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Last week we talked about karma and dependent arising, how things depend on many different factors, some of which are under our personal control and others which are not. What happened in terms of Rinpoche's visit was a perfect example of this, wasn't it? Many factors were involved in his visit. People here all worked together to prepare for it. Many different factors, many people, many things were going on. Then an obstacle came in the way and everything turned out differently – Rinpoche's visit was cancelled. The last conducive factor wasn't there. Just like what we were saying last time, we can begin to see how things are dependent on so many factors that it's not just a linear relationship of this brings that. The experience we had with the hope of Rinpoche coming and then the hope being unfulfilled was an excellent example of dependent arising. Our collective karma was involved and within that, each of us experienced the result of our own individual karma. Each of us also created our own individual karma. Collective karma was also being created by the group. You can see what we've been talking about the last few times on karma pertains to what happened last week. Did you see this? It's very interesting when you start to think of it that way, isn't it?

Definite and Indefinite karma – Continued

Last time we left off in the middle of talking about definite and indefinite karma. Remember that I gave you the example of what Amchog Rinpoche said, that definite karma was analogous with a confirmed flight [laughter], and indefinite karma was analogous with an unconfirmed flight. I said to Rinpoche that even confirmed flights can be changed and he agreed. [laughter]

Let's review for a moment. When you have four branches of an action complete, then it propels you strongly towards a particular result [maturation result]. It becomes not so flexible because the intention was very strong. The action was very strong. We did an "A" perfect negative action or an "A" perfect positive action.

Definite karma can ripen in this lifetime. Examples of such karma are when you have a very strong intention to do an action, either positive or negative, or when you do an action towards a strong object like your spiritual teacher or the Triple Gem, or when an action is done repeatedly or done after a long preparation. But most of our definite karma ripens either in the next life or in the second life thereafter.

Indefinite karma is created when all four branches aren't complete. Maybe you don't have the intention, or you don't have the actual action, or you don't have the completion of the action. It isn't an "A" perfect positive or negative action. Therefore it's not going to bring a result in terms of the realm that you'll be born into [maturation result]. It is also not going to ripen in this life. Indefinite karma tends to bring results like the environmental result and the result similar to the cause in terms of experience. The result isn't going to be as strong as that of definite karma.

An example of indefinite karma is if you do something but you have a very weak intention to do it. If you do the same action with a super-strong intention, it's very likely to be a definite karma. But if you do it with a wishy-washy motivation, then it becomes an indefinite karma. This is important to know. When we're making offerings or when we're doing some positive action, take the time to make sure our intention is strong. This will influence how the action ripens. Similarly, when we get carried away and engage in a negative action, try and weaken the intention.

Another example of indefinite karma: you have the motivation to go out and steal something, but then you don't do it. It's not a complete act. You have the thought to do it, but you do not act it out. This becomes an indefinite karma. Whereas if you have the thought to do it and then go do it, then it's much more likely to be definite karma. We can think of many examples from our own lives where we intended to do an action but ended up not doing it.

Another example of indefinite karma: we purify a negative action we did. Let's say you lied to somebody. You knew what you were doing. You felt great doing it. You were very glad you did it. But then afterwards, you thought, "Wow, what have I done? I'm a Dharma practitioner. Out of self-respect and self-dignity, I don't want to act this way." This motivates you to do some purification afterwards. You had some regret and you made a determination not to act like that again in the future. By doing this purification, that karma goes from being definite to being indefinite. You're impeding its ripening.

Five Actions which bring Indefinite Result

In one of his texts, Asanga talked about five actions we do where the result is indefinite.

1) When you're forced by somebody to do something.

Let's say you're abducted into the army without a choice. You're told to go and be a soldier and kill people, but it's not your choice. It's not your wish. This is very different from someone choosing to enlist and going out with their flag to kill. There's a difference. If you're forced by somebody to do an action, the result is not going to be a definite one. It's going to be much more indefinite.

Similarly, if we are forced by others to do a positive action, then even though it's a positive action, it is not going to be strong. For example, somebody forces you to make offerings. They guilt-trip you for so long that you finally make out a check to the Red Cross or some other charitable organization. You feel obliged to or forced to. Or your family is watching and so you do it. The result of an action like this isn't going to be a firm, definite one.

2) When somebody requests you insistently to do it.

In the first case, you're forced to do an action. You don't have a choice. Here, they nagged you so much that you eventually give in. Again, the result is not going to be as definite as if it's your own volition, your own intention, your own idea. You're doing it mostly because you're under pressure from somebody else.

It must be quite interesting when we think about the number of decisions we make that are what other people want us to do or what we think we should do. For example, some people put their pets to sleep not so much because they want to do it, but because they think other people want them to.

Or in the case of euthanasia, maybe the patient pleads with the person, "Pull the plug. Pull the plug. I don't want to live." The person then pulls the plug. This is different from the scenario where the person (who is well) says, "Ah, I can see this person is suffering," and he pulls the plug based on his own decision. There are many nuances in this. This is just an example. We can think of many similar situations in our life. Think of the things we do because people ask us insistently. We should be careful here. If we do positive actions only because somebody asked us insistently, then we're missing out on the opportunity to create a lot of good karma in our mindstreams. We're not being fully present in generating our own good intention to do the action.

3) When we do something with a lack of awareness.

In other words, we don't know that what we do is negative. For example, you don't know that the company you are working for sells materials to another company that makes bombs. Or you don't know that your company is engaged in chemical warfare, selling chemicals. You're not aware that there's any

negativity involved in what you are doing. In such cases, you do not have an intention, so the result is going to be more indefinite.

4) When we have an uncontrollable compulsion to do something.

This is not referring to our normal uncontrollable compulsions, or it'll be so easy to rationalize, "Oh, going to the refrigerator to get ice-cream is an uncontrollable compulsion, so it is not a definite karma." [laughter] I wish I could rationalize that one. This is referring more to the case of having a mental problem, a mental compulsion. They're insane. The person doesn't have all their mental faculties together. They have the intention but they don't have a real intention because their mind is completely out of it. An action done due to this kind of compulsion leads to an indefinite result.

On the other hand, if you think about something again and again, and you plan exactly how to do it, this kind of compulsion will result in a definite karma. It wouldn't be indefinite.

It is interesting to know that if an ordained person becomes insane and breaks a vow, they don't actually break the vow, since they are mentally unsound when they do the action.

5) When we have an incorrect understanding.

If you think you're doing something good, but it turns out to be harmful in the end, it will not bring a definite result. The result is going to be indefinite. You had a certain intention but you were not aware of all the factors. Things happened quite differently from what you had planned. That's going to be an indefinite ripening. This happens with both positive and negative actions. For example, you may think you're helping somebody, but in effect you're harming them. You give some money to a charity thinking that they're doing something good, but they wind up embezzling the money. Or you give an alcoholic some money to buy a sandwich or get his resume done, but he winds up drinking booze. This refers to cases where you think what you're doing is right, but only realize in retrospect that it was actually a harmful action. This will be indefinite karma.

[Audience:] What if you intended to help somebody, did it and it helped that person, but in the process you hurt somebody else?

It would depend very much on whether you had the intention to harm the other person. In other words, if you only had the intention to help this person, and you weren't thinking about the ramifications for some person halfway around the world, then it's not going to be so definite because you're not really putting all the pieces together. But if you have the intention to help one person but harm another through the action, then I wonder how much positive karma there is in that. You're helping somebody, but with a negative motivation to harm somebody else.

I remember talking once with one of my teachers about the people who were involved in doing nuclear research before the second World War. These scientists did the research out of a deep interest in Physics and the like. Do they get any negative karma when people were killed by the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima? This is a very interesting question. Our teacher was saying it depends on their motivation. If these scientists were not aware that their research was going to be used for bombs, then they don't receive the karma of killing those people. From their side they didn't intend to kill anybody. But his translator (who is a Western woman) and I felt that the scientists should have been thinking about what they were doing and how the results of their research could be used. Can we say that because they weren't aware of what's going to happen, they had no responsibility?

We got into quite an interesting discussion with my teacher about this. It's something to think about, exactly how much intention somebody had. If the scientists have the intention to kill people, or if they have the suspicion that their research can be abused, I think the karma is going to be quite different than if they have their heads in the clouds and don't even think one way or the other what's going to happen to their research. You can see from this, that there can be so many nuances, depending upon the person and their attitude, their motivation. It is interesting to think about this.

Performed and Accumulated Karma

Now we're going to look at definite and indefinite karma in a slightly different way. Here we have the breakdown of karma in terms of karma performed and karma accumulated. The terms here are actually

quite misleading. When I explain them, I might just change the terms. But the literal translation is 'performed' and 'accumulated'. 'Performed' means actions that you've done, that you've committed. 'Accumulated' means actions that have been done with intention. You had the motivation to do the action in the first place. We can make four different pairs out of these two:

- 1) Actions that were done (performed) and intended (accumulated)
- 2) Actions that were done but not intended
- 3) Actions that were not done but intended
- 4) Actions that were neither intended nor done

It's interesting to relate the different actions we do in the day to these categories.

1. Actions that were intended (accumulated) and done (performed).

These are definite karma. You had the intention to do the action and then you did the action. We did not do it by accident. We did not do it because we were spaced out. There was a very clear intention to do the action. All the other branches of the action are complete because you actually carried out your intention through doing the action. Also you don't have any regret afterwards. For example, there is a mosquito on your arm and you want to kill it. You kill it and you say, "Fantastic!". Or you cheat on your taxes. You had the motivation to cheat and you cheated. You said, "I'm glad I did it! And I'm going to do it again."

There's a big movement now where people refuse to pay the amount of tax that would go towards military expenditures. Is that stealing or not stealing? I'll leave you with that. It is interesting to think about it.

Actions are considered as done and accumulated when you had the motivation, did the action, and there was no regret afterwards. An example would be you get up in the morning and you generate your positive motivation, "Today, I'm not going to harm others. I'm going to help them as much as possible. I'm going to do everything for the long term goal of becoming a Buddha for the benefit of others." You motivated like that in the morning, and then during the day, you act accordingly. The actions done during the day in accordance with this motivation are therefore intended and done. Another example is if you have the idea to go out and steal, and you go out and do it.

Or somebody says, "Hey, your company has this and that. Can't you bring some of it home for me? They won't miss it." And you think, "Oh yes, my company does have a lot of money. I can take some of the things and bring them home for my friend. My friend will like me better." And you do it. Even though you are told by somebody else to do it, still, you have the intention to do it. We have to be careful about the actions that other people tell us to do. In this case, it isn't like they're forcing us. It isn't like they're nagging us and wearing down our will. Pay attention to such cases.

These are some examples of actions that are intended and done. We have the motivation and then we go out and do it. They are going to be definite karmas. They're going to be strong karmas.

2. Actions that were not intended but done.

These are actions which we didn't have the motivation to do, but the actions got done anyway. For example, you were forced into military service. You had no intention to kill. You were forced to do it. If you're forced into military service, you're told to kill, and you think "Oh yes, I'll do it!" then it falls into the first category of an action that is both intended and done. But if you're forced to do it and you don't want to do it from your heart, then it's not intended but done. The result of this one would probably not be a maturation result because you didn't have a complete action. You didn't have the intention there. It's going to be an indefinite karma.

Another example of this is when you act unknowingly. You don't have the intention to do something but it just turns out that way. Sometimes people come up to thank us and we realize we had no intention to help them, it just kind of happened unknowingly. [laughter] Or people might complain about us harming them, but we did it unknowingly. There was no intention to do that.

Or actions that people do for the heck of it, something off the top of their head, kind of not considering what they're doing. Being reckless. There was no real intention.

[Audience:] I cheated the IRS but I honestly don't regret it because I feel that they've ripped me off so much. So what do you do, do you trick yourself into purifying something you don't believe is wrong?

Well, to purify, what's the first step in purification?

[Audience:] To regret it.

Yes. So are you purifying?

[Audience:] Well I guess no. I start rationalizing my action and I get to the point where I'm convinced they don't have the right to do it. So then I won't purify.

You have to think about why you think they don't have the right to do it. In other words, everybody else in the country should pay taxes but not you? You have to think, what is the law of the land? What is fair? What have people agreed upon as a group? If a government institutes a policy that is clearly a criminal policy, then I think you can have very strong ethical reasons for not going along with it. But when it's not a case of the government instituting a criminal policy and it's more like, "I don't want to do this because somehow, I'm special. I deserve more than everybody else does," then you have to check up. It is strange. I'm always the one who shouldn't have to pay IRS so much. I'm always the one who should get more of this. I'm always the one who shouldn't have to do that. I never think about other people in those situations. I never look around the room and say, "Oh, you shouldn't have to give so much to IRS." "You give to IRS. That's good. I want you to pay for the roads, for the welfare, and so on, but I have better things to do with my money." [laughter]

[Audience: Inaudible]

My opinion of that is that it's quite a different thing. If you feel that this money is getting used to kill other people, then what some Buddhists have been doing is they subtract the portion of their taxes that would go to the military budget from the check that they sent in and explained to the authorities why they're doing this.

Somebody is putting a bill before Congress proposing that you could be a conscientious objector tax payer in order not to have to pay your taxes towards the military if you don't want to. You still have to pay the same amount of taxes, but they would channel the money towards non-military areas like social welfare or education. I think it'd be good if as a group, we write a letter to let those people know that this is good. In this way, you're acting with a very clear ethical conscience. You don't want your money and resources going for the harm of others.

[Audience:] Wouldn't it be possible that the money could be channeled somewhere else?

We do the best we can from our side. We can't sit on top of everybody. We try and direct our resources in the way we think fit, but we can't always control everything.

When we do something but it doesn't go according to our plan, it is an action not intended but done. We had an intention to do an action to get a certain result, and we did that action. But it didn't go as planned. Something other than what we had intended happened. This is therefore an action that was not intended but done. For example, you intended to kill a mosquito but instead you killed a tick.

Actions not intended but done also include actions that we do half-heartedly. You're doing something but at the same time you feel, "I shouldn't be doing this," or "I don't really want to do it." As soon as you have done it, you have regret, and you think, "I'm not going to do this again." Here, although you had the intention, it is as if you didn't have the intention because you were regretting it almost as soon as you started doing it. This kind of action is considered as non-intended but done.

It works the same way for our positive actions. For example, we're making some kind of contribution but the whole time we're thinking, "I don't really want to do this." If somebody asks you for help and you think, "I don't really want to do this but I *have* to." You're doing it but at the same time you're regretting it, wishing you weren't doing it. This is an action that's done but not intended. It is not going to be a strong karma.

Or, for example, you're forced by somebody to kill, you do it, but you regret it. Or you think of a woman who's forced into prostitution by economic conditions, although she doesn't want to behave in that way. It's not going to have a definite result. This works for both positive and negative actions, if we regret the action afterwards. This is why it is important when we've done something positive, to make sure we don't regret it. And to make sure we dedicate it. It's easy for some regret to come in. For example, you felt an impetus to give somebody something. "Oh, I really want to give somebody something." You feel very good about it and you do it. But afterwards, you think, "Why did I give them that for? And now, I don't have it."

We've all done that, haven't we? We kind of destroy the good karma. We have to be careful not to regret our positive actions. Another example: maybe you felt a little tired before you came to teachings. You thought, "Yeah, OK, I'll go to teachings." And you came, you felt good and you enjoyed it while it was happening. After the session, again you felt totally wiped out and said, "Oh, why did I go? I should have just gone home and go to bed." Regretting a positive action is very easy to do.

[Audience: Inaudible]

I think all the different kinds of regret are going to have some kind of effect. If you regret an action, you are diminishing that karma. Later on, if you again rejoice about it, you create good karma through the rejoicing. But I think you still lose something by initially regretting it [laughter].

Some people think, "I can do a negative action and then I'll just purify it afterwards." "I'll regret an action and I will 'un-regret' it later." That's like saying, "Well, I can break my leg and put it in a cast and it'll be okay afterwards." It's never quite the same. It is better not to break your leg in the first place.

[Audience: Inaudible]

Yes, and there is also no determination to avoid it in the future. You're not going to have full purification. The most important thing to do in purification is to generate regret. Sometimes when we do purification, we don't do it with true regret, we do it with the kind of mind that says, "I should feel bad for doing that."

[Audience: Inaudible]

If you have a criminal who sees nothing wrong with killing, how is that person ever going to go back to live in society peacefully? They have no regret. There's no determination to change in the future. It is the same with us. We may not be criminals. But if we have deeply ingrained bad habits that we don't feel any regret for, it's going to be hard to change our ways. The mind will get more and more obscured.

I think what's most difficult for us, especially at the beginning, is to admit our mistakes. I think there's something in us that feels, "Well, if I admit that I was wrong, it means I'm a horrible person." There's just too much fear involved in admitting our mistakes. Somehow we're afraid of ourselves. We're afraid of our own judgmental mind. "If I admit that it was a mistake, then I must be a horrible person." We pile up the rationalizations, justification and all this kind of stuff. But meanwhile underneath, we feel confused, edgy and unresolved.

It is good if we can get ourselves to the point where we say, "OK, I made a mistake. But that doesn't mean I'm an awful person. That doesn't mean I'm evil, sinful and condemned to hell for eternity." We don't have to let our judgmental mind be like a huge ocean-wave crashing over us. We can be more honest about our mistakes, which will bring us a tremendous sense of relief. When we try not to look at our mistakes, we have to spend much more energy doing that than if we honestly look at our mistakes and clean them up.

[Audience:] Sometimes, what stops me from doing a virtuous action is that people might take advantage of me.

It is interesting that we have this feeling that if we act virtuously, we're going to be taken advantage of. This permeates our culture, doesn't it? If you're a nice guy, look out, because other people are going to trample on you. One part of our culture is saying, "Be nice, it's Christmas time", and the other part is saying, "Don't be nice because you're going to get taken advantage of." We get caught in a lot of these

culturally learned attitudes. What we need to do is think, "What do I believe? What do I feel is virtuous to do? It is not what other people tell me to do so that I will not be taken advantage of. What really do I believe in? What are my standards?"

[Audience: Inaudible]

If you're doing civil disobedience for ethical reasons, I think it can be quite powerful. Suppose you had a society like Nazi Germany, and let's say you were one of the people who realized that millions of people there were getting killed. You decided not to go along with the army, not to pay the taxes and not to follow the laws because your doing so was leading to millions of people being killed. You did acts of civil disobedience. In this case, I would think you were acting ethically. Whereas if you knew that people were destroying other people's lives and you went along with it, putting your head in the ground...

[Audience: Inaudible]

It's not just a matter of public opinion. Some people would say, "Yes, we're acting very ethically. We're killing everybody who's not white." That might be their ethical standards. But I don't think that it deserves the name 'ethics'. It's not just a question of 'my own personal belief'. But rather, you look at the ten destructive actions and the ten constructive actions. If within that, you can find the basis for whatever you're believing in, then you know you're on the right track.

[Audience:] Somebody is forced to join the military, and he's not inclined to kill people. But if he doesn't kill people, he will be killed.

I think there's definitely some negative karma involved in his killing others, but it's not going to be as heavy as that of a person who says, "Rah, rah, I'm going to enlist. I'm going to kill as many people as I can!" The motivation is totally different. Completely different. That's why even within a large group of people, every single person within the group is going to create a different karma according to their motivation.

3. Actions that were intended but not done.

These are actions that you intend to do but you don't do them. These would not be definite karma.

Let's say you intend to do an action but you ask somebody else to do it for you. You didn't do it personally. But because you ask somebody to do it, you do get the karma from that. Remember we mentioned before that if I go and tell somebody else to kill, steal or lie on my behalf, not only do they get the negative karma of doing it, but I do as well. This could be a definite karma. We intend to do it, but we tell somebody else to do it for us, and then we rejoice after it's done.

[In response to audience:] You go to India on pilgrimage and I ask you, "Please take this money and offer it to the beggars at Bodhgaya." I had the intention but you did the action. It would be a definite action in this case. It's a good thing to do. When we ask other people to do positive things on our behalf, it is good for them and it is good for us. That's very often what our teachers do. I have observed that my teacher is always telling one person to go build a stupa, someone else to build a Dharma center, another to print books, and so on. He can't do it all on his own, but I'm sure he gets a lot of good karma because he's coordinating everybody else's efforts in this way. We have to be careful what we tell other people to do.

[Audience: Inaudible]

[Teachings lost due to change of tape.]

I don't think anybody has done very much with this because many of these issues are only arising more strongly as Buddhism comes to the West. Things that are issues for us were not issues in ancient India or Tibet. But they're coming up now and we have to think very hard how to apply the teachings. There is a lot of discussion within the Buddhist circles about the ethics of various issues.

If we think about karma in the light of our own culture and the issues that are strong in our society, karma and our Dharma practice are going to become very alive for us. We will also get much more

insight on how our own mind operates as well. It is good to discuss issues amongst yourselves. There aren't clear-cut answers to many of these issues.

We're used to, "Let's have a law that tells us what to do." "Euthanasia is good." "Euthanasia is bad." How about saying that it depends on the motivation? It depends on the circumstance. It depends on the person who is doing it, whether they have clairvoyance or not, whether they are a bodhisattva or not. We always want a nice, simple answer: "Do this." "Don't do that."

And yet, whenever we get a "Thou shall do," or a "Thou shall not do," we hate it! We can't stand black and white extremes, but another part of us is wishing everything was black and white. [laughter] What we're coming to, is the more we understand things in a deep way, the more we see how many different factors come together to make something the way it is. We have to think about all these different factors, many of which are internal factors. Two people might be doing exactly the same action, but one is creating negative karma and the other is creating positive karma. But we want some kind of computer that will measure it all and tell us what's going on.

Another kind of action that is intended but not performed is when we rejoice at other people's actions, whether positive or negative. Through our rejoicing, we're having an intention, although we may not do the action itself. But this karma can be quite powerful. Remember when we went through the Seven Limb Prayer, we were saying how rejoicing was a lazy person's way to create good karma. You don't have to do anything except lie in bed and rejoice. Effortless - physically effortless. Mentally, however, it is quite difficult. If we rejoice in other people's constructive actions, then we share in it. We create a lot of good karma.

Similarly, if we read a piece of news in the newspaper and we say, "Ah, I'm so glad they caught that," we accumulate the karma from that too, even though we didn't do it ourselves. It's intended but not done.

Now, it's very interesting when we talk about dreams. What happens if you dream that you killed somebody? Is it intended? Is it done? What do you think?

[Audience:] It could be a symbolic dream, where it is not really the action of killing.

Let's say it isn't a symbolic dream.

[Audience:] It depends on the outcome of the dream.

You mean if the person in your dream dies or doesn't die in the dream?

[Audience:] Yes, or if you wake up before it happens.

If you dreamt that you killed somebody, they died in your dream, and you didn't wake up before they die, is it a negative action?

[Audience:] I don't think so. It'll be negative if you wake up and you say, "Yeah! Good!" [rejoicing at the death].

What they say in the text is, if you killed somebody in your dream, there is no object, therefore you didn't really kill anyone. If you wake up afterwards and you say, "Oh, that was only a dream, but I don't want to ever do that," then actually you're putting a positive imprint in your mind because you're making a positive determination not to kill anybody. But if you wake up from your dream and you say, "Oh, that was only a dream. Too bad!", then actually you do create negative karma. It's interesting. There might be some intention before we fall asleep, but the real thing that determines whether it's an intended action or not is our attitude upon waking.

[Audience: Inaudible]

At the same time that you're thinking, "I want to kill somebody," part of your mind is saying, "This is just a day-dream. I have no intention of acting this out." This is quite different from thinking about killing somebody and feeling, "Oh, this is a pretty good idea." In the former case, there will be some negative karma involved. You are having malicious thoughts, but the maliciousness (one of the ten destructive

actions) isn't a full one because you're not actually thinking of doing it. You're not actually planning how to do it. But you're not sitting there wishing the person well either. There is definitely going to be some negative imprint on the mind.

We can see with all of these that so much depends on our internal processes, whether we're regretting it when we think about it, whether we're thinking we're going to act on it, or whether we're thinking we're not going to act on it.

I suppose it could be the same when we're making offerings. We do the mandala offering where we offer the Buddha everything in our visualization. If you're doing it and you're thinking, "Oh well, I'm sure glad this is a visualization, because I don't want to really offer my body, wealth, enjoyments and friends." You're probably getting some positive karma, because at least you're training your mind in the attitude of giving. But you're not going to get the full positive karma since in your heart, you're not truly giving.

This is why we do the prayers over and over again. I think most of the time we're really glad that all the generosity is a visualization [laughter]. By making offerings again and again, by visualizing the whole sky full of offerings again and again, we might eventually get ourselves to the point where we want the generosity to be real.

[Audience: Inaudible]

I think in lucid dreams, it certainly involves the creation of karma. If you're lucidly dreaming and you actively know what your intention is, or you're actively intending it, then even though you may not have the object (because it still is a dream), your intention process is much stronger.

By the way, the last three of the ten destructive actions – coveting, maliciousness and wrong views – can never be actions that are intended but not performed. These three are all done mentally at the level of motivation. As soon as they're completed, you have intended and performed the act.

[Audience:] I have malicious thoughts about my boss, but there's no real wish for any of these to happen to her.

This will not be a complete action of maliciousness. A complete action of maliciousness is not just the negative thought alone, but includes following the thought, planning and coming to the conclusion, "I'm definitely going to carry this out." We have lots of negative thoughts floating through our mind all day long. They definitely have some karmic effect, but they aren't complete actions of maliciousness. They also have some kind of effect on our mind right now. As we go through the whole day thinking negative thoughts, it becomes much easier to make them full-blown ones. Also you may get into a bad mood, and tend to be more short-tempered, and so on.

4. Actions that were neither intended nor done.

An example of this is when you were driving your car and you almost accidentally hit somebody, but you didn't hit him. Here, there's no intention and there's also no action. We didn't kill a person.

Another example is when you plan to engage in an unwise sexual behavior. You planned it but you didn't do it. You regretted it and you purified it. Here you've taken the intention away.

Another example would be if you intend to offer some money to a Dharma center or to publish Dharma books, but you forget about it or change your mind. You don't have the intention and the positive action isn't done.

Collective and Individual karma

Another classification of karma is collective karma and individual karma. As a group of sentient beings on this planet, we have some collective karma. That is, karma that we have created as a group, sharing this environment together. Within that huge collective karma, we have smaller chunks of collective karma. We have collective karma with the people in America we're living with here right now. We have collective karma with our family. We have collective karma with each other because we're doing things together here. There are different levels of collective karma.

We also have individual karma. We all individually act and receive our own individual results. We can be accumulating both types of karma at the same time. Right now we're accumulating collective karma. We're engaged in a virtuous action together as a group and we're intending it. At the same time, we're all creating our own individual karma. One person might be thinking, "Oh, I'm so glad I'm here. This is really good. I'm glad I'm doing virtue." Another person might be saying, "Oh, this is so boring. I wish I could go back to Hagan Daaz." Within the collective karma, we're each going to create our own individual, personal karma too.

Like I was saying, in the case of Rinpoche's visit, we definitely had some karma as a group. It was a powerful karma because Rinpoche's attendant, Roger, was telling me Rinpoche had received many invitations from his centers here, but he didn't accept any of those invitations. He accepted ours. We had somehow created the karma for Rinpoche to come. But some kind of obstacle happened later and Rinpoche's visit was canceled.

[Audience:] When you talked about collective karma, I was thinking we probably don't have very good collective karma because Rinpoche didn't show up.

Well, it could have been. Our karma probably could have been improved. We got so far, but we couldn't make it through the rest of the way. I had written to Rinpoche requesting that he confer the Chenrezig empowerment. I had specifically mentioned that we had done Nyung Nay and that we had been doing the Chenrezig practice. Roger said that when people are practicing sincerely and honestly and want to purify through doing Nyung Nay, then, of course, Rinpoche wants to aid as much as he can. We definitely had some collective karma there. But not quite enough. Either that or some kind of obstacle came in between.

[Audience: Inaudible]

This is a very good point. So much depends on how we view an experience. If you're thinking, "Wow, I learned a lot about myself. I saw this moment of flurry and excitement and I saw the disappointment. I saw my mind get wrapped around something, but I also saw myself, like other people, pitching in and helping. Even though this experience didn't turn out as I had expected, I nevertheless learned a lot about myself. It was very valuable for my practice because I learned from the event." That's a very good attitude to have. You learned a lot from it.

[Audience:] We got the articles written by Rinpoche that we would probably not have gotten if not for this opportunity.

Yes. You didn't get the empowerment, but you got a few of Rinpoche's articles. People who had never met Rinpoche remembered reading things by him and photocopied them for the whole group. To me this was incredible. It was remarkable. Many people benefited from this. This is how we benefited from the visit—the non-visit! [laughter]

Also, as a group, we were working together a lot. Out of the goodness of their hearts, people came to help out with all sorts of various little things. As a group, we learned a lot too.

Let's sit quietly.

This teaching is based on the *Lamrim* or *The Gradual Path to Enlightenment*. Please refer to the following web-page for its outline and other transcripts or to listen to the audio recording of these talks: <http://www.thubtenchodron.org/GradualPathToEnlightenment/outline.html>