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Review

So we have been talking about the bodhisattva vows, and we've been doing the ones particularly concerning the far-reaching attitude of wisdom. We have talked about different things to avoid, such as abandoning the scriptures, thinking that the paths of the Theravada are unnecessary for one following the Mahayana, exerting effort principally in another system of practice while neglecting the one one already has (the Mahayana practice), and without a good reason, exerting effort to learn or practice the treatises of non-Buddhists (that are not proper objects of one's endeavor). If you study different philosophies which are not Buddhist, with the idea that they help you develop your wisdom because you can come to debate their points and see where the holes in their philosophies are and so on, it's perfectly all right to do that.

Eliminating obstacles to the far-reaching attitude of wisdom

Auxiliary Vow 30: (To Abandon) Beginning to favor and take delight in the treatises of non-Buddhists although studying them for a good reason.

This next one follows up upon that, about beginning to favor and take delight in those treatises even though you are studying them for a good reason. So again, it's not about trying to limit ourselves to just what's Buddhist. These are set up so as to have warning bells go off in our mind if we feel like we're beginning to get too interested or too involved in some other philosophy that before we thought maybe wasn't so worthwhile. But if our mind is all of a sudden starting to get really entranced in New Age bliss, "spaciousness", "we're all oneness and part of the big self" stuff, then this kind of vow sets off the alarm and we ask ourselves, "Why am I studying this? Am I beginning to favor it because I think it's really true? Or am I just getting enchanted with the language? What is really going on?" And we begin to see if that kind of study is helping our practice or if it is becoming a distraction. The main thing is to understand reality and the vow is to help us get to that understanding.

Auxiliary Vow 31: (To Abandon) Abandoning any part of the Mahayana by thinking it is uninteresting or unpleasant.

In one of the root vows, we had: Abandoning the Mahayana by, like saying, "It's so difficult. These bodhisattva practices, they're too difficult. I'm sure the Buddha didn't teach them." That was when we had it in the root vow, we're abandoning the Mahayana by saying it's not the Buddha's teachings.

Here what it's saying is that you're reading Mahayana scriptures and you think, "Oh, this writing style is really awful. They aren't written very well. They're unclear." Or "This is really boring. This practice is really stupid. It has nothing to do with me." And so this vow is about the general disdain of the Mahayana practice.

This is something to be aware of in that it can very easily lead us to sectarianism if we get involved with putting down different aspects of the Mahayana. In each Buddhist tradition, certain sutras are emphasized. One tradition emphasizes the Amitabha sutras, another one emphasizes the Prajnaparamita sutras, while yet another one emphasizes something else. If you begin to criticize a sutra just because one of the sutras is not your favorite one, or you don't understand it so well, or it's not the one of interest, then it can very easily degenerate into sectarianism. So to realize that the Buddha taught all these different teachings, and if we have an open mind and a correct understanding, we can understand where they're all getting at, and where they're coming from, and how they can really help our practice.

There is still this tremendous amount of debate over the meaning of the Buddha's scriptures. So you'll find, when you talk about the Mahayana philosophical tenets, you have the Cittamatra and you have the Madhyamika, and each of those have different subdivisions, from ancient India where they divided into different philosophical schools. And the teachings of these schools are all within the Mahayana scriptures, the basis of them all. And there's tremendous amount of debate between them. The Madhyamikas are saying to the Cittamatras, "Oh, you're too extreme, you're negating external phenomena." And the Cittamatras are saying, "Oh, you Madhyamikas, you're nihilists."

So there's a lot of debate going on. And it's really good. It's really healthy. Because the whole purpose of doing that is to get us to think. To think what is really true. And what's going on here? What do I believe in? So all these vows about not casting aspersions and putting things down do not mean that we're not allowed to debate and question. What we're getting at is, when you debate, when you question, when you say to somebody, "That just doesn't make any sense," and you give your reasons and they give their reasons, then that's quite good and it's really helpful for people. And you're all doing it with the motivation of developing your wisdom.

This vow is referring to one being narrow-minded or prejudiced: "Well, this doesn't suit my fancy. This doesn't make me feel good. I don't find it amusing and entertaining. Therefore I'm going to put it down." So you see that's a different mental space? As opposed to when there's a lot of debate, and it's really fun and done in very good spirits. It's not like criticizing without a very good reason.

Auxiliary Vow 32: (To Abandon) Praising oneself or belittling others because of pride, anger and so on.

So again we had one similar to this in the root vows, which is praising oneself and belittling others. And that one was out of attachment to material possessions and reputation. So that's the motivation in the root vow. Here in the auxiliary vow, it's the same action but motivated by pride, or anger. Again, the vow is about feeling proud and so praising ourselves and putting other people down. Or feeling angry and jealous of other people and so praising ourselves and putting them down.

It's interesting to notice that this one comes under the perfection of wisdom. In other words, this is really emphasizing that when we get into that behavior, with a very proud mind, it inhibits the growth of our own wisdom. It's so interesting because often when we get proud and we're praising ourselves and putting others down, we're doing it in an attempt to make ourselves look really good and really wise. And what Buddhism is saying is that it actually backfires and produces the exact opposite result because it becomes an obstacle to the development of our wisdom. As soon as we start thinking that we're really top stuff and we know it all, it becomes very difficult to learn anything. I think that's why people like His Holiness the Dalai Lama are just tremendous examples for us because their example of humility and their willingness to listen open-mindedly to others is incredible.

Auxiliary Vow 33: (To Abandon) Not going to Dharma gatherings or teachings.

When there's somebody who is a qualified teacher, it's a good teaching, and you're well, there's no reason for you not to go except you're lazy, that's where this one applies. So this does not mean that

every time there's a Dharma teacher in town, or anybody who calls themselves a Dharma teacher, you need to run around and take every teaching and take every initiation. It's not saying that. You have to be discriminating and know who you consider your teacher and what level of practices to get involved in. But this vow applies when we know somebody is a good teacher, they're already one of your teachers, you know it's the level of practice, either a teaching, or a puja, or a debate session, or a discussion group, and instead of taking part in it, we just feel lazy. We'd much rather just sit at home and eat a McDonald hamburger and watch TV.

Again this vow is not saying, "You must go to every Dharma activity!" Because we take it as, "Oh-oh, big Daddy looking down at me!" That's not what it is. This vow is really made as a way of preventing us from getting distracted. Because if we have foremost in our mind that it's important to go to Dharma activities, either teachings or discussions or practice sessions, and we know that it's important for our own practice, because that's how we're going to progress, then when we see ourselves start to take out our book of 5,399 excuses and thumb through it to see which one we're going to use tonight, we say, "Oh oh, wait a minute, hold on, Buddha said beware of this one." This is where awareness of the vows comes in very handy.

Or out of pride, thinking, "Oh, I've heard this teaching before." You often hear people say that. "I've heard Lamrim before. I don't need to go. I want something new and interesting." Yet when you go to India you watch all these very high lamas who teach Lamrim, they go when His Holiness teaches. And they listen to Precious Human Life, to Death and Impermanence, and Refuge, and Karma -- the very basic teachings they listen to, again and again and again. But we hear something once and we say, "Oh, I know that one already. Give me something new and exciting." So a kind of proud mind that just wants to be entertained. Or a mind that's just very lazy and doesn't want to exert itself in any kind of way. We're the one who suffers from it. It doesn't make others suffer. It basically acts as a big impediment to our own practice. That's why again I encourage people to get together and to discuss the teachings, to continue the sessions when I'm not here. You learn so much from these discussions.

I got a letter from a student in Singapore and she's doing a Lamrim course in Singapore. I was telling Venerable Sangye Khadro and so she started doing something similar there. She gives some tests. [laughter and exclamations from audience.] Yeah, she does, she gives some tests and they get a certificate at the end. But anyway, this student was writing to me, because Ven Sangye Khadro does it where they have scheduled discussion groups in the teaching. And she wrote and said that she finds the discussion groups incredibly beneficial. Because some things that she never would have thought of, or considered, came up in the discussions that really made her think. And it's true.

I got another letter from another student in Singapore. And she was writing that she was at another temple in Malaysia when some Westerners came up to her to ask about the different statues on the altar. And all of a sudden she felt very ashamed because she didn't know who they are or what the symbolism was. Unless somebody puts a question to you, you don't realize what you don't know. And so that's why the discussion groups are just so important, because these kinds of things come up, and it makes us think about things we've never thought of before. That really increase our knowledge because we have to do some research.

Auxiliary Vow 34: (To Abandon) Despising the spiritual master or the meaning of the teachings and relying instead on their mere words; that is, if a teacher does not express him/herself well, not trying to understand the meaning of what he/she says, but criticizing.

You go to somebody's teaching, and they kind of teach in a very traditional style, or they read from the scriptures, they're giving you a Dharma talk like this, or they don't crack any jokes, or they speak in a monotone, something like this. And instead of looking at the meaning of the teaching and what's being spoken, you say, "This is stupid! This person is just an ignoramus. They don't know what they're talking about. They don't speak well." Criticizing in this way.

And so again, this is our difficulty. Our problem. We're missing a big opportunity. People might be incredible teachers and very, very wise, but because their delivery is not up to our standard, we just get fed up and leave. And we criticize. And then we lose out on the teachings there.

What this one is really emphasizing, is when somebody speaks, try and understand the meaning of what they're saying, and not just merely the words. And not just evaluating something by whether it happens

to be entertaining and the person is a good speaker. This is really something for the West because in the West, people want to be entertained during teachings. You have to be an incredible orator, crack jokes at the right time, and whatever. You have to compete with the TV. I don't know how many flashy, gimmicky things you have to do to keep them tuned in to your TV. They did some research. You have to have violence every so often to keep the audience interested, so what do you do with the Dharma teaching? No violence, no sex, how do you keep their interest?

So this is really something to be made aware of. I look at the situation now and it's so different from that when I studied back then. When I went to Nepal, we were studying and we had one Geshe who's an incredible teacher but he taught in Tibetan. The translator wasn't very good. We would sit there and write down word for word what the translator said, even though the sentences didn't make any sense. And then in the evening we would get together and try and make sentences out of what he said. And figure out what the Geshe was really saying. So it was like the English words weren't even clear. We had to piece together the words.

And there was hardly anything published in English. But whatever there was, we would try and look through and figure out what was being said. Because the translator would use one term – it didn't make any sense. But if we could find out what teaching it was in a book, and use another word, it might begin to make sense. And we get this week after week, month after month, going through a translator and then trying to piece it together afterwards. This is just to get the words, let alone trying to understand the meaning. And one of my friends, years later, he said to me, "I don't know how we actually stuck it out." Because by this time he was living and teaching in Hong Kong and he said, all the people who come to hear, they wouldn't put up with this. So we were thinking it's like some very special karma just sitting hour after hour listening in this way and trying to figure out what was going on.

Nowadays, it's a completely different ball game. You have things in English. You have good translators, or you have people speaking directly in English. You have books. Everybody tries to be really humorous, and give it Western style. I learned with all the Tibetan stories. And it is hard to figure out the meaning of some of these stories. You just sit there and you listen and you try and get from it what you can. It really took some effort.

So the vow is just saying to approach teachings with a good motivation and try and learn what you can instead of having the idea of wanting amusement and entertainment and wanting it to be tailor-made for your own particular style.

[Audience:] Did people volunteer to help Rinpoche with his teaching style?

Oh yeah, people have wanted to give him elocution lessons. So many people have volunteered. Rinpoche didn't believe in it [laughter]. So that's a good example. Rinpoche is an incredible teacher. But you have to have that kind of patience to learn to put the sentences together, and understand why he's repeating things so much, and be able to ignore all the coughing. Actually it was so interesting, because when he was speaking here, he was going [soft coughing sound] a lot, which was actually very good. Because when he was having lunch, he was coughing and he would cough so loud that it actually hurt my ears. So when he was teaching he was just going [soft coughing], I thought it was fantastic. But many people came up to me afterwards and said, "Oh why does he go [soft coughing] during teaching?" But it was different as many people were concerned for his health.

[Audience:] What was Lama Yeshe's teaching style like?

Lama Yeshe didn't cough, but sometimes Lama's English is just really far out. He couldn't say "f", so it all came out as "p", so everything was "pantastic" [laughter]. And again the sentence structure, because Lama never studied English, but he wanted to communicate with us. It makes you listen more acutely in order to put it together.

Again the reason that this is under the wisdom section is saying that when we become picky, choosy like that, and don't try and understand the meaning, but just wanting to be entertained, then we inhibit our own learning, hindering our own wisdom.

Eliminating obstacles to the morality of benefiting others

Now, the rest of the bodhisattva vows here are about the ethics of benefiting others. There're three kinds of ethics, and one of them is the ethics of benefiting others. All the remaining vows come under this. There's so much to talk about. And I'm thinking of having discussion groups to go into these quite a bit, because they relate very much to our daily life and figuring out how to practice these.

Auxiliary Vow 35: (To Abandon) Not helping those who are in need.

What it's saying is, when somebody needs something, help them. Unless of course, we're sick, or we don't have the skills, or we're incapable, or we're doing something else that's more important or more virtuous. So it doesn't mean that every time somebody needs something, you drop whatever you're doing and go do it. Because obviously if you're sick, if you're doing something else more important or if you don't have the skills or the materials, then that's a completely different ball game.

What this is really hitting at is again, the lazy mind, or the procrastinating mind, the miserly mind that doesn't want to share. So it's saying that in many different situations when people need things, to try and help them. For example, if people need a traveling companion, if they're going somewhere and it's dangerous and they need a traveling companion to go with, and we're not doing anything else, and we're capable of doing it, and so on, then we should do that. Of course if you're about to sit down and meditate or you have something very, very important to do, or it's in the middle of your work schedule or whatever, then obviously you can't. But when we have the ability to, and somebody wants a companion because it's dangerous, then we can go with them.

Or if somebody needs employment, and if we have the ability to, we should employ them. Or if they ask you to guard their property, to keep something for them, to watch their things, when you're traveling a lot, and take turns watching each other's stuff, or house-sitting, or watching their kids, or whatever. If we have the ability and the time, then to do that. If people are quarrelling, and they're in need of somebody to help mediate, then again, try to do that. There're several other examples here. Somebody is doing some useful work, some kind of purposeful work that's definitely benefiting and they ask you for help, and then because you're lazy, or you're bored, or it doesn't give you enough fame, and excitement, or they're not going to take you out to lunch afterwards, you refuse. If somebody is doing something useful and they ask for some help, then try and help them.

Again, if somebody is making a journey or if they ask you for protection and due to laziness, you refuse. If somebody needs help learning a language, and they ask for help, we have the ability to help them learn a language, but we refuse. Or somebody ask for Dharma teachings, and out of laziness, we refuse. Also, if somebody asks us to protect their possessions, to take care of their things, and we refuse.

Or if somebody invites us for a meal, not because they want to waste our time but because they wish to make an offering out of respect for us as a Dharma practitioner, then we try and accept that, rather than not going because we're proud, or whatever. Again this doesn't mean every time somebody ask you to something, you have to go. This is referring specifically to the case where somebody is inviting you, a Dharma practitioner, so that they get the opportunity to create merit, and you don't accept. This isn't saying when somebody invites you to a party, it's a good excuse not to meditate, so you accept because of that. It's not talking about that.

Or somebody who is visiting our country, who doesn't speak English need some help getting around. They need to know where the buses are, or how to do things. So help them. And this is something that, having traveled a lot, I appreciate so much. Sometimes people would go so out of their way to make sure you got on the right bus or turned at the right street. Or found the restaurant or the hotel. And you just feel so grateful, because when you're in another country, you don't speak the language, you don't know your way around, you're so lost. You feel really vulnerable. You meet somebody, and you ask directions, and if they're rude to you, it just makes you feel completely out of it. So when somebody is kind, your heart really opens up.

I think sometimes those of us in America aren't aware of what that's like, either because we don't travel very much outside of our own country, or if we travel, we only go to places where people speak English. So we don't know what it's like for travelers in our country, for newly-arrived immigrants, for people from

Southeast Asia - there's a huge rush in population in Seattle. They're people who don't speak English, who don't know the custom, who don't know how to get around, and just so many of these small activities that we do, even just meeting them on the street or in informal occasions, can be really beneficial for those people. But if we figure, "Oh, his guy doesn't know English. What kind of idiot are they? They don't speak English. Who are they?", as people sometimes get towards the Hispanics, or whatever, it's so devastating to these people. Once you're in a foreign country and you have that happening to you, you really know what it's like.

So as much as we can, be kind to travelers. Helping them, showing them around, try explaining things to them. And that includes, of course, when new people enter the group. New people come to the temple or a Buddhist gathering. To recognize that they feel like strangers, that they feel lost, and to help as much as we can.

It is so interesting. Somebody asked and you can tell the teaching was obviously given in India: "Do we have to give to all the beggars?" Notice the wording of this question, "Do we have to give to all the beggars?" And this is typically Western. It's like, we want to know what to do and what not to do, and we're completely forgetting about the mind and the motivation behind it. It's like "Do I have to give to all the beggars?" And if you say, "Yes", then okay, I'll do it. If you say "No", that's even better, I can keep some myself. But it's not even looking at the mind. And that's the whole thing here. It's to cultivate the mind. Cultivate the attitudes. And with that, go and relate to the world.

So anyway, the way this particular lama replied was, "No, you don't have to give to them all. If they're really sick, missing limbs, or whatever, then it's very good. If it's something that's just going to increase their own greed – you give to them today and then tomorrow they're back asking more and more and more – then it's not really beneficial for them." So again, it's the kind of situation where we need to look and see. If somebody is asking for money because they want to buy booze or whatever, then I don't think it's so wise to give. Or you sometimes go into these gas stations and people come with this story that they ran out of gas and they need five dollars, and you know very well that they're not going to use it for gas, then I don't think it's so wise to give. Or if you really want to give, buy the gas and put it in their tank, so you know it's going for that.

But generally in our life, when people ask us for help, if we have the time, and the ability, and the resources, and there's nothing else more important or more virtuous going on, to really see other people asking us for help as an opportunity instead of as a burden. So instead of, "I *have to* help somebody move house," it's "Do I get to offer service to somebody who has been kind to me?" Instead of "Do I *have to* clean up?", it's "Do I get to offer service to help other people?" So really transforming the mind whenever we're asked for help. And instead of jumping back into our excuse book to try and find an excuse, to assess the situation and transform our mind and say, "Yes, this is an opportunity to repay their kindness and I'm going to do it, and in doing so I am also accumulating a vast amount of positive potential if I do it with a bodhicitta motivation. So it's something worthwhile doing, not just for others, but also for myself, for my spiritual practice."

Instead of looking at things in very narrow ways if somebody asks for help: "This is two hours of my Saturday afternoon that I have to give up," recognize that your own spiritual progress depends on creating a lot of positive potential. And positive potential is generated by having a good motivation and acting on that, in ways that serve others. So it is trying to take joy in those things.

[Audience:] Should I look and see when I give money where it will be used?

You don't want to get into this whole thing of every time you give somebody something, "Give me the receipts for what you buy". But if you think that something is going to be misused, then it's not to that person's benefit to give them something.

[Audience:] What if I know that drinking is the other person's only pleasure in life, should I still give the money for a drink?

I'm sorry. I don't buy that. Really, I don't buy that. I don't buy that drinking is the only pleasure that somebody can get in life, and so it's good to support that habit. I think it's just as well to give him a granola bar. Or give him an apple. Or give him a pizza bread. I'm sure they get happiness from that.

[Audience:] But I am not able to change that person?

You're not going to change them but you don't need to contribute to it. I mean I'm not going to stop the sale of weapons in America, but if somebody is asking me for money at a gas station, and I feel that they look like a sleazy guy and they might go and buy a gun with the money that I gave them, and use that gun at somebody, I don't feel any need to support them.

[Audience:] Should I give based on what will make the other happy?

You have to have a big view what happiness is. Happiness is not what makes you feel good at this present moment. Remember all the teachings on karma? Remember all these teachings about the four noble truths? There are two kinds of happiness. There's the temporal happiness, and there's the long term happiness. Temporal happiness is here and it's gone [Ven snapping her fingers]. It's here and it's gone. If, in giving somebody temporal happiness, you're going to make them have long-term suffering, then it's of no benefit to them.

That's why they always say if something is for the long-term good and the short-term good, do it. Even if it creates some problems, it's still good to do. When we say long term, it means karma, thinking about the karmic result. If something is for the short term, it makes you feel good, but long term, it's harmful, don't do it. If you're doing something that's going to create negative karma, or induce somebody else to create negative karma, they might think that they're getting a lot of happiness, but it's harmful in the long term. Somebody finds happiness by robbing somebody else's house, does that mean that I'm going to give them happiness by helping them rob the house?

So in other words, we shouldn't just look at what people say brings them happiness. Look at our own lives. Samsara is a dysfunctional relationship. And we do so many things that are totally unproductive. Things that are self-destructive. Does that help us? It makes us feel good in the moment. Does that help us in the long run? It doesn't help us. So real friends aren't people who just help you feel good in the present moment. Real friends are the people who are going to help you get your life together. When somebody likes to eat pizza and somebody likes Chinese food, then we definitely don't need to get judgmental and make sure they eat exactly what we like. Because that kind of thing is really neutral. But if it's something where the behavior can be detrimental to many other people, then it's not good to encourage that.

[Audience:] How can I be truly sure that the help I give will be for the long term good?

I think a lot of it is trial and error and in what you were doing, in every situation, just being aware of what's going on. Just being aware of what's going on in your mind and your own limitations. And the thing is that it's not like there's one clear, right answer in every situation.

[Audience:] I think that we can't always be sure how the help we give will turn out. Would Venerable like to speak more about this?

I think you're right. We can't know exactly what everybody's going to do. The basic thing is to deal with the situation at hand. But to deal with it in a way that we don't cause more harm. And that's why we don't want to have idiot compassion. So what I'm getting at is avoiding idiot compassion. Of course we can't know all the conditions in any situation. We can't know whether these kids are going to give the money to their parents, and what their parents are going to do with it. How are we supposed to know? Whether our nickel goes to buy them an apple or our nickel goes to something else – we don't know. So we have to have a good heart and do what seems to be the wisest thing. But what I'm getting at is situations in which "helping" actually increases harm. Then we shouldn't help.

[Audience:] Should I give with a motivation that in future I will be able to give them the Dharma?

It's true. Whenever you give, if you can give with the thought, "And may I eventually give them the Dharma." Because the Dharma is the thing that's really going to help people. There's a big difference between giving politely and just throwing things at people which happens a lot of time in India. That's so humiliating. In the East, it's the custom that when you give, you give with both hands. Your whole being is involved with that giving.

[Audience:] Are you saying that what is important in giving is our motivation?

What I'm getting at is what's really important is your motivation. But when we have the things and we're able to give, we shouldn't just say to ourselves, "Well, I really don't have to give, it's just my motivation."

[Audience:] What do I do if my mind is confused about whether to give?

What do I do then? When I get into those situations and my mind is confused, what do I do? The basic thing is that I'm not willing to look at that person as a human being. I'm just looking at the situation and how to get them away from me as soon as possible and make myself still feel okay about myself. That's the basic thing that's going on when I get stuck. And so I think the thing at that point is just to not worry about what I'm doing, whether I give or whether I don't give, but be able to just stop for a minute and say, "This is a human being." And we should be able to look at that person with respect as you do with any other human being. And I find actually that's the thing that I need to do in those times when our mind goes, "What do I do?"

Auxiliary Vow 36: (To Abandon) Avoiding taking care of the sick.

Again, there are exceptions. If we're sick ourselves, if we don't have the medicine, if we're busy doing something that's more important, we don't have the skills, or whatever, then if we do not help the sick, that's okay. But here, the thing is when somebody is sick, to try and assess what they need and help them as much as possible. People who are sick have different needs. Some people need medicine, some people need help in their house, some people may need you to help spiritually, some people need you to run an errand, and things like that. For example, I know a number of people are going to this one man who has aids, reading to him and things like that. You know you shouldn't just think, "Oh, I was only called in here just to read the book and to give spiritual help. But meanwhile, he needs some food. I'm sorry, that isn't my job. Somebody else is supposed to do that."

When we're with somebody who's sick, to try and tune in to see what it is they need. Because often they need something really practical. And sometimes they need something spiritual. Sometimes they need material things. And so to try and tune in, rather than go in with our agenda. And especially when you're trying to help somebody spiritually, it's so tempting, the biggest pitfall is, "I'm going to save them! I'm going to help them spiritually! Here I am. I'm going to help them spiritually." And then we put our whole agenda on them about what they should be thinking about and what they should be dealing with, who they should be talking to or what they should be saying. We have our whole agenda of how to run their life. And instead of going in where we're trying to help, we go in with our idea of how we want the session to go, then we're basically just trying to make the sick person do what we want them to do. Instead of going in just with an attitude of offering help and what they need at this particular moment.

If we don't help out of anger, or arrogance, or miserliness, or laziness, then it becomes a downfall. So again, with people who are sick, they need all sorts of different things. Because we know sometimes if we are sick, maybe you need somebody to bring you some food. Maybe you need somebody to do the house-cleaning. Or maybe you need somebody to do an errand outside. Whatever. We know what it's like when we're sick. So just to recognize that for other people, they may have an idea what they want done first, what is the most important thing on their mind. And that's what needs to be done first.

I think we'll stop here.

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>