



## Venerable Khenpo Karma Namgyal

10 of 108

Teachings on *Environmental Guidelines* by His Holiness the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa,  
presented in English  
at Karma Chang Chub Choephel Ling in Heidelberg, November 2009.

“Until I awaken, I take refuge in  
The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.  
Through the goodness of generosity and other virtues  
May I awaken fully in order to help all beings.”

*Lama Dorothea Nett:* “I wish to greet Khenpo Karma Namgyal and welcome him on his first visit to our center. This weekend he will speak about the 108 guidelines given to us by His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje.

*Khenpo Karma Namgyal:* Let me greet you, too, and ask that we pray *The Dorje Chang Lineage Prayer* before beginning our seminar.

### Introduction

There are three vehicles in Buddhism. They are Sutrayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. It is very important in Vajrayana to see our Lama as inseparable with Lord Buddha. This can be misunderstood. These days I don't think that someone who wears the robes and is called a “Lama” is always a Lama. Here, Lama refers to our Root Lama, the teacher we follow. During our times, following His Holiness the Seventeenth Gyalwa Karmapa's advice is our practice. He has shown us easy practices that we can carry out. Therefore we don't have to leave home to practice in a cold cave and needn't go through any difficulties to follow his instructions. In the stories of Jetsün Milarepa, we do not read that his Guru, Marpa Lotsawa, requested him to do any liturgical practices or to practice calm abiding and special insight meditation. Milarepa only did what his Guru told him to do and built houses. In that way, Marpa showed Milarepa the way to become purified of the bad things that he had done in the earlier part of his life. In our life, His Holiness has not only shown us how to save our world, which sounds a bit funny in the small space we inhabit. But if everyone takes care of their

environment, then many small areas in the world will be taken care of and we can return to our natural world. His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa has given us 108 guidelines to follow so that we take care of our environment. If we don't do what we can, especially in the East, then our world will be in peril and become a very difficult place for future generations.

I am from Bhutan and have been living at Karma Lekshey Ling Monastery in Nepal since 1992. Our monastery is near the Swayambunath Stupa. I used to circumambulate the Stupa when I was young and I saw a spring of fresh water flowing from the mouth of a beautiful relief that had been carved into the rock. In the meantime, a house has been built there and not a single drop of water flows from the spring. If we don't take care, I think there will be many difficulties. I don't think any of you have ever seen people fighting for water in Kathmandu. People get up very early in the morning, stand in line to fill their buckets with water, and fight for every drop when they reach the distribution tanks. Twenty or 30 years ago, nobody dreamed that this would happen, but we can see it happening right now. If we don't become considerate of our environment, then I really think that our future is in danger. I can say that I don't think that severe problems will arise if someone shows us how to save our environment. I don't think that there's a water problem in Europe, or?

*Student:* "Not yet."

*Khenpo:* Not yet. Very good. I hope that such problems will never arise. But if we don't take care of the source of water, then problems will come. In *One Hundred and Eight Things You Can Do to Help the Environment*, His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa instructs us that we can speak about environmental issues with our friends or teach our children about it. I think that this is very important. During our weekend together, we will go through the 108 points to help our environment that have been given to us by His Holiness, and everyone is invited to do what they can do.

The preliminary practices are contemplating the preciousness of the human body, impermanence and death, the defects of *samsara* ('conditioned existence'), and *karma* ('the infallible law of cause and effect'). Our human body is very precious, but I don't think that we can use our human body well if our environment isn't good. Our body is comprised of four elements; our blood is water, our flesh is earth, our breath is wind or air, the warmth of our body is fire, and our mind is inside our body. If our elements are good, then we will be healthy and won't get sick. In Tibetan, we say to people we meet, *sKu-khams-bde-po-ying-pä*, which means 'Are the elements of your body well?' We will get sick if our elements aren't balanced. So, if the outer elements of water, earth, air, and fire aren't good, our body won't be good either. Then we won't live long and the second preliminary contemplation will become a reality for us. Following, the defects of *samsara* will appear to us very soon.

If I compare German air with the air in Kathmandu, it's very nice to breathe the air here, especially early in the morning. I came from our new Lekshey Ling Institute in Weißenthurm today. There is very good and fresh air in Weißenthurm. Because of the bad air in most cities, we have to cover our nose when we are there. I think the main reason the air is so bad in many places is because many people don't take care of their environment.

Now the Seventeenth Gyalwa Karmapa is with us and he is instructing us on protecting our environment. In the texts we can read that none of the sixteen previous Karmapas spoke about environmental matters, which means it wasn't a problem until now. Buddhism teaches that we are going into the dark ages, in which people think that they need what they don't need and don't have and that they want more and more after they got what they thought they needed and wanted. People are thus using up all the Earth's resources, so I think it's very important to take care of our environment during these times. If our environment is good, the four elements

will be balanced. Since we depend on the four outer elements, we can live well if they are good, and then our preliminary mind practice will be very good.



Let us now look at the 108 precious points that His Holiness the Seventeenth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, gave us in the *Environmental Guidelines* that he composed, entitled

### ***ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT***

#### **“Ten things you can do to make a difference ...**

**1. Make aspiration prayers.** We make aspiration prayers for all sentient beings. This should also include the Earth, which sustains us and gives us life. We can pray for a more harmonious world, where humans recognize how their actions have harmed the Earth and change their behaviour.”

The first point of making aspiration prayers, which isn’t very difficult, we do by ourselves. In fact, we can practice the first ten points in daily life and can see for ourselves which ones we are able to carry out.

We always make aspirations, which is something like making wishes. Is there a difference between aspirations and wishes?

*Annette:* “*Wunschgebete* in German.”

*Khenpo:* *Wunschgebete*. Normally, when we make wishes, we make wishes for ourselves. In Buddhism, also in *The Seven Points of Mind Training* by Palden Atisha, it is said that we should make *Wunschgebete*, ‘wishing prayers,’ for all sentient beings. His Holiness explains



in detail that it would also be good to think of where sentient beings are living and to include the environment in our aspiration.

As a child, it wasn't easy for me to believe that making aspiration prayers is effective. I doubted that making wishes make them come true, but I had them, too, and worked on accomplishing my aims. My wishes slowly did come true. In fact, aspirations are very powerful. At the annual Great Kagyü Mönlam in Bodhgaya, people from all over the world gather to make wishing prayers. Buddhism teaches *rten-'brel*, 'interdependent origination or the interrelated nature of all things.' Buddhists revere Bodhgaya as the most sacred location on Earth because the Buddha attained enlightenment there. Therefore, we believe that making wishing prayers at the seat of the Buddha's enlightenment is very beneficial and effective. We also believe that dedicating anything good we have been able to do (e.g., being generous or ethical) for the sake of the environment and for peace in the world is more powerful than making wishing prayers.

We need three factors to become enlightened. One is *tshogs-gnyis*, 'the two accumulations' (the accumulation of merit, *bsöd-nams-kyi-tshogs*, and the accumulation of wisdom, *ye-shes-kyi-tshogs*), and one is *smön-lam*, 'the aspiration.' The third is *zhing-khams*, 'pure abodes or realms of buddhas and bodhisattva.' I am sure many of you have heard of the pure realm of Buddha Amitabha, Dewachen (*bde-ba-cän*, 'blissful, pure land'). Before Buddha Amitabha was enlightened, when he was just like us, he made the aspiration prayer that in his land there is no harm and nobody is hurt, that it is easy to be born there, and that the grass is always green, like in Germany. I don't think there are Mercedes Benz cars in Dewachen because cars need petrol, which pollutes the environment. You know, it's not easy to breathe when walking down a busy street in German cities, but it is nice walking along the rivers. In any case, we need the three tools to attain enlightenment and should think about how the *zhing-khams* ('the pure land') should be. Right now our environment is the land that is like the pure realm. So, if we take care of our environment and keep it clean, then that is one of our tools to enlightenment, and it will become a part of *zhing-khams-rgya-ba*, 'the vast pure realm.'

I think the first point of making aspiration prayers is very, very important. I can say that we are always making wishing prayers to solve our problems. If we are a businessman, we pray, "May my business be good." If we are sick, we pray, "May I immediately become free of my sickness." I took my cousin's brother to the Great Bodhanath Stupa in Kathmandu and suggested we make aspiration prayers while circumambulating the sacred site. Afterwards I asked him, "What did you wish for?" He answered, "To pass my exams." We usually make wishing prayers to overcome our present problems or to achieve a short-term aim. Such aspirations aren't bad, but I can say that we should only make a few short-term aspirations and should make more long-term aspirations prayers. I don't know when I will attain enlightenment and when I can help all sentient beings. Sometimes it is very hard for me to even help myself. It says that "Even if you are sick and weak, don't forget to make the aspiration to help others." I think that's very important.

Since I couldn't afford to buy food, I was always hungry as a child. When I was told about helping others at that time, I couldn't imagine that I would be able to do what I am now doing in our monastery. But I made the aspiration to do this kind of work when I was small. Actually, I made three aspirations, to stay in retreat for a long time, to work for monks in monasteries, and to be a teacher. I am able to accomplish the last two, but I don't know when I will be able to stay in retreat for a long time. I think that we didn't really make good aspirations in our past, no matter how good we are now, as mentioned, to be in harmony with all sentient beings. Not all sentient beings are flying in the sky. But they need a place to live

and it should be a very nice place, with a beautiful garden and a comfortable chair. We shouldn't have this wish for ourselves but for all sentient beings. Even though we cannot work for the benefit of all living beings, we can make the aspiration prayer - in advance - to be able to accomplish this goal.

The second point that His Holiness instructs us in *ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT THINGS YOU CAN DO* is to

**“2. Read, discuss, and develop an understanding of environmental issues and how they affect you and your environment.”**

Those persons who are really concerned about the environment are already good, but I don't think that the young or the ambitious people out to make lots of money will remember to save the environment. You can talk about the importance of protecting the environment with good friends, children, brothers and sisters; they will probably listen to you. Let me speak about myself and tell you that about 5 or 10 years ago I wasn't careful and just threw my litter on the street, so my garbage was all over the place. Some of my friends, who cared, showed me where to throw my garbage after they shouted at me, “No, what are you doing?” Slowly I have become used to throwing my trash away properly and now I shout at people who litter the streets, “No, what are you doing?” Lately, I have been picking up thrown-away plastic containers that lie around. I put them in a garbage can and run away real fast. I think we can become accustomed to doing this.

His Holiness tells us that he was born in a small village and that people in that area still lived in the Middle Ages. He said that he never saw a dustbin there, but he never saw garbage either. When I read this, I thought about my childhood in my village and remember that the only garbage we had was the dust - no paper, no plastic, no tin. These days, there is lots of garbage from one breakfast only. A small portion of cheese is wrapped in one plastic. Wew! I don't think that in former times Westerners sold a small portion of butter wrapped in extravagant paper, but that they sold butter by the kilos and customers took care of bringing it home safely themselves. It might seem that we have become very demanding, but I think we have become very lazy. We are very spoiled and cannot turn the clock back, but if we think of disposing our garbage heedfully and speaking about environmental issues with others, then we will have helped to keep our environment clean.

I think that global warming has become a big problem. I don't think the climate has changed in a day or a month but that it has changed slowly, and I don't think that we can turn the clock back to have an agreeable climate that fast. It will take time, but we can speak about this crisis with others. If we do what we can, the crisis can reverse.

It is taught in Buddhism that one day our world will be destroyed by fire and that our sun will become seven times hotter than it is now. I do think that if we aren't careful, the sun will become hotter and hotter and that what is written in some Buddhist texts will come true. Some Buddhist texts state that seven suns will appear in the sky, but I don't think that this will happen in the near future. In any case, it is said that the power of the sun will become seven times stronger than it is now and that everything in our world will then burn. Scientists are confirming that temperatures are rising from one year to the next. It will be very difficult if the temperature continues rising. Then there will be no place for a precious human body to dwell and contemplating the precious human birth will be naught.

The first two points of *Environmental Guidelines* aren't that hard to follow. We can make aspiration prayers, we can discuss environmental issues with people we know, but the third point is a little bit difficult. His Holiness tells us to

**“3. Go vegetarian.** Not only will you practice compassion for all sentient beings, but you will decrease the resources you use up. It takes about 750 liters of water to produce 1 kilogram of wheat, and it takes 100,000 liters of water to produce 1 kilogram of beef.”

It isn't easy to be vegetarian and depends upon our attitude. We can make aspiration prayers that we all become vegetarian. I know that being non-vegetarian isn't good, but it is tastier. I tried to stop eating meat many times and managed for a few days. At the Kagyü Mönlam a few years ago, many people made big mandala offerings to His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa and recited prayers requesting him to live long, to live 100 years. He responded to their request and told them, “If you really want me to live long, become vegetarian. If you become vegetarian, I will live long.” It's a difficult offering, but he left devotees many choices, to either stop eating meat altogether or to reduce their consumption. He left them free to decide if they only had meat once a day in case they were accustomed to having meat three times a day. He offered many other choices, like having meat once a week instead of once every day, etc. His Holiness also mentioned that Vajrayana practitioners don't eat meat on a specific day. My teacher, Venerable Lama Phunstok, was like a tiger and it was as though the sun would not set if he had no meat that day. At the Kagyü Mönlam, His Holiness asked people who agreed to become vegetarian to raise their hand. Lama Phuntsok looked around, saw that nobody had raised their hand, so he raised his hand, and ever since then he has stopped eating meat. Everybody who knows him was shocked to hear this and asked, “What's going on?” At a recent meeting with his attendants, His Holiness explained why he had made this request to the people who were praying that he live long at the Kagyü Mönlam. He said that when he saw many goats being killed in India, goat's meat considered the best there, he couldn't take it, and that's why he made the request that disciples become vegetarian or reduce their consumption of meat as an offering.

In the past, I never thought about this very much because meat is delicious. But when I heard this request, I took it to heart and reduced my consumption. In the meantime, I've become a vegetarian and have been for 6 or 7 months now. Actually, I am known as the second small tiger in our monastery. People who know me are shocked that I have become vegetarian. Khampas, shepherds of East Tibet, have meat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner; it's their only choice. In the West, people have many choices; there's such good bread in Germany. I don't think it's easy to become vegetarian overnight, though, and people who are weak or sick should think of their precious human body and eat meat if it is better for them. Monks and nuns from Tibet and Nepal consumed much meat, but when they heard of His Holiness' request, no more meat is being cooked in monastery kitchens. I heard that Tibetan children who liked to sleep long would not get out of bed unless they were told that barley soup was being served for breakfast. Tibetans are used to eating meat, so it's a treat for Tibetan children to have something else. It's hard not to depend on meat in Tibet, but there are many nice vegetables and good rice available in India and Nepal. So, I think it would be good if we try to reduce our consumption of meat a little bit or become vegetarian if we can. I also heard that people who eat lots of meat catch many diseases and that vegetarians are healthier. Maybe this is the case. It's possible. I don't know.

If we see movies and videos on how animals are tortured and slaughtered for meat, then we will realize how very terrible it is. If we reduce our consumption of meat, less animals will be tortured and killed as brutally as is the case, and, in that way, we will save many lives. I think it's also important to make aspiration prayers not to be born as a fish or an animal at the hands

of a fisherman or butcher. Of course, they will have difficulties making a living if they give up their profession. When I was at the seaside in Thailand last year, I saw how terrible it is to be an animal at the mercy of fishermen and butchers. The sight moved me to slowly give up my habit of being non-vegetarian. If we look around, we will see for ourselves that it's better to become vegetarian. If we only look inside the pot on our kitchen stove or on our plate at the dining room table, I don't think we will give up this habit that easily. We have to think about where the meat comes from. Then it will be easier for us to become vegetarian. We should also make wishing prayers for the animals from the depths of our heart, and not just utter prayers like a parrot that learned how to say a mantra and then pecks at the insects it eats.

Furthermore, His Holiness asks us to

**“4. Live simply.** Practice your Vinaya vows and live as simply as possible, without unnecessary possessions.”

I don't think that everyone can live like a monk or nun. Yet, even they need lots of things, like jackets and shoes. In the past, monks and nuns were only allowed to have 13 things, a towel, 2 robes, an under-robe, etc. If more was given to them, they weren't allowed to keep it but had to give it to a new monk or nun or to somebody in need. I don't think it's possible for lay practitioners to live like monks and nuns, but they can wear the things they have a long time, instead of buying a new coat or outfit every month and throwing the others they have away. Clothes come from plants, and many plants are used to make all the clothes that people wear. I don't think this is good for the environment.

His Holiness speaks about practicing our Vinaya vows, which are the monks' and nuns' disciplinary rules of conduct. It is stated in a Vinaya text that we should wear our robes as long as possible and make pillow covers or blankets out of them or mix them with mud to plaster the walls of new buildings when we can't wear them anymore. That way they are never wasted. Of course, not even the monks and nuns can follow all the rules that were once made for those living in the hot climate of India. They need jackets, especially when they are in Germany during the winter. I only come to Germany in the winter and have to put on many clothes to stay warm. Someone said to me when he saw me dressed to go out in the snow, “You look like a football, oval.” Someone else said to me, “You look square.” I don't like going outside when it's cold because it's so much trouble putting on all those clothes. So, I think these rules apply to the circumstances. The robes worn in India are very light. Many dead bodies would come from the monasteries in Tibet if monks and nuns only wore light robes.

But we use so many things just for decoration or to look nice. Of course, everybody has to decide for themselves what they really need and how much they want to spend for the comfort and luxury they want to have. You can go through your home and see how many things that you have are really necessary and think about the unnecessary things you plan to buy and refrain from buying them. When we live like that, then we are practicing the fourth point.

The fifth point that His Holiness instructs us to do is to

**“5. Educate people on environmental issues.** Whenever possible, teach stories and Buddhist traditions that illustrate harmony between people and nature.”

Now His Holiness tells that we can talk with anybody we know about environmental issues and about how important the environment is for everyone. In this way, we are engaging in mind training practice, which is more important than physical training. The main practice of

mind training is generating and developing *Bodhicitta*, ‘the mind or heart of awakening.’ There is relative and ultimate Bodhicitta mind, which I will speak about briefly.

People have various views, and I can say that the Buddhist view is that the phenomena we see as outside our mind don’t really exist as we perceive them to be. But it isn’t easy to believe that we create appearances. For example, when we aren’t feeling good, have a headache, or see a friend not looking so well, especially when we are angry, we see everything in that light. In contrast, when we are happy, everything we see looks pleasant and good. How things look outside depends upon how we see them from our inside. That’s why in Buddhism the main practice is that of the mind. If our mind is perfect, then the outside will automatically be perfect. I don’t know what Westerners believe, but most people in India believe that the world and living beings were and are created by somebody. In Buddhism, we believe that we make our world, so I think that if we engage in a good mind practice and only do good, then everything in our environment will be good. We believe that the outer world and our inner mind are connected, and therefore it is taught in Buddhism that it’s better to make our mind good before we try to make our environment good. In this, the first point of making aspiration prayers is most important.

Everybody knows that there is a drastic climate change taking place in the world. It is 100% certain that this crisis wasn’t made by a single person, but that all human beings created it. I don’t think that everybody or anybody planned this, but due to being overly attached, working non-stop, and going ahead to satisfy their desires, people caused and are causing the climate change, their attachment being the strongest cause. Due to attachment, many factories have been built, many trees have been felled, many mines are still being exploited, and many forests are still being burned down, which are all factors that bring on global warming. I think you know more about this than I do. I don’t think that people living in the Himalayan countries or in India really think about the climate crisis and therefore they aren’t worried about it, but we all have to take care. Ever since His Holiness the Karmapa addressed this problem, people in the East are concerned and many talk about not throwing trash on the ground, about planting trees, and so forth. I think the West is well-prepared and many people are already doing their best to protect their environment. If people don’t know about the consequences of global warming, then it’s important to inform them. If everyone helps protect the environment, then I think the crisis will reverse and our world will be safe again.

**“6. Don’t litter.** Collect your own waste and dispose of it properly.”

The sixth point is easy for Westerners to practice because there are trashcans in many places, nevertheless, I often do see bottles and plastics lying on the ground in the West. Let me tell the story from our monastery.

Three or four years ago, before His Holiness spoke about environmental issues, we knew how many monks lived in a room by the number of used plastic bottles lying on the ground under their window. Of course, we didn’t know who it was when we only saw a hand throwing a bottle out, but I shouted. When somebody went up and asked them who did this, every one shook their head and answered, “No, no, it wasn’t me.”

His Holiness’ words are very powerful for people in the East and now they are taking care. We also bought containers for waste separation and our monks are well-informed about what to do and what not to do. Of course, we cannot teach everyone in the world what to do, otherwise they might beat us up, but we can tell those people we know to take care. I do this.



**“7. Use less paper.** A lot of trees are cut down simply to produce paper. Even a small choice such as printing on both sides of paper makes a big difference.”

In Tibetan style, when children learn how to write, they use a slate and ashes. They show what they wrote to their teacher and if everything is okay, they erase it. These days, people use so much paper. I think the newspaper industry wastes lots and lots of paper. We can't stop them, but we can reduce the amount of paper we use and thus save trees in the same way as we save livestock by eating less meat. As a child in school, I hardly used any paper. I had a slate and chalk. I remember that I fought a lot with other children about chalk when I had used mine up. I think the old-fashioned methods are better for our environment. We say that we live in very developed societies, but I'm not sure about this because so many things go against the environment.

**“8. Use less plastic.** We use plastic bags for a few hours, sometimes for only a few minutes. However, it takes over 500 years for plastic to completely degrade in a landfill.”

I don't know what people do in the West, but in Kathmandu people only take money along when they go shopping and get plastic bags to carry what they bought home. Then there are so many plastic bags in their garbage. I think Westerners take their own shopping baskets or bags along.

*Student:* “Not always.”

*Khenpo:* I don't know if they use lots of plastic bags, but I know that lots of plastic wrappings are used for butter and for very many things. We should also think about this, if we can. Lots of plastic is used to wrap small portions of cheese, which is really being very wasteful. But I think many things are recycled in the West, which is good.

*Student:* “No.”

*Khenpo:* No? I heard that one truck-load of plastic trash is carried away when one airplane lands. Buying less plastic is one of the things that His Holiness the Karmapa asks us to do. I heard that in the past people used one and the same pot for 25 years to buy cheese and one and the same bottle for 25-30 years to buy wine. In Tibet and Bhutan, everyone has to bring their own cup along when they visit someone. Nowadays, we use a plastic cup and throw it away after having used it once. There is a funny story I want to tell.

Near my village in Bhutan, a group of other villagers were invited to visit the minister. Not knowing how to behave in the presence of a minister, their leader told them to do whatever he did. They agreed and told him, “Okay. We will copy you.” While they sat at the meeting with the minister, the leader's cup fell out of his vest onto the ground and all the villagers threw their cup on the ground. It made a good sound.

*Annette:* “Paper cups would make less noise.”

*Khenpo:* That's good. Whatever the case, I think it's better not to use plastic or paper cups. It's really a bad idea.

I also think that using a nice Kleenex just once is also being very wasteful. Handkerchiefs are better. There weren't even handkerchiefs where I lived when I was young. Children blew their nose on the hem of their mother's long skirt. If a cup was a little bit dirty, their mother would also polish it with the hem of her skirt. And a mother's skirt is always clean, so there's nothing to worry about.

**“9. When making offerings, make healthy choices.** Buy fruit rather than sweets, or plants rather than cut flowers.”

I heard His Holiness say that many people bring him beautiful flowers. But they are expensive, aren't they? Since cut flowers wither after a few days and cost a lot, he said it would be nicer to offer planted flowers. I think this point refers to the many offerings made during a *Tsog-Puja* and that nobody will eat all the sweets and biscuits that are offered on those occasions. Furthermore, many offerings go against the environment, so His Holiness asks us not to offer anything that is unnecessary. In the section on "Protect Forests," he tells disciples that it isn't necessary to offer him money in an envelope, but planting a tree that is good for the environment, no matter where, is a good offering to him. So, we can choose to do that.

The next advice His Holiness gives us is to

**"10. Turn the switch off.** If you see that a light or an electrical device is switched on but no one is there to use it, turn it off."

Number 10 is very easy: When we go to bed, we switch off the light. I don't think there's a big electricity problem in the West as there is in the East. Is there a problem here?

*Student:* "It's huge. That's why we have the nuclear energy plants."

*Khenpo:* Last year, we only had electricity in Nepal for 6 hours a day.

*Ursula:* "We always have energy, but the problem is how we produce it. There's a tremendous problem storing the nuclear waste from the energy plants. If it isn't stored well, nature is contaminated from nuclear radiation for generations and many people become incurably sick and die a painful death."

*Khenpo:* So, use less. There's no nuclear power in the East, where energy is won from water. It's only a money problem for monasteries. When the electricity runs without being used, we have to pay for it. It's good to know that nuclear energy is very bad for health.

*Ursula:* "It is very bad."

*Other student:* "The nuclear catastrophe at Tchernobyl in 1986 is one of the worst catastrophies that ever happened."

*Ursula:* "For tens-of-thousands-of-years that energy plant will radiate and kill and destroy nature and life."

*Khenpo:* Maybe we can make a commentary in this book, because people in the East don't think about the dangers of atomic energy plants. They just think that energy comes from a wire.

*Ursula:* "Energy won from coal isn't better because of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution. Maybe hydroelectric power plants are better, but they endanger the environment, too."

*Khenpo:* So they aren't good either. Technology is always like this. I can say that electricity is really changing our environment. I remember that we had 5-6 inches of snow for 2 or 3 weeks every year in the village where I grew up and we were very happy to see everything covered in white. Nowadays, we are happy to have electricity, but we only have a little bit of snow for 2 or 3 days a year. We are spoiled by electricity. We can use less and switch it off when we don't need it. In that way, we can contribute to protecting our environment, just like we can save livestock from being killed so that we have meat on the table and just like we can spare trees from being felled by using less paper.

*Ursula:* "I heard on my car radio on the way here that our minister for economy said that we shouldn't take too much care of the environment because it doesn't benefit the economy. If we consume less, the unemployment rate rises."

*Khenpo:* Maybe we should all become farmers.

*Ursula:* "You can say this for Nepal, but there are 82 million people living in the small country of Germany."

*Khenpo:* His Holiness isn't just giving advice in *Environmental Guidelines*, but he is living by them. For example, many people from all over the world come to the Kagyü Mönlam for many days in Bodhgaya every year. To prevent the use of plastic bottles, nobody is allowed to buy bottled water during this time; everyone has to go to the tanks to fill their jug with filtered water. Also, many rikshas have to drive the visitors back and forth to the Mahabodhi Temple and their hotel within a few minutes, which makes it very hazardous for children and elderly pedestrians. Since many have been killed, His Holiness ordered that no visitors of the Mönlam may use a riksha and now everybody walks. To avoid dust being stirred during this time, tractors sprinkle the roads with water before and after a session. The monks and nuns walk in lines and look very nice. Maybe this isn't profitable for the riksha business, but it is better for the people. If the members of the Heidelberg center and of the centers in Hamburg and Kamalashila take care of their communities, then there will be more help.

I don't think that I'm really teaching during this seminar, but it is good that we are exchanging our knowledge, just like Ursula said that the source of electricity in Western countries is very bad. We have no idea about this in Nepal and Bhutan, so I can tell my people about this problem when I return home. We don't have nuclear plants, but I heard a lot about the danger of nuclear power in Iran and North Korea.

*Ursula:* "The radioactive fallout from the catastrophe in Ukraine spread over Europe. We can't even eat mushrooms anymore. People are still dying because of this atomic catastrophe. There are many nuclear energy plants in France, Germany, Denmark, etc., and they are very dangerous."

*Khenpo:* Maybe we can comment on this on our website, because in monasteries we only think about the money to pay the bill for the running electricity meter. So, our discussion here is the third Kagyü environmental conference, held in Heidelberg. At the conferences with His Holiness, participants don't bring their comments forward, so it's good that we are talking about these matters.

All points that His Holiness made are very important, and we do what we can. I can say that it's very good practice to follow the ten points, because following the Guru's advice is the way of a Vajrayana practitioner.

There's a story I want to tell, but I can't tell the whole story because the language isn't acceptable for everyone. A student of a Tibetan Lama was told to repeat a word that was the mantra of his Lama. The word was rather profane, so the disciple's family could not be around him when he did because they were shy. Shortly before he died, he told his family that his master had prepared him well, and he died smiling.

We won't be able to discuss all 108 points that His Holiness gave us in *Environmental Guidelines*, but we can practice the first 10 points in our daily life. We can take our baskets along when we go shopping, have coffee from a porcelain cup, and use a handkerchief or the sleeves of our new shirt to blow our nose. It's very good if you have any suggestions.

*Student:* "I remember that 30 years ago parents still used cloth diapers that they washed, and nowadays they buy huge packages of throw-away diapers for their babies."

*Khenpo:* Very good.

*Other student:* "I have to contradict. I tried to use cloth diapers for my two babies, but I used much detergent, energy for the washing machine, lots of water, plus my manpower, and all the diapers hanging in my small flat didn't make it easy for me. And they were still yellow afterwards. On the other hand, I don't have a car and bring everything I need home on my bicycle, thus contributing to environmental protection. But glass bottles are really heavy and

splitter when they have fallen down. So, buying plastic bottles is better for me to bring home on my bike. I like to read and need light when I read after dark.”

*Khenpo:* I think we need to look at the situation. We don't have to stop doing things we do all at once, but we can reduce our consumption and use less. His Holiness isn't saying that we may not turn on the lights, rather, he is asking us to turn off the light when we don't need it. In *The Bodhicharyavatara*, Shantideva tells us that it isn't possible to practice all six paramitas, but that practitioners should see which paramita is more important and practice it, e.g., morality and generosity. He taught that practicing morality is more important than practicing generosity, but if being generous helps others more, we practice that. We do what we can, and we can survive if we use less. Now we will talk a little bit about forest protection.



His Holiness tells us on page 5 of *Environmental Guidelines*: “Forests are necessary for life – both human and animal.” He therefore requests that we

### **“PROTECT FORESTS**

**“11. When a new monk or nun joins the monastery or nunnery, have them plant a tree sapling as part of their commitment to serve the world. Their commitment should be to take care of the sapling until it becomes a tree.”**

People living in cities with lots of high-risers and technology probably won't think about forests and many of their children might never have had the chance to see one. When I was in Taiwan last year, I was told that people living in some parts of the island are very scared. Scientists are telling us that the Taiwanese will have a big problem if people don't take care of the forests in the Himalayas and don't stop cutting down the trees there. Even if we don't think about it, our world is very connected. Taiwan is thousands of miles away from Nepal, but half of Taiwan will be lost because of all the trekking in the Himalayan Mountain Range and all the plastic bottles people throw into the countryside. This is a very scary perspective. The people living in the Himalayan countries aren't scared or concerned about this, but we have to think of each other. There probably won't be much of an effect on Deutschland when trees are felled, but it might affect other countries. I think we need to think like that.

For example, the enormous earthquakes and hurricanes that are destroying cities in the United States make it very hard for people to live there. Since we are human beings, we only think that humans will experience difficulties due to such catastrophes. But often I think that animals experience the same kind of disaster when we destroy an ant hole or cut down a tree. We should think about this before doing such unnecessary things.

In our monastery at Karma Lekshey Ling, the last two years I have been teaching *Vinaya*, one of the three parts of the Buddha's teachings on the discipline and moral conduct that is the foundation for all Dharma practice. Of course, during the Buddha's time there was surely no

cement, so the monks used bricks and timber to build monasteries. The teachings state not to just cut a tree down, but to make little cuts to see if someone is living in a tree. When a tree is cut slowly, sounds can be heard and signs can be seen, like the bleeding of sap. If we notice this, we should stop chopping at the tree. The Vinaya texts, that are more than 1000 years old, state that those trees are homes for local deities, but we are very bold these days and just fell them. I think our karmic connections are inconceivable.

The texts also state that there are beings living in fire, but we cannot believe this because we think fire burns and destroys everything. We would die if we had to live in fire or in ice or cold water, but we can see that many animals live there. We can see that many fish live in rivers and lakes. I've never been to Tibet, but I read many Tibetan texts about this and remember the small lake near my village in Bhutan. Because they feared that beings living there would become angry and because they believed that they would then harm them, people living in former times didn't even dare throw a stone into a river or lake. They didn't even touch the water in such a disrespectful manner, so waters were always protected. I think that way of protecting the environment in former times was very good, but nowadays people are bold and many lakes are drying as a result.

I can really say that local deities live in water. I have a friend who is a monk. He is engaged in the methods of practice to do a lot for water. There is a lake near his village that has already dried, so there is no water. He filled a *klu-bum*, a 'Naga vase,' with mantras, did a puja, and said to the water spirits, "Now is the time for you to return. This area is for you. We will take care of your house, so please come back." The area became filled with water again. He is very good at doing that.

As mentioned, we live in the world and it is our home. Lice that are in my hair think my head is their home. Even if you don't believe in local deities, I am 100% sure that there are living beings all over the world who feel that it is their home. I think that if we are all good and benevolent toward each other, then nature will be at peace. If we protect the local deities' homes, they will protect our house. If we disturb them, they will respond accordingly and harm us. So, even if we aren't involved with forestry, we can use less wood and material won from trees.

As stated in the 11<sup>th</sup> point: "When a new monk or nun joins the monastery or nunnery, have them plant a tree sapling as part of their commitment to serve the world. Their commitment should be to take care of the sapling until it becomes a tree." I had this done at Karma Lekshey Ling. One monk often returns to our institute to check how the tree he planted is doing. When we built our *Shedra* ('monastic university'), I couldn't plant all the trees alone on the new ground reserved for this purpose. I told our students that I would buy the saplings that they were allowed to choose and plant. I promised to have their name engraved on a metal plaque and would attach it to the tree they planted and tended. We have to replant the trees when we erect a new building. Even when our students and monks replant their tree somewhere else on our small compound, they are taking care of their tree. In the meantime, the area around our retreat center above Lekshey Ling has become a small forest. Since the land is very expensive, there isn't enough space for a big forest that belongs to our monastery. Of course, in the West there are only few monks and His Holiness instructs us that the monk and the sapling should grow up together. But if you have a child and a place to plant a tree that can grow well, you can do this and tell your child, "This is your tree." When they have grown up, I'm sure they will be happy to see their tree.



Due to the limited time at our disposal this weekend, I don't think that we can finish all 108 points of *Environmental Guidelines*, so I will tell a short story. It is the custom in Tibet to recite a specific long text at a sponsor's home from the *Kangyur* (*bka'-'gyur*, the 'Translated Words' of Buddha Shakyamuni). Two monks spoke on one of those occasions, the one saying, "You have almost finished reading the text. It's still early, so we can talk a little bit." They chatted a short while and then the monk continued reading. In the afternoon, the same monk remarked, "The sun is about to set and you have finished reading, so let's talk a little bit." Like that, we can practice the first ten points. The third one of being vegetarian might be difficult, but we can reduce our consumption of meat. We can choose from the other points and practice them. Now I want to speak about the 20<sup>th</sup> point.

**"20. Use sacred occasions to carry out environmental activities, such as tree planting."**

As monasteries do this more often, the connection between Buddhism and environmental protection will become clearer to the general public."

Normally, many prayers are recited and much food is offered at bigger celebrations in monasteries or Buddhist centers. Of course, we continue this tradition, but on designated days we can form a group and plant trees on land that is free. People might become angry with us, but I'm sure nobody will shout at us if we are out collecting garbage. This May, we sent all our monks to collect the garbage around the Swayambunath Stupa and loaded it on a jeep and a truck. Because there are many monkeys in the surrounding forest, the Swayambunath Stupa is sometimes called "the monkey temple," so on that day there was the brown monkey group and the red monk group. People were really shocked and wondering what we were doing. Everyone throws their garbage on the ground in Nepal, so we were able to collect two truck-loads full from just that small area. We cannot do this for all of Kathmandu, which is too big, and we wouldn't know where to discard the rubbish if we did.

People who aren't able to burn old prayer flags, for instance, even bring a truck-load of them to us to burn in our monastery. I think it's good to hang prayer flags in the mountains, but who will take care of them after they have become torn by the wind? Prayer flags are called *rlung-rta* in Tibetan (translated as 'wind horse,' bringing all aspects of luck and fortune). They are used for two purposes, one to benefit all sentient beings and one to remove own business obstacles. I think it would be better to use less of the later kind because it's too much. Of course, the cloth comes from plants.

In any case, some people who saw us collecting the garbage were really shocked, while others were very happy. Our monks received many complements on that day. We can't tell all people in Kathmandu to take care of their own garbage, so this activity may have taught many people that it's not good to throw litter on the ground and in the bushes. Most people in the West are well-educated, and it's very good that they throw their garbage in one of the many trash cans that are available. But many people just don't care.

I think it's really important to form a group and announce on which day you will clean a specific area. It's not good to do cleaning more than two hours. We see that if our monks spend two whole days cleaning, then they will sleep for three days afterwards. Sometimes they catch a cold when it is too hot and rains. They have to hand in an attestation for missing the pujas and courses and a bunch of attests are submitted after the days that they spent cleaning. Two or three hours are enough, but I don't think you will get sick if you work here all day.

Let's jump to points 25-33, in which His Holiness asks us to

## **“PROTECT WILDLIFE**

**“Teach local communities to feel reverence for all life.**

**If you are in a heavily forested area, protect existing wildlife.**

**Learn about the wildlife that exists in your area.** Include these animals in your aspiration prayers and in your teachings.

**If you know of people who hunt in your surrounding communities, advise them against killing endangered species.** Some animal species are on the verge of disappearing from the face of the Earth forever due to human society. It is our duty to prevent this.

**If you know of people who are involved in illegal wildlife trade, ask them to stop.**

**Don’t buy fur or other endangered animal products.** By buying these things, you are personally contributing to the extinction of an entire species.

**If you can influence local communities to give up wearing the fur of tigers and leopards, do so.**

**Think twice before using traditional medicines.** Although we are vegetarian, we often consume meat products when we take traditional medicines. Even worse, many of these medicines are made from endangered animal products. This is a serious problem. Look for an alternative before taking medicines like that.”

In Tibet, many people wear lots of fur from leopards or tigers to show that they are rich or they pay lots of money to decorate their homes with elephant tusks. There are many people who kill animals as a source of livelihood, and I think we should not want to own things like that. I heard that a few years ago His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche requested people in East Tibet not to wear fur coats. Eastern Tibetans have great faith in Tai Situ Rinpoche. They listened to him and burned any fur they had. I don’t think Westerners wear furs, or?

*Ursula:* “There have been strong protests and big campaigns, so less people wear furs now.”

*Khenpo:* I think Westerners wear leather shoes. But I think they aren’t aware of where it comes from. Just as we think that meat comes from the pot, they think that fur coats and leather shoes come from the shop where they bought them. I think that if people have an idea of how fur is won, they will refrain from buying fur coats and hats. For example, tourists in Nepal buy silk Pashmina shawls that are actually made in Kashmir. I think that silk is terrible, but I don’t know what isn’t terrible, actually. We must see what is less terrible and choose those products. I watched a T.V. film on how Pashmina is made. Producers throw the living insects into a machine that kills them and take out what they need to spin the silk thread. Tibetans use lots of silk brocade to frame the sacred paintings. I think we should reduce using that, too, because it harms many animals. Of course, we’re not living in the Middle Ages or during the times of the Buddha, when monks wore the same simple robe for many years. We have to wear clothes to keep warm, but we also wear clothes to show off that we have something new and better.

We can talk about matters like this with our children and friends. Of course, children who are very scornful won’t listen to us, but I’m sure that one day they will think back. For instance, I don’t know how many people really understand what His Holiness the Dalai Lama teaches. Last year I transcribed one of his lectures and 99% is Madhyamika philosophy. I think that even though people do not understand, maybe they will recall what he said a few years later and will then try to find out what he spoke about. In the same way, even if people don’t listen to us, maybe some day they will turn their mind to the good way.

Some people say that the horn of rhinoceros is very valuable and buy them from hunters. Many people are superstitious and buy this horn as a good luck charm, but I don’t think it will

work if they don't have the karma. Let me tell the story of a poor practitioner living in Bhutan who practiced Zhambhala, the deity of wealth and fortune. He practiced for many years, but nothing happened. He became really angry and tied a rope around the neck of the statue of Zhambhala and dragged it around. The statue spoke to him and said, "Please, don't do that." The poor practitioner replied, "I meditated you so long, but nothing came. Why do you behave like that?" The statue answered, "How can I bless you if you don't rely on yourself?" The statue told him, "Plant a seed and compare the plant that you tended with others when it has grown." The poor practitioner did as told and saw that his plant was totally different. Blessings work like that and have nothing to do with stupid thoughts, e.g., that luck is granted from the horn of a rhinoceros. We have to pray and make a connection by helping the poor and needy, not by hanging lots of prayer flags in a tree like a businessman. Then we will experience the real wind horse, the energy of luck and good fortune.

His Holiness then tells us,

**"33. Don't buy coral.** Coral is a living organism found in the world's oceans; it provides a home for other living things such as fish and crabs. Due to global warming, coral species are already under great threat, and if they disappear, much of the biodiversity in the oceans will be gone. We should be aware of all our actions and be careful of what our material desires result in."

I think this point is very important. I saw photos and videos of Tibetan men and women wearing heavy headdress consisting of precious stones weighing 2 or 3 kilos and 5 or 6 kilos of valuable ornaments on their body. I think all of you know where coral comes from, but I don't think there is any left in the oceans. Are they finished?

*Ursula:* "Pollution has harmed them greatly and then the fish that live in coral die too.

*Khenpo:* It's the same as when the trees die. Then we have no air and experience difficulties. I think it's the same for fish in the coral. I think gold also comes from the ocean, no?

*Ursula:* "It is washed down from mountains through rivers."

*Khenpo:* I think maybe in former times. Once I asked Venerable Thrangu Rinpoche where the Jewel Island is located that the ancient scriptures say existed hundreds of thousands of years before Lord Buddha took birth. There is the story of a merchant travelling to Jewel Island and collecting gold, jewels, and precious gems. I asked Rinpoche, "Where is that island?" He answered, "Yes, there is a story like that, but, but they didn't make a map, so I don't know." I talked about this with a woman from Taiwan who lives in Seattle. She told me that in former times gold was found along the beaches of Taiwan. I don't know the situation about gold, but *mu-tig* ('pearl') definitely comes from fish. In any case, it's better not to buy anything that comes from animals, even if it is very special. Now I will speak about the next section.

His Holiness instructs us in points 34-41 to

### **"CONSERVE RIVERS, LAKES, AND WETLANDS**

**"Don't throw garbage into rivers.** Recognize that rivers continue thousands of miles further and may be the only source of drinking water for millions of people.

**In areas near a water source, designate a boundary and keep the area clean of wastes.**

**Keep cattle and other livestock away from the actual water source.** Livestock and feces are often the reason for bacteria in water that lead to waterborne diseases.

**Plant vegetations on the banks of rivers to protect them and to improve the quality of the water.** Lakes and rivers that are covered with green algae are suffering from too many

nitrates which are found in fertilizers. Protect them by planting river reeds and plants that are found in that area naturally.

**If monastic grounds are used for farming, encourage organic farming using few pesticides and fertilizers.** Instead, promote the use of manure and compost products. Most pesticides and fertilizers are washed away into nearby water areas when it rains.

**Protect nearby wetlands from agricultural expansion.** One way to tell if wetlands are healthy is by counting how many different types of birds exist there.

**Recreate wetlands.** Wetlands are nature's filtering system for polluted water. If you used to have marshes in surrounding areas, allow for some water diversion and plant locally found wetland plant species.

**If building a connecting-road, do not place it over a river.** Most of the sediment will end up in the water, making it too cloudy for fish to live."

I can't say much about lakes because there are none near where I live. I don't know about India and it's certainly not the case in the West, but I can see in Nepal and Bhutan that people wash their clothes in rivers. While people living higher up use the river as a bathroom, those living a little bit further down drink the water from the same river. These people aren't educated very well and only think of themselves. I hardly eat anything at the Indian border and when I do, I wonder what kind of water the bakers used for their biscuits. I'm sure they didn't filter the water because they don't take the time.

All 108 points that His Holiness taught are important. If you can put them into practice, then you do; if you can't, then you are free to do what you can and can talk about them with friends. I will now jump to the next points that deal with caring for water. We are in a Dharma center and when you are in your house, you can follow the guidelines that His Holiness offered in the points 42-52. They are:

### **"CONSERVE WATER IN YOUR MONASTERY**

**"Turn off the taps while brushing your teeth.** You will save up to 10 liters of water every day.

**Fill up a bottle of water and put it in your toilet cistern.** This automatically saves water when the toilet is flushed.

**Fix dripping taps.**

**Repair broken or leaking pipes.**

**Using a bucket instead of a shower to bathe will save a lot more water.** Similarly, use a bucket to wash clothes instead of a running tap.

**Use water filters rather than bottled water.** Instead of using plastic bottles in meetings, use jugs of filtered water.

**Install a solar-run water filter to provide water continuously.**

**Fill the kettle only with the amount of water you need.** This will also use less energy.

**In dry areas, harvest rain water.** Capture some of the rain that falls on your roof by connecting a water barrel to a downpipe. This water can be used in the garden.

**In dry areas, water the (...) gardens in the early morning or late evening.** This will allow most of the water to be absorbed by the soil rather than evaporating in the midday heat.

**Reuse the water that is offered on all monastery altars (...)** by using the water from offering bowls for watering gardens and plants."

There is a big water problem in Nepal. I think most of the water in Nepal and India is pumped up from the ground, but in Germany it flows down from the mountains, or?

*Ursula:* “Yes, from lakes, like the Bodensee or Lake Constance. I think that the water in the Rhein River is purified in special facilities.”

*Khenpo:* I think it’s good to have the water that flows down from the mountains. Much expensive electricity is used to pump water up from the ground. I think we need to use water heedfully. I think that nowadays there is less drinking water available in the world.

*Ursula:* “It is said that the water we use to clean the floors of our home has the quality of drinking water. There is a discussion going on to change this, because it’s being very wasteful with good water.”

*Khenpo:* I see. Water is a very big problem. I think that everyone living in developed and less developed countries must think of their environment and care for it. Of course, we are only a small group here, but learning about this is very good.

Nepal is a poor country, so people don’t have air-conditioners, like the people living in Thailand. I don’t think air-conditioners are good for the environment because all the dirty air is blown out. I told a friend in Bangkok, “Because there aren’t enough facilities, Nepalese don’t take care of their garbage and just dump it out their window. But in developed countries, people blow out all the dirty air inside their houses, so it is very warm outside.” He said to me, “Shut up.” There isn’t a need for air-conditioners in Germany. Here people need heaters. But some places in India are very, very hot, around 40 or 50 degrees Celsius in the summer.

In points 53-64 His Holiness asks us to

### **“ADOPT GREEN DESIGN**

**“In cold climates, design new buildings to face south** so that rooms most used during the evening have the most light and heat during the winter. Create large windows to maximize light and heat.

**In hot climates, use shading to cool down buildings.**

**In hot climates, use climbing plants.** (...) This will create a large and cool air between the sunlight and the wall.

**Plant a ‘green roof.’** (...) A green roof will cool down the building because the plants will absorb the sun’s rays.

**Using light colors on roofs can make a big difference.**

**Design classrooms and workrooms to face east** so they will benefit from early morning light.

**Landscape around new buildings** (...) to provide summer shade and winter sun.

**Maximize the use of natural light** (by painting) walls in light colors.

**Plant trees or hedges around monasteries and between them and the road.** The vegetation will capture most of the dust from the road before it reaches the building.

**Line the roads that lead to monasteries with trees** to purify the atmosphere.

**Create your own vegetable gardens.** It is important from both a health and an environmental perspective to eat more leafy green foods. Growing your own vegetables will also help young monks and nuns realize the interdependence of ourselves and nature.

**Plant fruit trees.** (...) Plant fruit trees that are naturally found in that area and were grown by our ancestors.”

We can talk to people about these points. We can also plant a small garden, not for decorative purposes, though. We can plant vegetables or fruit trees. I grew up in a small village and, since we didn’t have a refrigerator, we always had fresh food. When we needed onions or radishes, we went into the garden and picked them. I think Ursula knows that we have a small



plot of land between the buildings of our monastery. I like chilli, so I planted very hot chilli on this land. I can't plant everything there, but I planted a lot. Before the bell is rung announcing our noontime meal, some young and small monks go to our vegetable garden and eat pure chilli peppers before lunch. I think, if possible, we can plant a small garden. We will have natural exercise if we work a little bit in our garden. Then we needn't pay a high price to exercise in a gym, sweating our heads off while using the apparatus. Most farmers have a healthy body. The book by His Holiness inspired me to plant more in our monastery next year.



Let us jump to the next points of *ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT THINGS YOU CAN DO*, numbers 65-78. His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa wrote:

### **“SAVE ENERGY AND BECOME CARBON NEUTRAL**

**“Personally plant a tree.** A single tree can absorb more than a ton of carbon dioxide in its lifespan and produces enough oxygen for a family of four.

**Plant bamboo trees.** Bamboo stores more carbon dioxide and generates more oxygen than other tree species.

**Carpool!** (...) Share one vehicle instead of taking several.

**Use energy-efficient lighting.** How can you tell whether a bulb is insufficient? If you feel heat when you place your hand near it, most of the energy it produces is in heat rather than in light.

**Use lighting efficiently in main shrine rooms**

**Place lamps in the corner of the room.** They will reflect more light than if they are positioned centrally or along a wall.

**Use rechargeable batteries.**

**Shut down your computer at night.**

**Unplug chargers or other electronic devices when not in use.**

**Give your old (mobile) phone to someone else or recycle it.**

**When buying a computer (...), consider a laptop.** (It) consumes 90% less energy than a desktop computer.

**For dark rooms on the top floor or in the shrine rooms, set up sun pipes.** Sun pipes are like sheltered chimneys with reflection interior surfaces that direct light from the outside into dimly lit areas in a building.

**Use solar energy in areas where sunlight is plentiful and consistent.**

**Explore the possibility of wind energy.”**

I think these points are easy to understand. Even though they are easy to understand, I will explain them a little bit.

It looks like His Holiness wrote number 67, “Carpool!” for people in the West and not for people in the East. He is suggesting that people going in the same direction or who have the same destination don’t drive alone in their car but do car-sharing. In the East, meaning India or Nepal, it’s impossible to go anywhere alone in a car. Sometimes I ride a bike and when I was once stuck in a traffic jam, I saw a man on his scooter with two children sitting in the front and his wife sitting on the seat behind him. If you come to Nepal, you will see this very much. I think only very few people in the East sit in a car all by themselves. When I was in Seattle two years ago, I learned that there are two separate lanes on the freeway, one for people driving alone in their car and one for cars with more passengers, so the later is less congested. I laughed a lot when I heard about a man who managed to use the lane with less traffic by placing a dummy on the passenger seat. He finally got caught, though. People in Germany are usually alone in their cars. His Holiness advises us to think twice before buying a new car for a monastery because it’s also very expensive in usage. I don’t have a car, so I’m spared. He also tells us in classrooms to only have lights on the teacher, which helps students listen to what the teacher is saying. This leaves the students in the darker part of the room, which makes it easier for the lazy ones to sleep without being noticed. When I was young, I always sat behind a pillar to hide from the teacher. If there was no pillar, I always tried to sit behind the biggest monk in the room and felt safe there.

There are special public waste cans for used batteries in the West, which is very good. This isn’t the case in India, where people just throw their highly toxic used batteries in their everyday garbage. I remember that we used to chew and bite on radio batteries when they were low, until they worked again for two or three more hours. There are so many practical apparatus on the market, so His Holiness recommends that we buy rechargeable batteries. Furthermore, we shouldn’t leave the adapter plugged in if we aren’t recharging a battery.

Cell phones have become like our second heart, i.e., memory. I remember an advertisement on radio that went like this: “Recharge your battery to remember your girlfriend’s birthday, otherwise you will get into trouble.” We are really spoiled by our cell phones. We don’t even remember our own phone numbers anymore. I was locked out of the house in Hamburg last year, shivering in the cold, and my key, my handy, and my money were inside. I didn’t know anybody in the neighbourhood, so I was very happy to find 10 Euro in my pocket. I wanted to call friends but I didn’t have their numbers in my memory; all their numbers were stored in my handy. I went to a stationery shop, bought a piece of paper and a pen, and placed a note on the door of the house where I would be waiting for them.

It is very cold in Tibet and people there don’t have heaters. Their homes have small windows, so they use many butter lamps when reading prayers after dark. Unless necessary, I don’t

think it's very useful to light many butter lamps. We can use less of them in the West. Venerable Lama Phuntsok has built many monasteries and always designed big windows. I think it's a good idea. I like the roof-top and wall-to-wall windows in the West because they provide much light. Tibetans also offer more butter lamps because not many flowers grow in Tibet, while Westerners offer more flowers. Maybe we can offer potted plants, which would make a big difference. As said, Lama Phuntsok built our monastery, so one Tibetan Lama asked him to build his monastery, too. He designed the monastery with big windows and the Lama from Tibet said, "We will die in the cold." Big windows aren't suitable for monasteries in Tibet, because it would really be too cold. – Thank you very much.

### **Dedication Prayers**

Through this goodness, may omniscience be attained  
And thereby may every enemy (mental defilement) be overcome.  
May beings be liberated from the ocean of samsara  
That is troubled by waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

By this virtue may I quickly attain the state of Guru Buddha and then  
Lead every being without exception to that very state!  
May precious and supreme Bodhicitta that has not been generated now be so  
And may precious Bodhicitta that has already been never decline but continuously increase!

May the life of the Glorious Lama remain steadfast and firm.  
May peace and happiness fully arise for beings as limitless in number as space is vast in its extent.  
Having accumulated merit and purified negativities, may I and all living beings without exception  
swiftly establish the levels and grounds of Buddhahood.

### **The Long Life Prayer for H.H. the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje**

Naturally arising Dharmakaya, unchanging and ever-present,  
Karmapa, you appear as the form kayas' magical illusions.  
May your three secret vajras remain stable in the realms  
And your infinite, spontaneous activity blaze in glory.



*Environmental Guidelines* by His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, was published by Tsurphu Labrang, the Karmapa's Office of Administration, Dharamsala, India (2008) and is available on His Official Website, [www.kagyuoffice.org](http://www.kagyuoffice.org). Photos of an afternoon excursion in Annette Bungers' VW to Heiligenberg ('Mt. of the Saints'), an ancient Celtic ritual ground with an arena the size of a football stadium. The site, which is situated on the outskirts of Heidelberg, dates back farther than the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Having

tackled the steep climb up the more contemporary Philosophers' Walkway, view of Heidelberg with the Neckar River flowing below. Thank you, Khenpo, for the wonderful teachings and the photos of our field-trip into European history. Special thanks to Annette (seen on the photo with Khenpo) for her excellent, simultaneous translation into German of the teachings that Khenpo offered in English. Wonderful thanks to Lama Dorothea Nett for having arranged this most special seminar and for having made the recording available to us. Photo of squirrel taken and offered by a friend. Photo of dainty gentian taken in Pokhara, Nepal, by Ursula Bollinger and kindly offered for Khenpo's article. The seminar was transcribed, edited slightly, and arranged by Gaby Hollmann, responsible and apologizing for any mistakes. All persons and institutes mentioned here have copyright for their contribution. Khenpo's article is made available for personal use only by his Dharma Download Project at Karma Lekshey Ling Institute in Kathmandu, by Karma Chang Chub Choephel Ling in Heidelberg, and by Karma Sherab Ling in Münster; it may not be reproduced in any form nor be published. All rights reserved. Munich, 2009.