



open letter to a president

Since war was declared, some people have been protesting against it and clamoring for peace. But if what those people really want is peace, then they should first come up with a clear practical idea how to stop the terrorist attacks in the United States and other countries. Otherwise, you shout for peace and let the United States be completely destroyed by terrorists? This

I understand that the situation is very difficult and that the American public is very angry but there are ways to solve the problem other than by going to war. It is possible that these terrorists can be overcome by spiritual power rather than by using military power. War costs so many lives and so much money. Even one missile can be so expensive, costing millions of dollars. When spiritual power is used to solve the problem, it saves all this expense and costs hardly anything.

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE has a message for US President George Bush about the effectiveness of spiritual solutions to the current world crisis. He offers a range of prayers and practices for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike.

Buddhism, and especially Tibetan Buddhism, has so many methods to help bring peace and happiness to sentient beings. If the Government were interested in the possibility of using spiritual methods to solve the current problems, they would need to consult with the spiritual head of each of the different traditions.

is like the saying in the Tibetan Buddhist texts: "A blind yak eating grass." Or the Western saying: "To throw out the baby with the bath water."

So many people are suffering now due to lack of awareness of what will come in the future. The problem is that common ordinary people are limited in what they can see, because of the lack of development of the mind. They do not have the power to see beyond, to read the minds of the terrorists and those in training. If Government Intelligence had the power to see beyond, then they could foresee future dangers. They see the harm in the minds of all those harmful people and terrorists. They could see what damage they could do to the United States and the whole world.

War is what ordinary people in the world regard as the solution. The problem is that war, even if it is won, is like a medicine that has side effects. It may temporarily help the situation but afterwards there will be continual complications. Why? Because the people you defeat generate hatred towards you and in future generations they harm you back. In the natural law of actions, called karma in Sanskrit, the action of harming leaves an imprint on the mental continuum and that imprint is like a seed. When it ripens later, the person experiences the result of receiving harm from others.

Then practices could be done for a few months or a year in order for them to be effective. This way is not like military war, which makes some people happy and some people upset. These practices are unseen, so they do not irritate or upset anybody; that means also nobody gets angry and plans to retaliate back.

A war without anger

Another solution would be to have a war without anger, something that appeared violent but actually became positive. Just because something looks violent, that alone does not necessarily define it as negative, because there are actions that outwardly appear to be violent but in reality are most positive, pure and for inner peace.

Buddhism is based on not harming others and on benefiting others. But when an evil being is harming him or herself and greatly harming many others and the world, then in Mahayana Buddhism great saints called bodhisattvas who have the qualification of unbearable compassion take the life of that being. They completely sacrifice themselves to happily experience whatever suffering consequences may come from taking that life, such as suffering in a hell realm. They do this in order to benefit that sentient being, to stop them from engaging in harmful actions,

and also for the peace and happiness of others. When there is greater benefit to take the life of an evil being than not to, the Buddha has permitted great saints who are qualified to do so.

Particularly in Mahayana Buddhism, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana, on the basis of unbearable compassion, cherishing those evil beings, Tantric wrathful action is done: The consciousness is split from the body and transferred to a Pure Land where there is no suffering. In reality, even though an externally wrathful or violent action is used, it does not harm the evildoer, it only benefits them. The wrathful aspect of mind is without any anger – the thought of harming others. An example is when a child is very naughty and the parent has no peaceful means left to control it. The parent will then scold the child with a wrathful mind because this is the only way to control it so that it will have a good, successful future.

These terrorists' minds are trapped in so many heavy iron cages of wrong views that they cannot even see these views are wrong and their actions harmful. Their negative thoughts and actions caused so many thousands of people to be killed and so many firemen to sacrifice their lives to save others. Because of this, they will have to suffer for thousands of eons. From negative actions suffering results, from positive actions happiness arises, so it is unimaginable how much harm the terrorists did to themselves, to the US and to the rest of the world.

Reincarnation

Numberless people have realized that reincarnation exists and that there is life both before and after this one. At the time of death the body finishes, but the mind continues; this is reincarnation. Reincarnation is not only Buddhist philosophy and experience, Christianity also talks about reincarnation because they talk about a heaven and hell after this life. That which experiences heaven and hell is not the body but the mind, therefore reincarnation exists. The Bible also talks about resurrection.

In this world there are believers and non-believers. An example of this is when the US put a man on the moon: some people in the East could not accept or understand how that was possible. Another example is the satellite interviews that we see on the television: one person is talking to somebody else who is thousands of miles away but can be clearly seen on the screen. Some primitive people would not believe this is possible.

As the mind continues after death, the negative thoughts also continue, so these terrorists will go on to harm others again and again without end until their negative emotional thoughts are ceased. Negative thoughts, such as anger, dissatisfied mind, desire, are the chronic disease of the mind and the main cause of suffering. If the people in this world do not put effort into making the mind better, into ceasing the negative thoughts, then even when the body is destroyed and disintegrated, the mind, which does not cease, will continue along with all these thoughts. Ceasing negative emotional thoughts is the ultimate solution – especially ceasing them



Photo Ven. Roger Kunsang

by generating loving-kindness and compassion, the ultimate good heart, cherishing others, and benefiting others.

Religions that help, religions that harm

I am sure that for most religions, each one has something good to offer mankind. Any religion that offers a complete method should bring sentient beings to ultimate happiness – the cessation of all negative thoughts, the afflicted emotional mind including the seed of it. If your religion harms others, it harms

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This does not just mean Buddhist methods but also those from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam or any religion.

yourself. Then there is no meaning to have religion. It is better to have no religion at all.

My suggestion and contribution for the present and future peace and happiness of America and the world is that people living in pure morality and especially the Sangha should read or recite the text called The Sutra of Golden Light. This is one of Shakyamuni Buddha's most precious holy teachings and reading it has benefits like the infinite sky. It also helps eliminate other

problems, including economic difficulties, and to stop natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and so forth. The Government could ask Buddhist monks in America to recite this text for two to three years. Lay people and also non-Buddhists who have an open mind can also read it. Then there will be so much benefit for the country



Healing Medicine Buddha

So here I am simply offering suggestions. There is a powerful short meditation on the Healing Medicine Buddha, which came from the enlightened yogi called Padmasambhava. (See page 66.) The practice is to avoid catching sicknesses from others or, if one has already been infected, to be healed. It was recommended by another spiritual

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person who predicted that it could be very beneficial in protecting from the disease anthrax.

The Mantra Purifying All Negative Karma and Defilements not only protects from anthrax, but also if one can recite it daily, it will be a very good protection from life danger caused by earthquakes, fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, water and so forth – the dangers of the four elements. There are another two short mantras against anthrax, sickness and so forth, as well, which are proven to have healed cancer.

When natural disasters occur, Christianity might say that it is God's punishment. However, all I am saying here is that it is worth asking religious institutions and meditation centers to pray, and not only organizations but even individuals, because by praying they can help to stop or reduce these things. It may not be the case every time, but perhaps some times.

What else to do

I have a few suggestions of things people can do to save the place they are living in from many billions of dollars of damage to buildings and also to save many human beings from death:

There is a practice of offering tea to the beings who control the weather and create disturbances. There is a tea offering prayer called "Ablution to the Eight Worldly Powerful Spirits" that is

very effective. The practice itself is nothing – just reciting a short prayer mentioning their names and asking them not to create these disturbances.

Praying very strongly to the female Buddha Tara, who is like the Virgin Mary in Christianity, is also very effective in stopping dangers. She is the embodiment of all the buddhas' actions and there is a mantra and a short and long prayer with Twenty-One Praises.

Even relying upon and praying to Shakyamuni Buddha with a full heart, reciting his name and mantra and making strong requests for these dangers to be pacified will be very effective.

The techniques are very simple but the result can be of great benefit to the area and to the country.

Other things that can be done are to recite The Diamond Cutter Sutra, The Sutra of Golden Light, and The Heart Sutra with meditation on emptiness. Another very powerful method

that can be helpful is to pray to the Compassionate-Eye Looking One *Chenrezig* when these dangers are going to happen. Recite the mantra, have total reliance and make strong prayers. The Buddhist Tantras are full of so many methods for overcoming all kinds of disasters, including war, and for purifying the causes, but of course their success depends on how qualified the people doing the meditation are.

Even if there are no Buddhist centers in the area where the disasters are going to happen, it still may be possible for people in a Tibetan Buddhist center in another state to do the prayers. I want to emphasize that in situations where ordinary people cannot control disasters, they should rely upon spiritual means to prevent or reduce them. This does not just mean Buddhist methods but also those from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam or any religion.

Leaders and the media

I have never heard any of the leaders, and others in the news, stress the need to take care of the mind, to guard the minds of the people living in the world. It is very clear that everything, good and bad, happiness and suffering, all comes from the mind but there was not one word about the need to develop loving kindness and compassion. Nobody emphasized the need for everyone in the whole world to practice this. I only heard the word "compassion" twice and both times it came from President Bush, once in the context of "America is a compassionate country."

I was very happy to hear you and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair mention precisely that you are not attacking Muslims or Islam but the terrorists. If the media could also present it this way, there would be much less anger and confusion. The media can cause many millions of people to get angry just by saying a few unskillful words.

Educate the child first

My final suggestion is that it would be so good if the whole world, including Muslims, were to develop compassion, loving-kindness and universal responsibility – to give special education on this in schools and at home for the parents to practice

This way, one child can bring so much peace and happiness into his or her own life and also to the family, country and over time to the whole world. Then, when that child becomes a mother or father, they can educate their own children to practice universal responsibility, loving-kindness and compassion so that the good heart goes on and on, from generation to generation. Cherishing others and putting effort into developing a good heart in the office, at work, at home, everywhere – this is the ultimate method to stop terrorism worldwide. It is very important before the cause has ripened into a result, and the problem is being experienced, to practice loving-kindness, universal responsibility, tolerance, forgiveness and kindness towards others, instead of being careless towards them and only cherishing oneself.

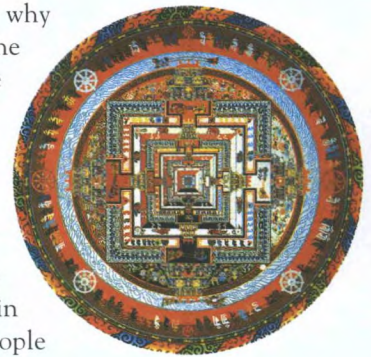
The reasons and explanations can be taken from Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and any other religion – anything that helps the mind to develop universal responsibility, compassion and loving-kindness towards others. Historically we can see that even just one person who is influential but lacks a good heart, compassion and patience can cause millions of people and other sentient beings in the world to be killed.

It is also important to have interfaith meetings, where all the religious leaders come together and pray, each according to their own traditional way. This should be made available for the young people as well. If the youth of this world come together and pray together, it will contribute towards peace and harmony amongst the different religions in the world.

I am writing this because I have particular concern for the American people. This country gives so much freedom for peace

and happiness. I do not know why Mainland China cannot give the same freedom to the Tibetan people and others.

Even though the methods I have explained here are taken from Buddhism, the tradition does not really matter, it is just a question of staying alive and saving others from danger. The main thing is how important it is for people to make use of these mantras and prayers. They have no side effects and they can do no harm to the body or mind.



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A final prayer

Finally, I dedicate the merits and I pray every day for the peace and happiness of all living beings, that everyone may generate loving-kindness, compassion, and the wish-fulfilling precious good heart. I pray that they may only benefit each other and that everyone's heart may be filled with joy and bliss. I pray that the whole world may be filled with peace and happiness.

With my prayers and good wishes

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