the first level of the form realm to burn up. There are other kalpas of destruction by wind or water. There are also minor destruction eons where inhabitants destroy the planet with weapons, etc. Millions of years pass between the formation of each new sun.

2.) **CHAKPAY KALPA** **Eon of formation:** It goes on for the length of twenty
formation eon intermediate eons (but doesn't have the up and down wave
structure of an intermediate eon - it has one down slope only - it
just lasts as long as twenty intermediate eons would). In a time
TSE - ME length equal to one intermediate eon, the physical basis for the
measurable not world forms - discs, mountains, etc. The first beings who take
birth have bodies which radiate light, they can fly in the sky, are
very gentle. The whole planet is edible - just lick anything for
sustenance - very much like the garden of Eden. Then they slowly

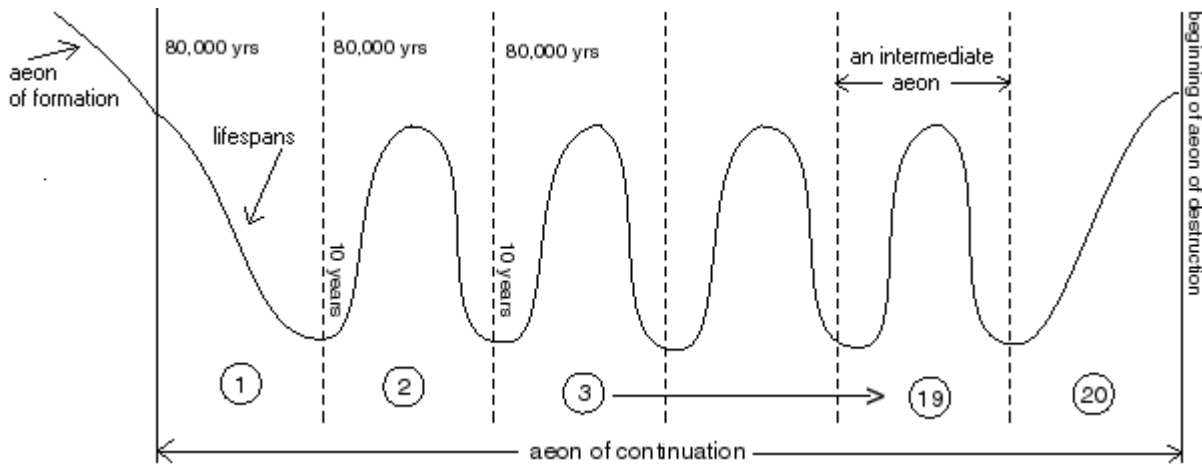
CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Eight: Description of time and space, cycles of eons

start to collect bad deeds, and their bodies start to change. Human lives are immeasurable (a specific number with > 30 zeros) at this point. The formation eon ends when the first being is born in Avichi hell. Lifespans have dropped to 80,000 years at that point.

- 3.) **REPAY KALPA** **Continuation eon:** It goes on for twenty intermediate eons.
continue eon



Lifespans drop from 80,000 years down to ten years because people are doing the ten non-virtues more and more, which creates disturbances in the world. People create more and more powerful weapons. Most people are living in cities. Some people are out in the country when the weapons of destruction are unleashed, and only they survive. The few who survive are overcome with remorse, and decide to give up the ten non-virtues. Lifespans increase from ten years back up to 80,000 years. The same cycle keeps repeating: one cycle is an intermediate eon. The eon of continuation is made up of twenty intermediate eons (i.e., the world is destroyed twenty times by people). The first intermediate eon is only half a wave, but the drop in lifespans is slower in that eon, so it ends up taking the same length of time as the other intermediate eons. The same is true for the last intermediate eon.

A moment of anger directed at a bodhisattva destroys an intermediate eon's worth of virtue. You don't know who is a bodhisattva, so you shouldn't get angry at anyone!

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Eight, continued

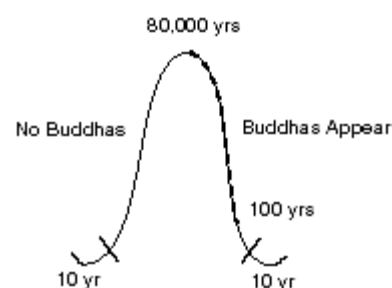
- 4.) **KAL CHEN** **Great eon:** One great eon is eighty intermediate eons long. (Believe it
great eon refers to four eons of continuation.)

DE DRANGME SUM LA SANG GYE After you decide to begin collecting virtue
that countless (10^{60}) three after Buddha to become a Buddha, it takes three countless
great eons to collect enough virtue to sustain the perception of yourself as a Buddha in
paradise forever.

KALPA SANGPO
eon good fortune

This present eon is called the Eon of good fortune because 1,000 Buddhas will appear in this eon.

Buddhas don't appear while things are improving. They appear as things are getting worse. People get interested when they have problems. Buddhas don't appear in a period below 100 years lifespans (where we are now) because beings don't have suitable faculties to grasp the message. It's too near the point of blowing up, and beings have too much ingrained negativity.



Five degenerations - which exist in our time and are spreading. It's a sign that the kalpa's end is approaching. We're very close to the time when people are no longer interested in Dharma. People study it, but don't practice it. People stop keeping it in their hearts. That's the beginning of the end of the eon.

- 1.) **TSE** Human life is very fragile. There are many diseases, the body is very
life weak, it's very easy to die.
- 2.) **NYON MONG** Unordained people won't be interested in doing virtuous deeds.
mental afflictions People are not attracted to doing good.
- 3.) **SEM CHEN** We have lousy bodies. Our bodies are not very servicable - not in good
living being shape. They're not strong, coordinated, well-proportioned, etc.
- 4.) **DU** Food loses its ability to nourish you, to keep you alive and healthy. The
time benefits which food and medicine supply diminish.
- 5.) **TAWA** Ordained people are not virtuous.
worldview

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Nine: Meditation on the awareness of death, part one

CHIWA MITAKPA
death impermanence

CHIWA DRENPA GOMPA
death remember meditation

This is a special section of the Lam Rim. Death awareness habituation.

Death awareness habituation doesn't take place sitting in meditation. It takes place all throughout the day. The point of the practice is to feel (know) that you are going to die today. If you know that you're going to die today, what would you be doing right now? Having awareness of death means that you are always living as if today was your last day; you would always be doing virtue for your future lives. With awareness of death, you have great clarity in your life. You know what you have to do. Things are in perspective.

Four-part death meditation:

- 1.) **CHIWA MAGOMPAY NYE MIK** Disadvantages of not cultivating death awareness:
death not meditating problems

Six problems that will come to you if you don't meditate on death:

- 1.) **You don't do Dharma** - If you don't do death meditation, then you will concentrate on the small pleasures of this life, i.e. food, clothes, etc. They will be the main focus of your day and your day won't be focused on Dharma.
- 2.) **You consider death, but think it will happen to you later.** You delay undertaking virtue because in your heart you believe death will come to you later, and that you can do virtue later. Later never comes.
- 3.) **You do practice, but for reputation only.** Our natural motivation is from self-interest and self-concern. This becomes accentuated if we don't do death meditation.
- 4.) **You practice, but with no enthusiasm.** Without death meditation, you just do rote practice, and eventually drop the practice.
- 5.) **You get deeper into this life.** If you don't do death meditation, you get more invested in and entrenched in this life. You need the lifestyle, leisure, money, and activities, etc. you're accustomed to as you age. You get sucked into and stuck in mundane, neutral, or non-virtuous activities.
- 6.) **You have intense regret at death** that your life was wasted. You're sorry for how you lived your life. You didn't change your heart/nature/character. This feeling is intensified at death.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Nine, continued

2.) CHIWA GOMPAY PEN YUN Advantages of cultivating awareness of death: death meditation benefits

- 1.) **Your practice is pure.** You're doing it for the right reasons. Not for others' approval, etc. You also practice more.
- 2.) **Your practice gains power.** If you felt you were going to die, you'd get serious and concentrate hard and have forceful practice. This is your last meditation before you die.
- 3.) **Helps you get started.** It motivates you to give up something else that you were going to do and practice instead. Personal practice must come first before everything else, including Dharma work.
- 4.) **Keeps you going strong.** Your practice will always have ups and downs. When your practice is down, death meditation helps lift you back up.
- 5.) **Gets you to the end.** When you're practicing and you reach a hard spot - you're 75% there and then start to fade - then death meditation keeps you going and gets you to the end.
- 6.) **You die with satisfaction.** As you near the end, your choices provide more satisfaction. The older you get, the more vindication you have that you made the right choices. You see the wisdom of your choices in life, and feel the satisfaction of having chosen Dharma activity, which now pays off.

3.) What death awareness is and isn't:

CHI LO JITAR KYEWA
death awareness what kind of develop

What kind of death awareness
are you supposed to develop?

- A.) Death awareness is **not** paying attention to or trying to recreate the panic and terror you will feel at death because of your mind's hallucinations, dissolutions, and grasping at the things of this world which you are losing.
- B.) Death awareness is **learning to focus on the things in this life which will affect you after you die**; to focus your life on the things which help after death. This is the minimum motivation to be a Buddhist.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Nine, continued

4.) How to develop death awareness - three steps:

1.) **Death is certain.** NGEPAR CHIWA
certain death

2.) **The time of death is uncertain.** NAM CHI MA - NGE PA
when time death not certain

3.) **When you die, nothing helps but Dharma.**

CHU MA TOK MI PEN The only thing which you bring with you beyond
Dharma except for doesn't help death is your mind and what's in it. What's in your
mind is based upon what you thought, did, and
said.

Three main points and nine sub-points of death awareness:

1.) **Death is certain:**

a.) **Nothing can stop it** - when your time comes, you go.

b.) **You can't add time to your life** - with each breath, you are that much closer to death. Life here is finite. Each activity brings you toward death.

c.) **You have no time to practice while you are alive.** Even if you choose to practice, the day flies by and you have no time left to practice.

(continued in the next class)

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Ten: Meditation on death, part two

2.) The time of death is uncertain:

d.) **DZAMLING TSE MA - NGE**
this world lifespan not certain

Lifespans are not fixed. There is no order to how long people live on this planet. Some die young or old. Bad and good people die, instead of the good living and the bad dying. Death seems random. Also, this eon is one of fluctuating ages (from 80,000 to 10 years). Other planets and eons have fixed, ordered lifespans.

e.) **CHI KYEN MANG SUN KYEN NYUNG**
things that can kill you a lot things that keep you alive not a lot

There are a lot of things that can kill you, and not a lot that keep you alive.

Things that can kill you are divided into:

- 1.) **Living** - animals, people, bacteria, etc.
- 2.) **Inanimate** - cars and things outside of you, or things inside you (the four elements).

The four elements represent the energy of hardness and solidity, the energy of fluidity and wetness, the energy of heat and burning, and the energy of dissipation. These four elements are at work in your body and are in conflict with each other. Solidity and dissipation fight against each other, as do wetness and heat. Health is when the four elements are in balance - equal amounts present as they fight each other - no one element is less or more present than the others. This is a rare and unnatural occurrence. It's normal that the four elements are fluctuating. Imbalance in various elements lead to certain diseases. Sooner or later one of the elements will win and dominate. This kills you. Your own body's basic constitution is set to kill you eventually. If you live long enough, your own body will kill you. Otherwise you'll get hit by a truck or killed by someone else sooner. In the wheel of life, the lord of death represents the elements of your body, which will kill you ultimately.

CHI KYEN DU GYUR Things that keep you alive can turn into
things that can kill you turn into things that can kill you.

f.) **LU SHINTU NYAM CHUNG**
body extremely delicate/fragile

Your body is extremely delicate and easily hurt. A small thorn with dirt can cause an infection and death. The body is fragile like a bubble. You die easily and are very fragile. Life is directed at death; death is the only way that life can end.

CLASS NOTES

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Ten, continued

3.) When you die, only Dharma can help.

- g.) **Friends and relatives don't help.** They can hang onto you or treat you nicely, but as your system breaks down, you hallucinate and it doesn't help, as you can't recognize anything around you.
- h.) **Material possessions don't help.** Your physical senses are shut down early on in death and you can't perceive external things such as food, money, clothes, etc.
- i.) **Your body doesn't help.** You lose your body, and only your mind is left. Only your mind and its imprints are left. As you die, your mind selects a karma, and that karma becomes activated. That karma expands like an atom bomb, and largely determines your next life.

Three resolutions: (in reaction to the three points of death awareness)

- 1.) Knowing you must die, **begin to practice Dharma.**
- 2.) Knowing you can die at any time, **quit your worldly work and begin Dharma today.**
- 3.) Knowing nothing else can help, **practice only Dharma.**

NAMDAK

see the purity

***** See every event that happens to you as happening to you for the purpose of leading you to enlightenment. See everything as being done by Buddhas to help you reach enlightenment. Think of everything and everyone as holy all the time in every circumstance. *****