It is important especially to us who are following Buddhism and following the teachings based on these scopes, to know what is needed and what one must avoid in order to accomplish the goals of each scope.

In Buddhism, any method whatsoever, by any means whatsoever, if it is, they will ask by which method they can completely cease attachment, anger and ignorance—these three mental defilements which are the root causes of the problems of this life and to find happiness in this life, that is called spirituality.

Small beings are divided into two types, ‘mere small beings,’ who are concerned mainly with this life, and ‘special small beings’ who are pursuing samsaric goals, but for future lives. For that reason, according to Buddhist teachings, the spiritual being is considered to be pursuing a spiritual life. Buddhist teachings offer special methods based on the goals of those beings who seek a spiritual life. The term small being is not special, and can include everyone, even beings in lower realms. Most small beings are mainly interested in the pleasures and happiness of this life—that is, they are interested mainly in a samsaric type of life and mainly seek higher rebirths. But the small beings who are called special do not think only of this life. Instead, they have started learning a little about what comes after this life, and know that there are higher lives that are the result of wholesome virtuous actions, and lives that are the result of bad actions or karma.

In his summary of Buddhist teachings, Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment, Lama Atisha divides everyone into three types of beings. When Atisha talks about beings, he says that the first type or first scope of being includes both of these, the special small and the mere small. He says:

Seeking only samsaric pleasures by any method whatsoever, striving after their own goals, that is known as the small.

This means that if one is just interested in merely the pleasures of this life, not seeking any goals beyond that, not even through future lives, among the beings, that is the smallest. However, special small beings are interested in learning about future lives, and are concerned about falling into a miserable life after this one. There:

fore they seek freedom from that, and strive for a higher rebirth as a human or deva. The special small being worries about future lives in accordance with the spiritual teachings that explain that as a result of evil negative karma, one will be born in three lower realms, called hell, hellish animals and so on. These are all lives in which one experiences only misery and suffering all the time.

The special type of being is one who is interested in learning what will happen to them after this life, i.e., one who is born in these kinds of realms, what kind of misery and problems will one face? If one is born in a good rebirth, as a god or human, as expected in the teachings, what will one experience? Then, based on learning what one may experience in future lives, one tries to analyze to see what the causes of these experiences are. Understanding that, the special being will try to develop positive causes as much as possible in this life, and to get rid of negative causes. Even though these second beings, the ‘special small’ beings, are not seeking emancipation or Buddhahood, but merely a future life after this life in which they are born in a higher rebirth and are free from lower life and its miseries, according to Buddha's teaching, that is the beginning of the first type of spiritual being.

A person who is mainly involved in methods that are wholesome and virtuous actions that stop evil karma and produce positive future lives is a ‘special small’ being. In general, this special level of small beings can develop higher spiritual qualities, looking beyond just to the future happiness of this or future lives, and seeing that samsaric pleasures are not the final goal, the solution. They can begin to seek to be completely free from all types of problems, including other beings and, of course, lower beings. Each of these types of existences has different kinds of suffering, and freedom from those sufferings can be achieved by completely removing their causes.

The causes are explained in detail as karma and its cause, the delusions. Basically the delusions are the three mental defilements—attachment, anger and ignorance—and the many other types of mental defilements which can create evil or impure actions and are the main cause of samsara. One who wishes to remove those things, to completely liberate one’s own mind and personality from them, will first ask whether that is possible. Then, if it is, they will ask by which method they can completely cease karma and delusions. They will want to learn those methods, and then by applying them, will mainly seek their own complete emancipation from impure life, whether lower lives in hell or higher lives up to the devas. If a life is created by karma and delusion, then it’s impure. But when one seeks a life beyond that for oneself, not tied to this karmic situation, then one is called an intermediate being. Total freedom from suffering for oneself, or emancipation, is the intermediate being’s goal. That requires a lot of studying, meditating and practicing the methods to solve all the problems of this existence and to remove their causes.

Knowing what causes bring about what results is one of the most important teachings. When Buddha taught the four noble truths, the first truth, the truth of suffering, showed the different types of suffering in detail. Then the second truth, the truth of the cause of suffering, is explained as karma, and karma itself is caused by various mental defilements, mainly ignorance. If these causes of suffering can be eliminated, then of course their result can be eliminated. But if the causes cannot be eliminated, then there is no way to seek cessation.

Buddha taught the truth of suffering and the cause of suffering, showing what kinds of sufferings beings experience, from those of hell all the way up to those of the deva realms, and showing that this suffering cannot happen without a cause. This cause is not purely outer-side; the main cause is within each individual: mental afflictions which are mainly prime ignorance, or egoistic view, and then attachment to one’s own side and hatred towards others. These are the three mental poisons, which are the key causes of suffering, and from these three root defilements many branches are described, such as jealousy, pride and all kinds of other defilements. One needs to know that each of these defilements is removable, and one needs to know by which antidote they are removed temporarily and by which they are completely uprooted. Some antidotes reduce or subdue-defilements, and some remove them completely.

Thus there are two different levels of practices or methods taught in detail in Buddhist teachings. If one is mainly seeking not samsaric pleasure—impure life in this life or in future lives—but instead is seeking complete emancipation, and based on this, one is mainly engaged in studying, learning and implementing those practices for those purposes, then one has become an intermediate being. Buddha taught the path extensively, but Atisha taught it in a summarized way. Lama Atisha in his short Lamp on the Path explains intermediates beings as:

Those who turn their back on the pleasures of existence and turn toward the path of perfection, not out of personal interest, but to strive only for their own peace. These beings are called intermediate.

This verse refers to those who work their whole life striving mainly for peace for themselves, and who revere their own mind from any kind of pleasure of samsara—that means impure pleasure, sensual pleasure, high rebirths and so on.
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EDITORS: 
José Cabezón, and John Makransky 

NEWS 

Opening to Our Primordial Nature 
by Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Kenpo Tseyang Dorjag Rinpoche

This book provides clear and deep explanations of how to uncover our inherent wisdom and compassion. The authors explain how our minds function and what our primordial nature is, and shows us how to go about cultivating insight, bodhicitta, and devotion so that our true nature can manifest. This book gives detailed instructions on how to meditate using the tantric techniques of visualization, mantra, and formless meditation. At the same time, it is simple and accessible, pointing out how we can see our fundamentally enlightened nature. This is a great introduction to Tibetan Buddhism by highly respected teachers from the Nyingma Vajrayana tradition.

Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Kenpo Tseyang Dorjag Rinpoche are founders and directors of Padmasambhava Buddhist Center, based at Palma Samye Ling in upstate New York. PBC includes over twenty local centers in the United States, Puerto Rico and Russia, as well as retreat centers and monastic institutions in the United States and India.

THE THREE TYPES OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS 
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so on. Because one’s mind has been turned away from samsatic pleasures, one tries to turn away from the mind, and the mind, who is merely seeking perfect or everlasting for their self, is called an intermediate being.

In many Buddhist teachings, one may hear of the Hinayana and ‘Mahayana’ systems. Hinayana practitioners are of this intermediate type, mainly seeking their own goal of complete emancipation without too much emphasis on others. The term ‘Hinayana’ in Sanskrit means lesser or lower vehicle. Usually small vehicles carry a small load, and big vehicles can carry huge loads. In the same way then, the mental attitude of practitioners of the Hinayana vehicle is to take responsibility for one’s own goal, on that basis, the scope is smaller because one is looking for one’s own individual way. One whose personality is mainly involved in the path in this way is called a follower of the small vehicle.

This is a great thing when one has developed even that much, to the point of clearly seeing one’s short life as not being for the purpose of any kind of samsatic pleasure, but rather for the goal of the much better and longer lasting peace, and then working mainly towards that. It’s difficult to fit into this category of being. Ordinary beings are usually below that because this is a special kind of mental scope. The third level of beings, are the great beings of the Mahayana. These are people who have first trained in the proper knowledge and later, after that, seek their own emancipation for a little while. But then our concern finally turns towards others, starting with their own dear mother and then from there, everybody else in the world. Since everybody is looking for happiness and pleasure, in that sense everybody is the same. Knowing this, one’s attitude changes. One sees that looking merely towards one’s own small area is not enough. Instead it is much more to fulfill everybody’s wishes. One sees so much misery and suffering worldwide, everywhere, from hell’s all the way to the heavens in between higher realms, and one wants to free them all. Great beings have so much desire to take responsibility for all beings. They develop first love and compassion for all beings, and when they have a strong wish to act on that, then they determine how to become most beneficial for others. At that time, one sees that the only perfect way, without error or discrimination, is when oneself achieves highest Enlightenment, where all obstructions have been removed and omniscience has been obtained. Until one reaches that stage, all will try to help others, if nothing else, it won’t be perfect. Once that stage is attained, one will be able to help all beings, and benefit to others. Therefore, one mainly seeks that highest goal, called perfect liberation. When a person’s attitude changes towards fulfilling the purposes of others, and that attitude arises spontaneously, from then on, one fits into the category of great beings.

From the point of view of these three scopes, one can see that being interested in the sensual pleasures of this life and not believing or seeking anything else, from a spiritual point of view, is the worst. It has no spiritual value. This is the scope of the small being. If one is looking for methods to bring about this kind of pleasure and enjoyment, not only for this life but also for future lives, then one fits into the category of spiritual beings, which begins with special small beings.

From there, there are three goals. One is to be free in future lives from the worst miseries of lower lives and to attain a higher life, thinking even if the happiness one seeks to attain is samsatic, it is not enough. They consider it worth pursuing. With just the goal of fighting not to be reborn in a lower situation, having gained any kind of benefit, one begins the spiritual scope. As explained, for the intermediate scope being, temporarily being free from lower beings’ miseries is not enough. Achieving higher birth is not enough. Realizing that any kind of samsatic life is impure and in the nature of suffering, and then wanting complete emancipation from that for oneself, is the intermediate scope. Then, wanting complete freedom not only for oneself but for others too, and mainly seeking to accomplish that, makes one a being of great scope.

There are three different levels or scopes, and it is important especially for us who are following Buddhist teachings and following the teachings based on these scopes, to know what is needed and what must be avoided in order to accomplish the goals of each scope. On each level, it is important to know how to accomplish one’s spiritual goals, and then engage mainly in doing that. Within the third scope too, when achieving those goals for oneself is not important and one is concerned mainly for others, one needs to know what one has to do mentally to bring that about. One needs to know what kind of action, what methods and what path should be taken.

For us who are interested in Buddhism, we have to first thoroughly learn and study these areas. Other- wise, blind faith will not bring us to these. For the one who wants to study and understand. First you have to learn the middle path, and then examine and analyze. Finally when those things come into one’s own mind, the mind accepts them into practice; this is what we call meditation.

According to Buddhism, it is important to first study one’s own mind, and then practice, practice, practice, over and over again. This is meditation. These spiritual godly observations for this book are obtained through personal hearing. By merely thinking about them, they will not come about. Great detail has been written about this topic. Meditation is required over a long period of time. Many thousands of intelligent people who are interested in investigating and doing all these things. When we study these scopes, we should rejoice that we are seeking things, rather than living in an empty life pursuing the sensual pleasures of a full stomach and a comfortable living place. Even animals can attain these temporary goals. But we have a human life, and not just any human life, but a human life, which is the opportunity to hear all the teachings that are available in the world. Especially in North America there are many teachers and teachers are widely available, and also where one is living, and is involved in—that’s wonderful. It is most rare, so one should be rejoicing. I think that is the purpose of achieving a human life. Here I am basically talking in connection with the teachings of Buddhism, since I myself am a Buddhist person. But we are very fortunate that we have so many choices of special teachings, religious values, and samsatic kinds of groups in different places. Having this is itself a sign of richness. According to these teachings, if one is born as an animal, during that life one cannot utilize anything among these three scopes. Although the teachings and teachers are available in this world, to understand an animal’s life is available. So this is one of the ways one should be rejoicing.

JB: Thank you for these wonderful teachings.

GESHE Sopa is recognized around the world as one of the greatest living masters of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He has taught and advised one of several resident teachers at Geshe Lharampa College and Monsatery which he founded in 1979 in Oregon, Wisconsin, just ten minutes outside of Madison. He is now an Emeritus Professor at the University of Wisconsin where he taught in the Buddhist Studies program for thirty years. Before coming to the United States on the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1982, Geshe Sopa was already famous in Tibet and considered to be one of the nation’s greatest scholars. As such, in 1959, when His Holiness was ready to establish his Geshe degree, Geshe Sopa-la was elected as the first Holiness’ debate partners at His final defense to examine His Holiness’ knowledge. Geshe Sopa-la currently has thousands of students around the world including many of the greats of the Tibetan tradition such as Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Khenur Lobsang Sangay Rinpoche, and Donyo Rinpoche as well as top Western scholars such as Jeffrey Hopkins,rolley Carpenter, and John Makransky among others. Jeffrey Hopkins referred to Geshe Sopa-la as “one of the most famous scholars” and Lama Zopa Rinpoche described him as “a very beautiful example of a Dharma teacher.”

Deer Park sits on sixteen beautiful acres in rural Wisconsin. In

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addition to twice weekly Dharma classes, regular weekend retreats, and the annual five week summer course, Deer Park serves as a center for the preservation of Tibetan culture for the 500+ Tibetans living in Madison.

Since Deer Park is the largest center of Buddhist activity in the Midwest and has such an imminent need for a new temple complex, Geshe Sopa-la instituted the new temple project several years ago to fill this pressing need. Enough money was raised to begin construction in the summer of 2005, but more support is needed. If you would like to learn more about Geshe Sopa-la, Deer Park, or help with the temple project, please go to the Deer Park website at www.deerparkcenter.org or call Deer Park at (608) 835-5572.

THE THREE TYPES OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS

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We hope that these great dharma books plus the many information services we offer—both on our website and in this free newsletter—are of value to you. Your purchases from the Snow Lion newsletter and catalog make possible the continued publication of new books on Tibetan Buddhism.

So, thank you for buying direct from Snow Lion!
Tsechen Kunchab Ling Temple, Seat of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in the United States is delighted to announce that HE Khondung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche has accepted the temple’s request to come to the United States from June 7–17, 2006 to bestow the beginning portion of a very important and historic cycle of initiations known as the Collection of All the Sadhanas. This is the first time that this collection will be bestowed outside of Asia, and the first time that it will be bestowed in English.

The first portion of the Collection of All the Sadhanas, which will be bestowed in June, is known as One Hundred Bari Letsawa Sadhanas, which is also being given for the first time in the West. HE Gyana Vajra Rinpoche is Abbot of Sakya Monastery in Rajpur, India, and the younger son of His Holiness Sakya Trizin.

The Collection of All the Sadhanas is one of the most important initiation cycles in Tibetan Buddhism. This collection of one thousand initiations is an authoritative compendium of initiations for almost all of the short sadhanas of the Sakya, Kagyu, Kadam, Jonang, and Shangba Kagyu Schools, as well as some Nyingma sadhanas.

The Collection of All the Sadhanas was compiled for the first time in the 1800s by the great Jamgon Loter Wangbo, a scholar of the non-sectarian movement. Foreseeing the destruction of libraries, scattering of practitioners, and difficulties that were to come to Tibetan Buddhism in the next century, he traveled throughout Tibet to receive empowerments from the many lamas who held the lineage of initiation and practice for each of the sadhanas, and to collect the texts themselves into a compendium.

Beginning this year, and in following years, additional sections of initiations from this great cycle will be given at Tsechen Kunchab Ling until the transmission of the Collection of all the Sadhanas in the West is complete. A full list of the initiations contained in this cycle is available at www.sakyatemple.org.

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First Bestowing of the Collection of All the Sadhanas in the West

Venerable Geshe L. Sopa and the Deep Park Community of Madison, Wisconsin are pleased to announce the construction of a new temple.

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Chasing Buddha Pilgrimage

with Ven. Robina Courtin

LIBERATION PRISON PROJECT is delighted to offer the SIXTH annual Pilgrimage to INDIA and NEPAL Sunday, Oct. 22 to Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006 Visit the holy places of Lord Buddha in INDIA: Srawasti, Vaishali, Kushinagar, Raigir, Nalanda, Bodhgaya and Sarnath. AND NEPAL: Bodhnath, Swayambunath, Parping and Lumbini.

Daily practices and teachings. The pilgrimage begins with a four day retreat at Kopan Monastery in KATHMANDU. Land cost including meditation retreat from US$3300 plus air to Kathmandu.

INFORMATION FROM: Himalayan High Triks, 241 Dolores Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA Phone (in US): 800 455 9735 / (1) (415) 551 1005 / Fax: (1) (415) 861 2391 / Info@ChasingBuddha.org

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Got News? We’re interested in your Tibetan-related news, articles, and teachings for possible publication in the Snow Lion Newsletter. Please send your articles and news items to the attention of Christi Cox, Newsletter Editor, at christicox@snowlionpub.com.