



# How to Use *Invocation*

*A Teaching from Jetsunma Ahkön Lhamo*

*This teaching was given to Jetsunma's students at Kunzang Palyul Chöling in Poolesville, Maryland, immediately after completion of a two-day, around-the-clock, Invocation retreat.*

I'd like to speak a little bit on the use of the invocation, and to continue what it is that you began by having the Invocation retreat. Hopefully, you've listened to 108 repetitions of the Invocation. That came to me in my meditation as an auspicious number and a number that's meaningful in some way, and would bring about some benefit. But during that time of the 108 repetitions you may have noticed that some strange things happened. And you don't know how to attribute that. Is it due to the Invocation or is it due to some reaction that you're having? Is it due to the lack of sleep or is it due to being around people that you would normally not be around for such an extended period of time under such strange conditions? So there are lots of questions about what happened.

Well, the Invocation as you know, as I explained to you, works on several different levels. This is important to understand so that you can continue to take benefit from it. On an external level, or on a more superficial level, if one were to practice in such a way as to really think that you were accomplishing the Invocation while you were hearing it, the benefit would be extraordinary. Due to the way the Invocation is structured and due to the thoroughness of it, it really has all of the necessary requirements of making a proper invocation. So that if you really visualize Guru Rinpoche in front of you, and you really think that by the virtue of your devotion, that Guru Rinpoche is actually there, and really make the Invocation from your heart as though it were you making it, then of course there is extraordinary benefit there. I think that simply making an invocation of that kind and of that completeness 108 times—even if you didn't verbally go through every single word 108 times, but still considered that you were making that invocation—just in doing that there is benefit.

It is my understanding that just hearing the voice of a Bodhisattva is beneficial. It has some benefit in that it makes a connection, and it causes certain qualities to arise within the person that is hearing that are like the mind of the Bodhisattva. So, in listening to that enough, there begins to be like an assimilation factor. The qualities begin to be meshed and interchangeable. So if your Guru happens to be making that Invocation and you're listening

to that again and again and again, your mind becomes more and more— in tiny increments— like the mind of your Guru. I mean you can't think that it's going to happen overnight. But that would be the case if you were hearing the Invocation of any Bodhisattva, and that is important. Maybe that would be considered to be on an inner level. But on maybe a secret level—I'm trying to put this in a very traditional context—on a deeper level it might be seen this way, in that there is something about that Invocation.

I don't feel responsible for the Invocation. I have to tell you that when I hear the Invocation I am affected by it as though someone else had done it. It sounds to me the minute that it came out, I really disowned it, I really don't think I'm singing that. I really don't feel that way. Too many weird things happened when it was being brought out and when it was being recorded to make me think that I had much to do with it at all. I really feel like it just came out. So when I hear it I'm affected by it and the same thing happens to me. So I'm not making any claims for my ability. I don't see it that way at all. But I know that it has some kind of strange capacity that is a little unusual. I don't think you're going to find this by listening to any other kind of music. The Invocation actually has the capacity to affect the inner winds and channels and fluids and really bring about some extraordinary change. It's that change that I really want to address tonight.

I've already told you that you should listen to the Invocation as though you were pronouncing it. I've already told you that to listen to the voice of a Bodhisattva pronouncing the Invocation would be greatly beneficial. But the particular and peculiar and sort of mystical quality about the Invocation that I would like to talk about, is the way it changes you on some psychic inner level.

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One of the things that you probably noticed during the course of listening to the Invocation, was there were certain periods where you had different kinds of reactions. You can listen to the Invocation for awhile and you find yourself first of all unable to help it when you actually hear it like music, even though you were told not to hear it like music, the mind registers it as music. It's the habit, really. And so you hear it and you

think, "Oh, I like the synthesizer in the back or I don't." Or, "I like the voice or I don't." Or, "I like the way she hit that note, I like the way she did that or I don't like the way she did that." So at some point you find yourself reacting. But then you get past that and your mind really can't stay focused on that kind of thing for a very long period of time. Pretty soon you're going to put Invocation in some different kind of place. Because you just can't think about that all the time. You can't think about whether you like the thing, again, and again and again or not. And probably that's one of the great values in hearing the Invocation so many times. At some point the Invocation becomes sort of a background thing and you find that you're peaceful with it during some periods and accepting of it, and you just kind of let it come

in and do what it does. But then at some point you find that you're fighting it. At some point you find that you are unconsciously, or maybe even somewhat consciously, not wanting to hear it anymore. Or you are keeping it out or feeling that you want some quiet. But there's a stress or a tension or a resistance.

In watching you as I was able to do even though I wasn't actually always with you, here's what I saw happening. That at some point there is a place where the Invocation is having an effect over a period of time, and suddenly there is some kind of thing that actually changes. Something mechanical about you on a deep, subtle or psychic level that begins to change. Perhaps it's something as obvious and gross as a habit pattern. Perhaps it's something as subtle as the way the winds move within you. Perhaps it's something as wonderful as actually opening up or sounding a note or a tone or some kind spiritual capacity through sound in your wind channels. Now the wind and mind are inseparable. They're piggy back and totally inseparable. Sound is like that too. Within each one of your inner channels and in the places where channels come together, especially in the little wheels, major and minor energy centers, there are sound syllables, seed syllables, where you are actually like sound images, or emanations or displays of wisdom nature.

If the person is very samsaric, you know very deluded, and most of us are, those seed syllables will be off. They're not quite right. In your nature that seed syllable's very pure, but from a relative point of view the channels are blocked and they are really filthy in some cases. Really filthy. Sometimes desperately so. Particularly I've found that in the lower channels, people that have had a great deal of lust activity in their lifetimes, particularly with other people who are very lusty, over a period of time there is a deep, very filthy kind of sediment that collects in the lower channels. That's one example but there're many kinds of such things. Those seed syllables become occluded in the same way. One's rational mind is different from and deluded in comparison to the nature. From the relative point of view that is not clean. Of course in your nature that is never so, but since one is not focused on one's nature, one is always drawn through desire into the relative point of view.

*If you really think you're going to go nuts and you think it's Magnum time and pretty soon you're gonna shoot the speaker if you hear Invocation one more time, that is the very time that you should hear it again.*

When you begin to hear the Invocation, gradually—over a period of time through hearing, through sound which is connected to mind, which is therefore connected to the winds and inseparable from the winds—sound carries into those wind channels and actually begins to purify the

wind channels. And at some point there has to be some kind of breakthrough. It is almost like the scales which are tipped into the impure side have to at some point tip over a little bit, or some event must happen. It is the tension of that event beginning to happen which can be likened to breaking the surface tension on water. There is an event there, there is a tension there. And it is that tension that causes you to have that feeling that you interpret as resisting Invocation.

It is not different from what happens in your relationship to Dharma. You have these periodic feelings of tension where you just can't do it anymore. You've just had enough. Or some period where you can listen to your teacher very well and you can be very surrendering, and very loving and very full of your practice, and then other periods where you just can't. You just have a lot of hardness, really. Don't you? Hardness and tension and inability to go any further. So it's not so different from that. But in this case it's actually that the psychic winds and channels are being purified, and there is a change that is happening in you. An actual, measurable—if you could measure things that way—psychical change that's happening. According to the density of the change, or the importance of the change, that will be how deep your resistance is. If you really think you're going to go nuts and you think it's Magnum time and pretty soon you're gonna shoot the speaker if you hear Invocation one more time, that is the very time that you should hear it again. That is the very time that you should surrender to it utterly.

The thing to do is to stand outside of yourself in a sense and look at yourself and say, "Oh, I see what I'm doing. I'm extremely tense right now because I'm about to make a breakthrough." It's kind of like you have to get a little space in that. You have to have some space there. You have to be able to say to yourself, "I see what I'm doing, I see what's happening here and of course I would want to continue. Of course I would want to continue." If you're having just a little bit of resistance—and that little bit of resistance may not be like I'm going to shoot the speaker—that little bit of resistance may be more like just dulling out. Just not hearing it anymore. Just putting it so far in the background that it's just not part of you. That actually is in some ways more dangerous. If you're about to shoot the speaker you can probably stop yourself in time. Or if you do shoot the speaker you can go and buy another

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one and turn it back on again. But if you dull out and you come to the point where you're no longer hearing, then at that point you're in a dangerous position because you don't realize that you've done that. You don't realize the condition that you're in. You just can't quite get a grip on it. And so, it no longer becomes as available to you. It's not that you're not hearing anymore and it's not that it's not still affecting, but it's like the difference that you would have in your practice when on the one hand, you're really into it, you're really trying, you're really acting with faith and devotion, and in another case perhaps you're just doing your practice by rote. How much more superior is the first practice than the second practice? In the same way that the superior kind of hearing—where you really let it come into you and let yourself really practice the

Invocation—is so far superior than just listening to it and tuning it out. Having it as background music, what will happen to you is the same thing that happens with background noise. It becomes invisible and it becomes part of your samsaric picture. So it has very limited effect on you.

But on the other hand, if when you feel that kind of dullness, or that kind of hard

resistance, if you are able to get a grip, you know, really pull yourself together, and accomplish the Invocation, because what you're resisting is Guru Rinpoche. You're not resisting a song. You're resisting Guru Rinpoche, you see. What you should do at that point is to really remember the whole meaning of the Invocation is that you have summoned Guru Rinpoche. Definitely, because the Invocation has been accomplished, and originally by one's Guru, you are certain, you have been told by your teacher, that in fact, Guru Rinpoche is there. So you know what you're dealing with. You're dealing with Guru Rinpoche in front of you. If you block out the Invocation or you turn yourself off, or you become angry or upset or something like that, effectively what you have done is chosen to ignore the presence of Guru Rinpoche. Of course you've chosen it just as you've chosen everything else in samsara: without understanding. With ignorance. So what you should do is to really offer the heart. At that point you redouble your effort.

You see not only one person listening to the Invocation, you can visualize your body multiplied by an infinite number. Infinite numbers of your body making nine prostrations and making offerings and requesting that Guru Rinpoche remain present and steadfast, and be enthroned in your heart. Just at the Invocation says. At that point you should reaffirm and you should continuously listen. Think what your practice would be like if you listened to the Invocation constantly on a regular basis and were always making that kind of prayer. Think what your practice would be like. What a help. What an aid. What a tremendous source, resource on which you, as a practitioner, can rely.

I'm not saying this so that you'll all buy a copy. I know you're all going to buy a copy. It's not like that. I'm not trying to sell it. I'm trying to give you a resource that you greatly need. I mean you should think that here in samsara we're kind of in some way, handicapped practitioners. I never hear the end of complaints about how we don't have time to practice. And so here you've been given something like a walker. You know, a pair of crutches, or something like that so you can limp through samsara and get to the other side. And so you have your remedial kind of aid for the handicapped here. And in that way you know you should think of it as something that you can really use. Just think of it as the greatest tool that you might have. Because you might not be able to sit down and really do your practice. If you're honest with yourself, you might not be able to do that. But you can. Think of the words. Go with words in your heart. Request that Guru Rinpoche be present. Follow the words with your thoughts. Really mean them from the depth of your being. Really mean them deeply. That you can do. So it's an aid for you.

Now, you've heard it the required 108 times. I gave you instruction on how deeply to hear it. If you heard it as deeply as possible you really made the most of your time. You probably achieved some good results. How does one mark those results. Well, as you know, on this path those of you that have been with me a long time know that I am greatly against having experiences. Whenever students say to me, "Gee, I've had this experience, I had this psychic experience and I got something telepathically from you and blah blah blah", I'm like, "Yeah, fine, thank you." I'm not excited about that. Because what basically has happened is that you've made up another one, and it's not so different from the other kinds of experiences

that you've had except that this one goes in the spiritual category. But they're all pretty much the same. They're just experiences. And since they happen in samsara, they're pretty much samsaric experiences. You made them with your rational mind, you exaggerated them, you constructed them, and they're all about you.

I feel the same way about Invocation. I'm not interested in hearing what experiences you had about Invocation. And actually, you shouldn't be interested in what experiences you've had with Invocation because it isn't important. What happens to you happens to you. And you will always interpret it in your habitual manner, whatever that might be. If you tend to be overexcitable, you will have interpreted it in an overexcitable way. If you tend to be kind of cynical and laid back about that sort of thing, you will continue to do so. If you tend to be kind of numb, you're probably still pretty much reacting in a numb way. It's your habit and however it is that you react or if you're constantly in your head, or whatever it is, you've done all of those things and you'll do them again, it's just the way you are. That's not the important thing. How you reacted is not the important thing. Reaction is utterly useless. It is no measure at all. Do you understand what it is that reaction actually comes from? Only this: habitual tendency. If you characteristically react in a way that you react—have reacted since who can remember when—it's your habit, and because it's your habit that's what you'll do. And it really doesn't matter what the stimulation is. You're just going to react in the same way.

*And so here you've been given something like a walker. You know, a pair of crutches, or something like that so you can limp through samsara and get to the other side.*

So reaction is nothing, it's nothing. It is meaningless. If you cried for Invocation it's because you're used to crying. If you had a big emotional rapture it is because you're an emotionally rapturable person. It's just your thing. And your reaction is nothing. You've done it before and you'll do it again and it will not make you enlightened. So please do not collect reactions and display them to your friends. They are useless. They are

utterly useless. As for what actually happened to you during Invocation, you've been told what's going to happen to you. It's going to affect your winds and channels. That's all you need to know. Your teacher told you that. If my teacher told me that I would say, "O.K. boss", and I would listen to it 108 times and I would do my best. Period. That's it. And if I can feel a difference, more delicate or something, a lightness in my inner nature, then fine. But still, I would mostly rely on the strength of my teacher's promise rather than my own perceptions or reactions because they're pretty useless. So, you've been told what's happened.

What's happened is you've listened to it the required 108 times, therefore there has been a change. Now you're ready to do some fine tuning. And that fine tuning is like this. Again, the results that you have actually achieved will be according to the way that you listened. If you listened really carefully and really tried to accomplish Invocation, and you really put your heart into it, and when you came up against these points really tried to surrender as much as possible, there will be benefit. What you should do is surrender and what you should do is practice devotion. So the thing to do is to just accept that you've heard

the Invocation 108 times and you've gotten so much value from it, so much worthwhile value. Each of you at any time can take an afternoon or an evening off and continue the process of doing Seven-Line Prayer using the Shower of Blessings Practice and listening to Invocation. You're all welcome to do that. You don't need me to tell you to do that. You can take a retreat and you can do that. You can take the same kind of retreat that we just took together. You can take a week long retreat. Sleeping and listening to Invocation constantly when you're awake. You're free to do whatever you want to do with it.

But now you have some idea that it's going to put you through some changes, and you have some idea that you can cope with it, and that this is how you should cope with it—by practicing surrender. By considering that your response is the response to Guru Rinpoche and, therefore, you really want to keep your mind in a very pure place. You really want to make offerings constantly. You really want to accomplish the Invocation as you are hearing it. Each of you are free to do that. You're also free to listen to Invocation constantly when you are home. You're free to listen to it in your working environment if that's possible. You're free to listen to it in your car. And during all of those times you can feel safe. You can be assured that Guru Rinpoche is with you as long as you hear that. But again, if that is so then you have to take responsibility for that. You see what I'm saying. If Guru Rinpoche is with you, if you have invoked the presence of Guru Rinpoche, you have to make an offering. You have to offer your devotion. You have to mentally offer your body speech and mind and make offerings of all that you see. The kind of practice where you can look at everything around you and say, "Oh beautiful flower, I offer it." No clinging. I just offer it. Everything you see you offer to Guru Rinpoche.

You see that's the way you should have been practicing all along without the Invocation. Your minds should always be invoking the presence of Guru Rinpoche. You should always think that the face of the Root Guru, that the face of Guru Rinpoche, is right in front of you. You should always be thinking that every moment is a display of the Guru's face. And you should be constantly aware of that and constantly making offerings and constantly on that mark. But that was impossible until now. Now however, you have Invocation and so suddenly it becomes possible with this help. But again, you know, don't blow it. Don't listen to Invocation as though it were just a song. You should think that you are looking at the face of Guru Rinpoche and you should practice accordingly.

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So the way to continue is as I have explained. And it's really up to you with what depth you continue. If I were you, I would be constantly be listening, really. Listen as much as possible. And I would be constantly practicing as though Guru Rinpoche were right in front of me. As though there were like an irrevocable invocation going on. Another quality that people have noticed about Invocation that's kind of neat is you can hear it echoing in the air after you have heard it played. There's something about the harmonics in the voice, or something, I don't know what, who knows what it is. But anyway, it stays in the air and it's

like this natural thing that continues. It's like what's in the air. At the same time it also means that there is something about that quality that has become part of your inner air, or your winds. So that's really pretty holy stuff, and you can think that whatever it is that you are doing is irrevocable. You're accomplishing something really precious.

If you don't take advantage of this after you've been given this devotional practice crutch for the handicapped, all I can say to you is that you're a fool. I mean at that point there's nothing to be said about it except that you are a fool. I'm saying this with love, believe me. At some point you have to face the fact that you may be a fool. If you've been given such a thing as a way to get through samsara and you just cannot manage, then you have to seriously look at yourself in the mirror and say, "What, are you stupid?" Really, you've got to look at yourself and wonder if you might be just a little stupid. So I don't know what else to say about that except that it may be true. I think you really ought to use it and I think you ought to begin some serious fine tuning with it now that you have the 108 repetitions under your belt. You should really practice that again. Perhaps we can continue to have shorter retreats or something like that where we continue to practice together. I think that would be really useful.

The thing that I would like to reiterate is that the response that you had to Invocation is like the response that you have had to everything in your life. There's really no difference in that you are a reactive being, and if you understand the basis of that reaction, then you can really see it for what it is. Try to remember, and when you're having reaction you should constantly remember why you are a reactive being. It is because of the assumption of self nature being inherently real. And as that assumption is operative you are constantly distinguishing between self and other. You are constantly—in order to distinguish between self and other and as a result also of distinguishing between self and other—reacting toward other with attraction, repulsion or neutrality. That's kind of like the nature of the beast. Once that distinction has been made, that kind of looking at the external happens, and looking at the external when it happens, must happen in a reactive way. But that self nature that you have assumed, is not more your nature than anything else that you might make up as being a nature. Your nature is the clear, uncontrived, spontaneous luminosity that is the Buddha nature. The assumption of self nature as being inherently solid and separate from the external is just, flat out, a mistake. And so that assumption is erroneous. You are locked into this reactive thing and your whole life consists of a reactive process.

That is all you are experiencing. Every single experience that you have from the grossest such as the five senses, touch, smell—blah, blah, blah, all that stuff—to the most subtle such as the process in your mind, is a reactive process. So what! You know what that is. It's nothing. It's meaningless. In the great scheme of things it is meaningless! It means nothing. So knowing that to be the case when you listen to Invocation and you have some kind of reaction, you should really take yourself through that process of remembering what that reaction is all about.

This kind of reactive process becomes like a drug for us. It's a narcotic. It is so

seductive and it is so continual. In a sense, when one assumes the solidity of self nature and begins to separate self from other, which happens the very millisecond that you assumed solidity of self nature, the mind begins to have kind of back and forth, almost elastic bounce-back kind of phenomena happening. And it changes in its texture, in its flavor, in its function. The mind in its natural state is spacious, relaxed, uncontrived, luminous and free floating in the way that sheer awareness or pure awareness or simply wakefulness or luminosity would be. It is not limp, but spacious, in that there is no bounce back reactivity happening because there is not contrivance. So once the mind begins to move into this other kind of posture—which is the posture of duality—this mind that became, that was sort of radiantly spacious with nowhere to go, in a sense, and nothing to do, suddenly becomes this thing that goes back and forth. It develops a bounce-back kind of elastic stretchy quality. The force, or the energy, or the tension of that bounce-back stretchy quality becomes like dope, becomes like a narcotic. The tension is like a high in a sense, and it's a strong thing and you become addicted to the tension. And the tension tells you, "I Am". Well that's true. Without that kind of tension—which is the distinction between self and other—you might just relax and see the nature which has nothing to do with, "I Am."

So, in a way it's like an assertion. It's like an experience you know and it becomes like a drug. The truth of the matter is if you didn't constantly keep assuming self nature, there is nothing that perpetuates self nature, it's only an assumption. It's only an idea. There's really nothing to it. The whole gig falls apart if the mind experiences true spaciousness. See what I'm saying. The tension becomes then like a hype, a drug, a gig, something you know. And you become kind of addicted to it. And the experience that you're in right now is a kind of hyper-stimulated state that's feverish. Sometimes you can even feel the feverish quality of it. And you like it. You get hit. It's a hit you know. You become so accustomed to the tension that you really like it and you actually begin to seek it out. You begin to seek out new definitive experiences. Begin to seek out different kinds of highs. If I do this it's going to feel this way. OHHH. So I'll try this and it'll feel that way. OHHH. And you keep seeking it out. And you develop the habit of seeking it out. And the tension increases and the more the tension increases the more the inflammation increases. The more the inflammation increases the more you like the tension. You see? So that's why you're so involved in this kind of reactive process. Because it's like a drug and you like it so much.

Viewed in that way you have to realize how stupid it is. How almost embarrassing it is. You know what I mean? I mean, don't you kind of get how embarrassing it is. You almost realize if you really looked at it that you're dancing naked in a glass house. I think on some level we all realize that and it's one of the reasons why we have all these things we're going to say to our teachers and all these spiritual questions and all these blah blah blahs going on in our head. And then you meet up with your root guru and you can't think of ANYTHING TO SAY. Has that ever happened to you. Huh! I mean you wait six months for a consultation and you get in there and you're like, "Duh", you start drooling. And it's because you see your Guru and that face is naked and it's not dancing, and it's like a mirror and suddenly you realize that you're dancing naked in a glass house and you look pretty stupid. I mean you just look pretty stupid. That is kind of what happens. And that reactivity is like

that. It really is like that. It's that fix, that thing, that whirlwind of activity that you're caught up in. And it's, if you think about it, that's all it is. That's all it is. And when you look into the face of your teachers, it's almost like you get caught mid step! And it makes you back off and get kind of quiet.

So I wanted to give you an understanding of what that reactivity is. You should not give it any importance. It means for some of you, you made the mistake of thinking your big experience was the reaction you walked away from, away with. Whatever reaction you had, whether it be sublime and meaningful or "So what", or "I don't think I can do that for another hour", or whatever, you know whatever your experience happened to be. That was the thing you walked away with. I mean in the midst of all this wonderful opportunity being in the presence of the face of Guru Rinpoche, what did you do? You walked away with this STUPID EXPERIENCE and now I've explained this all to you, this embarrassing memory that you may be dancing in a house naked. In a glass house! So now what you have to do, if you've heard the Invocation 108 times, is you have to continue by doing it better. Trying to really leave the reaction aside and when you have it, see it as that tension in your mind. See it as that stretchy kind of dualist thing that the mind becomes when it's functioning in that way. Understand what it is, and simply allow yourself to persevere. And do it better than you were when you were having that. Really reaffirm the surrender. Reestablish the surrender. Re-accomplish the Invocation. Sit down and listen to it better the next time and break through that breakthrough point. Really continue.

Some of you may wonder what happens. Why is it that the first few times you listened to Invocation maybe you got goose bumps, and you had some kind of feeling. Then after awhile you don't have that feeling anymore. It's because you're changed. In a sense there was probably something very thick and hard that was affected in the beginning. Hopefully, that's not so thick and hard anymore. Hopefully something inside of you is more like the quality of the Invocation. So you're not going to feel the same feeling. There's no need to. There's simply no need to. But that doesn't relieve you of the responsibility of really practicing with devotion. Of really practicing the Invocation as though Guru Rinpoche were right in front of you. It doesn't relieve you of the responsibility of actually making those offerings.

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I'm really not supremely thrilled with peoples' reactions. I get letters all the time. Letters from people that are chronically without much devotion saying that they're having a hard time with devotion and they're not feeling much devotion right now. Or letters from people that are chronically angry saying that they're angry again. Or letters from people that are chronically reactive giving me their reactions. Or, you know, different kinds of interesting letters. And mostly I don't answer them. The reason why I

don't answer them is because I just don't think we need to do that. I will not give any recognition to a student who is showing me what they always do. Because I know what they

always do, and I don't need to see it again. And they should have the capacity of knowing that they always do that too. So, we don't need to see that again. We know that you do that. We know that you're angry, we know that you don't have too much devotion, we know all these different things. We know that already, don't we? That's not a surprise to us. That's not a shock. We know that we're having these experiences.

What you have to do is you have to look outside of those things and say, "These are the reactions that I chronically have and I chronically have them." Why? It's because it's habit. That's all it is. It's just habit. Is it meaningful? Does it tell you what kind of person you are? Does it tell you anything about yourself other than the fact that you have a habit? So what's the point? Really. What is the point? Letters like that I very rarely answer. Why don't you tell me something I don't know. Like I'm really trying or something like that. Not that, don't give me the reaction that you're really trying. That I don't want to hear because I already know that. But the point that I'm trying to make here in this little discourse is that you're filled with reactions. I know that about you. When you stop and think about it you know that about you. That shouldn't be a surprise. You have hatred. You have grasping. Right? You have ignorance. We all have that. We all have it. This is not news. This is not the big feature.

So, that being the case, we know that we just have to recognize our habitual tendency and kind of stand outside of it. Kind of stand outside of it and say, "Yeah, that's really me. That's what I do. That's really my habit. So I'm just gonna let go of that because it doesn't mean anything." You know, or, "I'm just gonna recognize the habit and I'm gonna push through it." I'd really like to see you use Invocation as a way to do that. What you don't have the habit of is invoking the face of the Guru. What you don't have the habit of is making offerings constantly to the mind of enlightenment. That's what you don't have the habit of. We know what your habits are, we also know what they're not. Now you have an opportunity to create new habits. When you see these things about yourself, that you have these habits, I just think you shouldn't make a big deal. I mean so what. In samsara I know that you're not the only person that has a habit. To tell you the truth, if I saved up all your letters and fed them back to you I could actually erase the names and cross over, you know, just break them up and change the handwriting and you would not know that it wasn't yours. Believe me. Believe me. This is true.

The people who help me answer my mail, can you not attest to this? It's the same letter again and again. Yeah, maybe two varieties, that's right actually. It's pretty much two. I don't like and I need. So anyway, that's not you. And what you ought to do is at some point come to the realization that these are only your habits and really got for the gold. Go for realizing your true nature. Accomplish seeing the face of Guru Rinpoche in front of you all the time. Accomplish taking responsibility for that and making yourself ready to do that, and really knowing that. That is the way and it will happen gradually over a long period of time. Another habit you have to develop is that of patience. But in that time of developing patience, you must really do your best! You can't say that you're being patient while you're not doing anything. When you're not doing anything you're just not doing anything. So

practice as honestly and sincerely as possible and have patience, it's going to take a long time. You have a long pattern of habitual tendency to break through. And you're gonna break through it by putting something heavy in the other pile so that it balances. So you simply continue to invoke the Guru, to make the offerings, to practice pure perception, that's the gig here! Now you have a way to do it. And stop making gods out of your reactions. Who really gives a big flip? It doesn't matter. They are what they are and they aren't what they aren't. They are part of samsara, they have no good result. They will always lead to more samsara of a similar kind, and that's it. End of story. They will never lead to enlightenment. So how important can they be? I mean don't you see that it's that simple? It's a big "SO WHAT".

*... we know that we just have to recognize our habitual tendency and kind of stand outside of it. Kind of stand outside of it and say, "Yeah, that's really me. That's what I do. That's really my habit. So I'm just gonna let go of that because it doesn't mean anything." You know, or, "I'm just gonna recognize the habit and I'm gonna push through it." I'd really like to see you use Invocation as a way to do that.*

When you see yourself acting in your characteristic way, just blow it off. See it as habit and continue to practice. Even if you're not the kind of person that sits down and does a lot of practice all the time, using Invocation—and at least using that kind of method of constantly invoking the face of the Guru—you can be practicing no matter what you're doing. Who says you can't practice while sitting on the toilet. It doesn't matter. Guru Rinpoche is everywhere. So there's no excuse if you say you don't have any time. There's no excuse. Especially now that you really have something that you can use as a guide post and a method and also an aid to help you.

So I do really heartily recommend that each of you continue to take small retreats, mini retreats or longer retreats. You can set up groups of retreats. Smaller groups where you cooperate with each other, facilitate each others' retreats. That's one idea. You can do them individually. You can do them as couples.

(Question: What about using it while we sleep?) I think you should. I think it's a great idea. You can get one of those tape recorders that constantly plays. That would be a great thing to do.

(Question: Is it appropriate for the children?) Absolutely. Anyplace you play it, Guru Rinpoche is. You always have the choice of wanting Guru Rinpoche there or not.

(Question: I mean even if they (children) are not consciously paying attention to it?) Yes. Yes. It will still benefit them.

(Question: What about the quality of the sound system that you have?) It's pretty important, actually, because you want to get the full range of sound. You don't have to go out and buy a \$2000 sound system. You don't really have to do that. But I mean a good system is

nice. If you have a boom box try to get one that you know sounds good. I wouldn't listen to it on a little transistor. I don't even know if they still make them anymore.

-- *Jetsunma Ahkön Lhamo*

