

**Kalmyk Brotherhood Society of America
Religious Classes
Sunday, January 8, 2006
Class #1**

Teacher: Garav Suren (“Young Manya”)

Materials:

Papers with prayers that can be said at home were passed out to the class. More copies will be made available at the next and subsequent classes.

Opening:

“When we learn things here during our lessons, it is good for us to leave and remember. It is not like here in America, where you have a ‘money back guarantee’. If we don’t ask questions and talk to the Manya’s, we will never learn anything. If you have any questions, just ask me and I will try to tell you what I know.”

On practicing two different religions:

- **It is difficult to explain, but it is difficult for you to practice two religions. It is hard to go one way and then another. But, I wouldn’t say that if you practice another religion you shouldn’t also practice Buddhism.**

Main explanation of Buddhism:

- **When you hear Lamas explain what Buddhism is, it is mainly about action and result. If you have good actions, the results are good. That is the main explanation for Buddhism.**
- **It is good to study the basics at first. If you build a house, you have to build the base. Faith is the foremost important thing. That Buddha is true, and right, and know that you will follow Buddha’s teachings – the Dharma.**

Questions:

Why do we always pray in threes?

A. It is true that we always pray in threes, but we also pray in multiples of seven as well. Twenty-one is also good.

Q. But why is three significant?

A. In Buddhism we have Body, Speech and Mind. During prostration, our hands are first above our head, this signifies the Mind. When our hands are at our throat, this signifies the Speech. When our hands are in front of our heart or our body, this signifies the Body. The Body, Speech and Mind stand for the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma. This is known as the Three Jewels.

- **Buddha’s teachings come to us through our Manya’s and the prayers they recite.**

- **Tsongkhapa is who the Temple is named after. We Kalmyks, Mongolians and Tibetans have always followed the Gelug or “Yellow hat” sect of Buddhism, which is the youngest sect of Buddhism.**
- **The four schools of the Buddhism we practice and follow are: the Nyingma; the Kagyu, or “Black Hat”, of which the Karmapa is the highest recognized scholar; the Sakya; and the Gelug, or “Yellow Hat”. Each of the four schools are different because of method, but their wisdom is the same.**
- **The Dharma (or teachings) is what holds you from fear, dangers and delusions.**
- **As Buddhists we practice compassion, tolerance and patience. The most important thing is that you practice these good virtues.**
- **Buddhist teaching is that at some point we were all each other’s mother, therefore how could you ever hurt someone who might have been your mother? You have to allow or practice to let loving kindness grow in your mind. Starting with a little bit of compassion will help you to grow.**
- **Think of Buddha as a skillful doctor. The Dharma is the medicine. The Manya is the nurse.**
- **Lifetime to lifetime there is an intermediate state, which is what we call the 49 days after death. During these 49 days, you are in a magical, intermediate state. The first 7 days, your mind is free. The second 7 days, your mind finds or becomes a temporary spiritual being/body. By the 49th day, you will have found your new physical body.**
- **Lama Tsongkhapa teaches us that we need to make the distinction in the universe between three levels of positivity.**
 - **First level – self liberation, when someone is thinking only about him/herself.**
 - **Second level – think I am ok, I am doing a good job, but what about the other people? Thinking about him/herself and others.**
 - **Third level – someone who completely forgives self liberation and practicing and working towards the benefit of ALL sentient beings. That is what Bodhisattvas do, what they lead up to. In this life, we shouldn’t make a distinction between material things. Selflessness.**
- **Within Buddhist teaching, there are 4 kinds of people in this universe:**
 - **First, there is someone traveling from darkness to darkness. This person doesn’t know anything about Karma, Dharma or thinks about others.**
 - **Second, someone who is traveling from darkness to light. Someone who is realizing that they need to move out of the darkness and into the light.**
 - **Third, someone who is traveling from the light to the light. Shantideva says something about this. All of the Buddhas travel from light to the light.**

- **Question – would that be a Rinpoche or high Lama? No, even YOU can be in this third level.**
- **Fourth, someone traveling from the light to darkness. Someone who has studied Buddhism well and then questions it and begins to have disbelief in Buddhism. All five of their senses are full.**

For the next class: I want you to pray in English & you can practice and prepare in your own house. In the next class we will learn a little bit about meditation. So whenever there is angry energy that comes from your mind, you can practice changing that energy into positive energy. Little by little it will begin to work. Buddha said he made his teachings so that anything was possible. Also, I can give a list of how to prepare yourself at home for every day prayer.